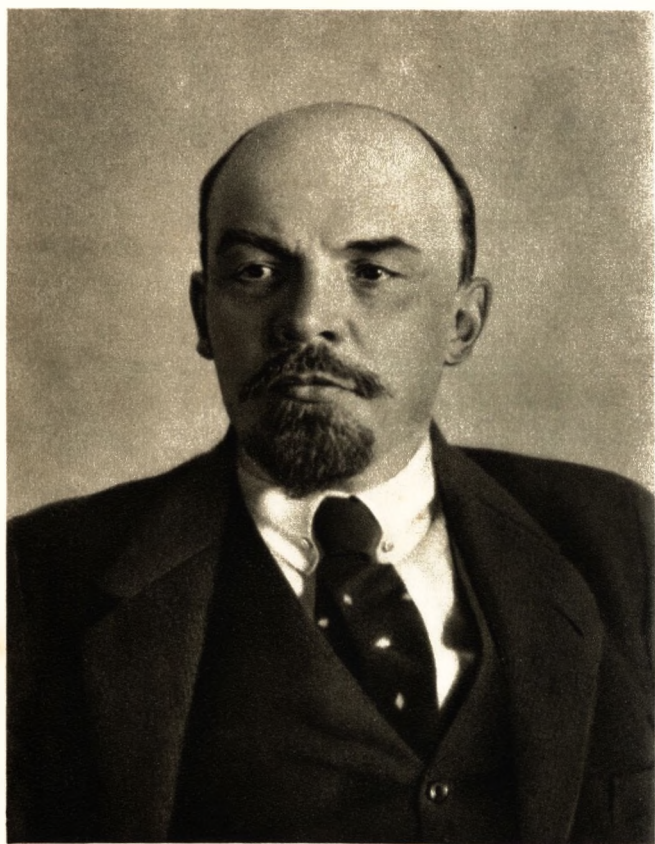


**V. I. LENIN**

**MARX-ENGELS-MARXISM**



*W. J. ...*

V. I. LENIN

M A R X  
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M A R X I S M

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

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The footnotes are by Lenin, unless otherwise indicated.

An index of works by Marx and Engels referred to in the present selection, a subject index, and explanatory notes are given at the end of the book.



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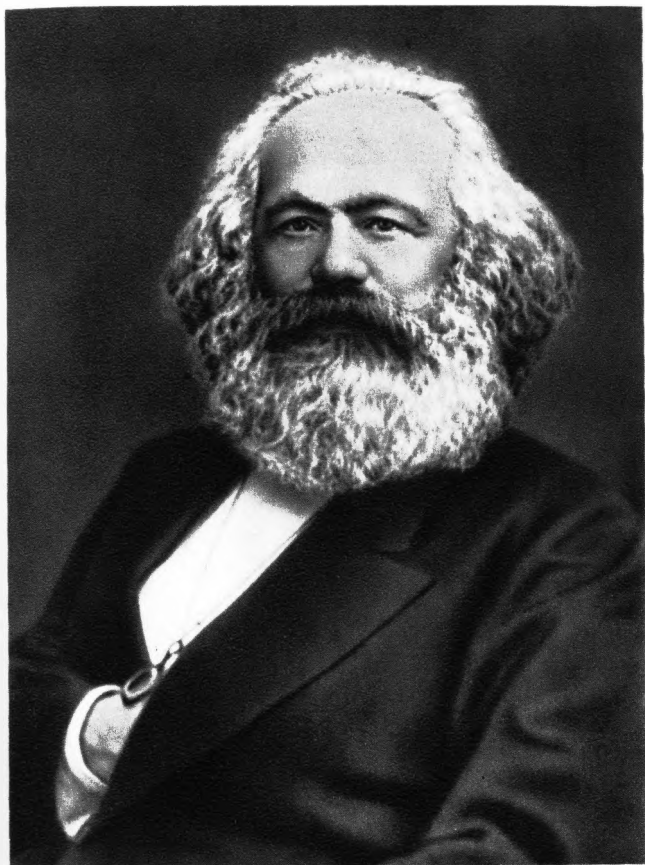
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Karl Marx

## KARL MARX

(BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH  
WITH AN EXPOSITION OF MARXISM)

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

After graduating from the university, Marx moved to Bonn, expecting to become a professor. But the reactionary policy of the government—which in 1832 deprived Ludwig Feuerbach of his chair and in 1836 refused to allow him to return to the university, and in 1841 forbade the young professor Bruno Bauer to lecture at Bonn—forced Marx to abandon the idea of pursuing an academic career. At that time the views of the Left Hegelians were developing very rapidly in Germany. Ludwig Feuerbach, particularly after 1836, began to criticize theology and to turn to materialism, which in 1841 gained the upper hand in his philosophy (*The Essence of Christianity*); in 1843 his

*Principles of the Philosophy of the Future* appeared. "One must himself have experienced the liberating effect" of these books, Engels subsequently wrote of these works of Feuerbach. "We" (i.e., the Left Hegelians, including Marx) "all became at once Feuerbachians." At that time some Rhenish radical bourgeois who had certain points in common with the Left Hegelians founded an opposition paper in Cologne, the *Rheinische Zeitung* (the first number appeared on January 1, 1842). Marx and Bruno Bauer were invited to be the chief contributors, and in October 1842 Marx became chief editor and removed from Bonn to Cologne. The revolutionary-democratic trend of the paper became more and more pronounced under Marx's editorship, and the government first subjected the paper to double and triple censorship and then decided to suppress it altogether on January 1, 1843. Marx had to resign the editorship before that date, but his resignation did not save the paper, which was closed down in March 1843. Of the more important articles contributed by Marx to the *Rheinische Zeitung*, Engels notes, in addition to those indicated below (see *Bibliography*),<sup>1</sup> an article on the condition of the peasant wine-growers of the Moselle Valley. His journalistic activities convinced Marx that he was not sufficiently acquainted with political economy, and he zealously set out to study it.

In 1843, in Kreuznach, Marx married Jenny von Westphalen, a childhood friend to whom he had been engaged while still a student. His wife came from a reactionary family of the Prussian nobility. Her elder brother was Prussian Minister of the Interior at a most reactionary period, 1850-58. In the autumn of 1843 Marx went to Paris in order, together with Arnold Ruge (born 1802, died 1880; a Left Hegelian; in 1825-30, in prison; after 1848, a political exile; after 1866-70, a Bismarckian), to publish a radical magazine abroad. Only one issue of this maga-



zine, *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, appeared. It was discontinued owing to the difficulty of secret distribution in Germany and to disagreements with Ruge. In his articles in this magazine Marx already appears as a revolutionary; he advocates the "merciless criticism of everything existing," and in particular the "criticism of arms," and appeals to the *masses* and to the *proletariat*.

In September 1844 Frederick Engels came to Paris for a few days, and from that time forth became Marx's closest friend. They both took a most active part in the then seething life of the revolutionary groups in Paris (of particular importance was Proudhon's doctrine, which Marx thoroughly demolished in his *Poverty of Philosophy*, 1847), and, vigorously combating the various doctrines of petty-bourgeois Socialism, worked out the theory and tactics of revolutionary *proletarian Socialism*, or Communism (Marxism). See Marx's works of this period, 1844-48, in the *Bibliography*. In 1845, on the insistent demand of the Prussian government, Marx was banished from Paris as a dangerous revolutionary. He removed to Brussels. In the spring of 1847 Marx and Engels joined a secret propaganda society called the Communist League<sup>2</sup>; they took a prominent part in the Second Congress of the League (London, November 1847), and at its request drew up the famous *Communist Manifesto*, which appeared in February 1848. With the clarity and brilliance of genius, this work outlines the new world conception, consistent materialism, which also embraces the realm of social life, dialectics, as the most comprehensive and profound doctrine of development, the theory of the class struggle and of the world-historic revolutionary role of the proletariat—the creator of the new, communist society.

When the Revolution of February 1848 broke out, Marx was banished from Belgium. He returned to Paris, whence, after the March Revolution, he went to Ger-

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

His life as a political exile was a very hard one, as the correspondence between Marx and Engels (published in 1913) clearly reveals. Marx and his family suffered dire poverty. Were it not for Engels' constant and self-sacrificing financial support, Marx would not only have been unable to finish *Capital* but would have inevitably perished from want. Moreover, the prevailing doctrines and trends of petty-bourgeois Socialism, and of nonproletarian Socialism in general, forced Marx to carry on a continuous and merciless fight and sometimes to repel the most savage and monstrous personal attacks (*Herr Vogt*). Holding aloof from the circles of political exiles, Marx developed his materialist theory in a number of historic works (see *Bibliography*), devoting his efforts chiefly to the study of political economy. Marx revolutionized this science (see below, "The Marxian Doctrine") in his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859) and *Capital* (Vol. I, 1867).

The period of revival of the democratic movements at the end of the fifties and the sixties recalled Marx to practical activity. In 1864 (September 28) the International Workingmen's Association—the famous First Internation-

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

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

On December 2, 1881, his wife died. On March 14, 1883, Marx peacefully passed away in his armchair. He lies buried with his wife in the Highgate Cemetery, Lon-

don. Of Marx's children some died in childhood in London when the family lived in deep poverty. Three daughters married English and French Socialists: Eleonora Aveling, Laura Lafargue and Jenny Longuet. The latter's son is a member of the French Socialist Party.

### THE MARXIAN DOCTRINE

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

### PHILOSOPHICAL MATERIALISM

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

"in the eighteenth century, especially in France, had been a struggle not only against the existing political institutions and against . . . religion and theology, but also . . . against all metaphysics" (in the sense of "intoxicated speculation" as distinct from "sober philosophy"). (*The Holy Family*, in the *Literarischer Nachlass*.) "To Hegel . . ." wrote Marx, "the process of thinking, which, under the name of 'the Idea,' he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos (the creator, the maker) of the real world. . . . With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought." (*Capital*, Vol. I, Preface to the Second Edition.) In full conformity with this materialist philosophy of Marx's, and expounding it, Frederick Engels wrote in *Anti-Dühring* (which Marx read in manuscript): "The unity of the world does not consist in its being. . . . The real unity of the world consists in its materiality, and this is proved . . . by a long and tedious development of philosophy and natural science. . . ." "Motion is the mode of existence of matter. Never anywhere has there been matter without motion, or motion without matter, nor can there be. . . . But if the . . . question is raised: what then are thought and consciousness, and whence they come, it becomes apparent that they are products of the human brain and that man himself is a product of nature, which has been developed in and along with its environment; whence it is self-evident that the products of the human brain, being in the last analysis also products of nature, do not contradict the rest of nature but are in correspondence with it." "Hegel was an idealist, that is to say, the thoughts within his mind were to him not the more or less abstract images (*Abbilder*, reflections; Engels sometimes speaks of "imprints") of real things and processes, but, on the contrary, things and their development were to him only the images

made real of the 'Idea' existing somewhere or other already before the world existed." In his *Ludwig Feuerbach*—in which he expounds his and Marx's views on Feuerbach's philosophy, and which he sent to the press after re-reading an old manuscript written by Marx and himself in 1844-45 on Hegel, Feuerbach and the materialist conception of history—Frederick Engels writes: "The great basic question of all philosophy, especially of more recent philosophy, is that concerning the relation of thinking and being . . . spirit to nature . . . which is primary, spirit or nature . . . The answers which the philosophers gave to this question split them into two great camps. Those who asserted the primacy of spirit to nature and, therefore, in the last instance, assumed world creation in some form or other . . . comprised the camp of idealism. The others, who regarded nature as primary, belong to the various schools of materialism." Any other use of the concepts of (philosophical) idealism and materialism leads only to confusion. Marx decidedly rejected not only idealism, always connected in one way or another with religion, but also the views, especially widespread in our day, of Hume and Kant, agnosticism, criticism, positivism in their various forms, regarding such a philosophy as a "reactionary" concession to idealism and at best a "shamefaced way of surreptitiously accepting materialism, while denying it before the world." On this question, see, in addition to the above-mentioned works of Engels and Marx, a letter of Marx to Engels dated December 12, 1868, in which Marx, referring to an utterance of the well-known naturalist Thomas Huxley that was "more materialistic" than usual, and to his recognition that "as long as we actually observe and think, we cannot possibly get away from materialism," reproaches him for leaving a "loophole" for agnosticism, Humism. It is especially important to note Marx's view on the relation between freedom and necessity: "Freedom is

the appreciation of necessity. 'Necessity is blind only in so far as it is not understood' (Engels, *Anti-Dühring*). This means the recognition of objective law in nature and of the dialectical transformation of necessity into freedom (in the same manner as the transformation of the unknown, but knowable, "thing-in-itself" into the "thing-for-us," of the "essence of things" into "phenomena"). Marx and Engels considered the fundamental shortcoming of the "old" materialism, including the materialism of Feuerbach (and still more of the "vulgar" materialism of Büchner, Vogt and Moleschott), to be: (1) that this materialism was "predominantly mechanical," failing to take account of the latest developments of chemistry and biology (in our day it would be necessary to add: and of the electrical theory of matter); (2) that the old materialism was nonhistorical, nondialectical (metaphysical, in the sense of antidialectical), and did not adhere consistently and comprehensively to the standpoint of development; (3) that it regarded the "human essence" abstractly and not as the "complex" of all (concretely defined historical) "social relations," and therefore only "interpreted" the world, whereas the point is to "change" it; that is to say, it did not understand the importance of "revolutionary, practical activity."

#### DIALECTICS

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

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

"The great basic thought," Engels writes, "that the world is not to be comprehended as a complex of ready-made things, but as a complex of processes, in which the things apparently stable no less than their mind images in our heads, the concepts, go through an uninterrupted change of coming into being and passing away . . . this great fundamental thought has, especially since the time of Hegel, so thoroughly permeated ordinary consciousness that in this generality it is now scarcely ever contradicted. But to acknowledge this fundamental thought in words and to apply it in reality in detail to each domain of investigation are two different things." "For dialectical philosophy nothing is final, absolute, sacred. It reveals the transitory character of everything and in everything; nothing can endure before it except the uninterrupted process of becoming and of passing away, of endless ascendancy from the lower to the higher. And dialectical philosophy itself is nothing more than the mere reflection of this process in the thinking brain." Thus, according to Marx, dialectics is "the science of the general laws of motion, both of the external world and of human thought."

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



"no longer needs any philosophy standing above the other sciences." Of former philosophy there remains "the science of thought and its laws—formal logic and dialectics." And dialectics, as understood by Marx, and in conformity with Hegel, includes what is now called the theory of knowledge, or epistemology, which, too, must regard its subject matter historically, studying and generalizing the origin and development of knowledge, the transition from *nonknowledge* to knowledge.

Nowadays, the idea of development, of evolution, has penetrated the social consciousness almost in its entirety, but by different ways, not by way of the Hegelian philosophy. But as formulated by Marx and Engels on the basis of Hegel, this idea is far more comprehensive, far richer in content than the current idea of evolution. A development that seemingly repeats the stages already passed, but repeats them otherwise, on a higher basis ("negation of negation"), a development, so to speak, in spirals, not in a straight line;—a development by leaps, catastrophes, revolution;—"breaks in continuity"; the transformation of quantity into quality;—the inner impulses to development, imparted by the contradiction and conflict of the various forces and tendencies acting on a given body, or within a given phenomenon, or within a given society;—the interdependence and the closest, indissoluble connection of *all* sides of every phenomenon (while history constantly discloses ever new sides), a connection that provides a uniform, law-governed, universal process of motion—such are some of the features of dialectics as a richer (than the ordinary) doctrine of development. (See Marx's letter to Engels of January 8, 1868, in which he ridicules Stein's "wooden trichotomies" which it would be absurd to confuse with materialist dialectics.)

## THE MATERIALIST CONCEPTION OF HISTORY

Having realized the inconsistency, incompleteness, and one-sidedness of the old materialism, Marx became convinced of the necessity of "bringing the science of society . . . into harmony with the materialist foundation, and of reconstructing it thereupon." Since materialism in general explains consciousness as the outcome of being, and not conversely, materialism as applied to the social life of mankind has to explain *social* consciousness as the outcome of *social* being. "Technology," writes Marx (*Capital*, Vol. I), "discloses man's mode of dealing with nature, the process of production by which he sustains his life, and thereby also lays bare the mode of formation of his social relations, and of the mental conceptions that flow from them." In the preface to his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Marx gives an integral formulation of the fundamental principles of materialism as extended to human society and its history, in the following words:

"In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces.

"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 of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process 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 productive forces of 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 hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces 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, esthetic 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 productive forces and the relations of production. . . . In broad outlines Asiatic, ancient, feudal, and modern bourgeois modes of production can be designated as progressive epochs in the economic formation of society.” (Cf. Marx’s brief formulation in a letter to Engels dated July 7, 1866: “Our theory that the organization of labour is determined by the means of production.”)

The discovery of the materialist conception of history, or rather, the consistent continuation and extension of materialism into the domain of social phenomena, removed two chief defects of earlier historical theories. In the first place, they at best examined only the ideological motives of the historical activity of human beings, without investigating what produced these motives, without

grasping the objective laws governing the development of the system of social relations, and without discerning the roots of these relations in the degree of development of material production; in the second place, the earlier theories did not cover the activities of the *masses* of the population, whereas historical materialism made it possible for the first time to study with the accuracy of the natural sciences the social conditions of the life of the masses and the changes in these conditions. Pre-Marxian "sociology" and historiography *at best* provided an accumulation of raw facts, collected sporadically, and a depiction of certain sides of the historical process. By examining the whole *complex* of opposing tendencies, by reducing them to precisely definable conditions of life and production of the various *classes* of society, by discarding subjectivism and arbitrariness in the choice of various "leading" ideas or in their interpretation, and by disclosing that all ideas and all the various tendencies, without exception, have their *roots* in the condition of the material forces of production, Marxism pointed the way to an all-embracing and comprehensive study of the process of rise, development, and decline of social-economic formations. People make their own history. But what determines the motives of people, of the mass of people, that is; what gives rise to the clash of conflicting ideas and strivings; what is the sum-total of all these clashes of the whole mass of human societies; what are the objective conditions of production of material life that form the basis of all historical activity of man; what is the law of development of these conditions—to all this Marx drew attention and pointed out the way to a scientific study of history as a uniform and law-governed process in all its immense variety and contradictoriness.

## THE CLASS STRUGGLE

That in any given society the strivings of some of its members conflict with the strivings of others, that social life is full of contradictions, that history discloses a struggle between nations and societies as well as within nations and societies, and, in addition, an alternation of periods of revolution and reaction, peace and war, stagnation and rapid progress or decline—are facts that are generally known. Marxism provided the clue which enables us to discover the laws governing this seeming labyrinth and chaos, namely, the theory of the class struggle. Only a study of the whole complex of strivings of all the members of a given society or group of societies can lead to a scientific definition of the result of these strivings. And the source of the conflicting strivings lies in the difference in the position and mode of life of the *classes* into which each society is divided. "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles," wrote Marx in the *Communist Manifesto* (except the history of the primitive community—Engels added subsequently). "Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes. . . . The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones. Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two

great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat.' Ever since the Great French Revolution, European history has very clearly revealed in a number of countries this real undersurface of events, the struggle of classes. And the Restoration period in France already produced a number of historians (Thierry, Guizot, Mignet, Thiers) who, generalizing from events, were forced to recognize that the class struggle was the key to all French history. And the modern era—the era of the complete victory of the bourgeoisie, representative institutions, wide (if not universal) suffrage, a cheap, popular daily press, etc., the era of powerful and ever-expanding unions of workers and unions of employers, etc., has revealed even more manifestly (though sometimes in a very one-sided, "peaceful," "constitutional" form) that the class struggle is the mainspring of events. The following passage from Marx's *Communist Manifesto* will show us what Marx required of social science in respect to an objective analysis of the position of each class in modern society in connection with an analysis of the conditions of development of each class: "Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of modern industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product. The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class. They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history. If by chance they are revolutionary, they are so only in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat; they thus defend not their present, but their future interests; they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that

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

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

### MARX'S ECONOMIC DOCTRINE

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

### VALUE

A commodity is, in the first place, a thing that satisfies a human want; in the second place, it is a thing that can be exchanged for another thing. The utility of a thing makes it a *use-value*. Exchange-value (or simply, value) presents itself first of all as the ratio, the proportion in

which a certain number of use-values of one sort are exchanged for a certain number of use-values of another sort. Daily experience shows us that millions upon millions of such exchanges are constantly equating one with another every kind of use-value, even the most diverse and incomparable. Now, what is there in common between these various things, things constantly equated one with another in a definite system of social relations? What is common to them is that they are *products of labour*. In exchanging products people equate to one another the most diverse kinds of labour. The production of commodities is a system of social relations in which the individual producers create diverse products (the social division of labour), and in which all these products are equated to one another in exchange. Consequently, what is common to all commodities is not the concrete labour of a definite branch of production, not labour of one particular kind, but *abstract* human labour—human labour in general. All the labour power of a given society, as represented in the sum-total of values of all commodities, is one and the same human labour power: millions and millions of acts of exchange prove this. And, consequently, each particular commodity represents only a certain share of the *socially necessary* labour time. The magnitude of value is determined by the amount of socially necessary labour, or by the labour time that is socially necessary for the production of the given commodity, of the given use-value. "Whenever, by an exchange, we equate as values our different products, by that very act, we also equate, as human labour, the different kinds of labour expended upon them. We are not aware of this, nevertheless we do it." As one of the earlier economists said, value is a relation between two persons; only he ought to have added: a relation disguised as a relation between things. We can understand what value is only when we consider



it from the standpoint of the system of social relations of production of one particular historical formation of society, relations, moreover, which manifest themselves in the mass phenomenon of exchange, a phenomenon which repeats itself millions upon millions of times. "As values, all commodities are only definite masses of congealed labour time." Having made a detailed analysis of the twofold character of the labour incorporated in commodities, Marx goes on to analyze the *forms of value and money*. Marx's main task here is to study the *genesis* of the money form of value, to study the *historical process* of development of exchange, from single and casual acts of exchange ("elementary or accidental form of value," in which a given quantity of one commodity is exchanged for a given quantity of another) to the universal form of value, in which a number of different commodities are exchanged for one and the same particular commodity, and to the money form of value, when gold becomes this particular commodity, the universal equivalent. Being the highest product of the development of exchange and commodity production, money masks and conceals the social character of all individual labour, the social tie between the individual producers who are united by the market. Marx analyzes in very great detail the various functions of money; and it is essential to note here in particular (as generally in the opening chapters of *Capital*), that the abstract and seemingly at times purely deductive mode of exposition in reality reproduces a gigantic collection of factual material on the history of the development of exchange and commodity production. "If we consider money, its existence implies a definite stage in the exchange of commodities. The particular functions of money which it performs, either as the mere equivalent of commodities, or as means of circulation, or means of payment, as hoard or as universal money, point, according

to the extent and relative preponderance of the one function or the other, to very different stages in the process of social production." (*Capital*, Vol. I.)

#### SURPLUS VALUE

At a certain stage in the development of commodity production money becomes transformed into capital. The formula of commodity circulation was C—M—C (commodity—money—commodity), i.e., the sale of one commodity for the purpose of buying another. The general formula of capital, on the contrary, is M—C—M, i.e., purchase for the purpose of selling (at a profit). The increase over the original value of the money put into circulation Marx calls surplus value. The fact of this "growth" of money in capitalist circulation is well known. It is this "growth" which transforms money into *capital*, as a special, historically defined, social relation of production. Surplus value cannot arise out of commodity circulation, for the latter knows only the exchange of equivalents; it cannot arise out of an addition to price, for the mutual losses and gains of buyers and sellers would equalize one another, whereas what we have here is not an individual phenomenon but a mass, average, social phenomenon. In order to derive surplus value, the owner of money "must... find... in the market a commodity, whose use-value possesses the peculiar property of being a source of value"—a commodity whose process of consumption is at the same time a process of creation of value. And such a commodity exists. It is human labour power. Its consumption is labour, and labour creates value. The owner of money buys labour power at its value, which, like the value of every other commodity, is determined by the socially necessary labour time requisite for its production

(i.e., the cost of maintaining the worker and his family). Having bought labour power, the owner of money is entitled to use it, that is, to set it to work for the whole day—twelve hours, let us suppose. Yet, in the course of six hours (“necessary” labour time) the labourer creates product sufficient to cover the cost of his own maintenance; and in the course of the next six hours (“surplus” labour time), he creates “surplus” product, or surplus value, for which the capitalist does not pay. In capital, therefore, from the standpoint of the process of production, two parts must be distinguished: constant capital, expended on means of production (machinery, tools, raw materials, etc.), the value of which, without any change, is transferred (all at once or part by part) to the finished product; and variable capital, expended on labour power. The value of this latter capital is not invariable, but grows in the labour process, creating surplus value. Therefore, to express the degree of exploitation of labour power by capital, surplus value must be compared not with the whole capital but only with the variable capital. Thus in the example given, the rate of surplus value, as Marx calls this ratio, will be 6:6, i.e., 100 per cent.

The historical prerequisites for the genesis of capital were, firstly, the accumulation of a certain sum of money in the hands of individuals and a relatively high level of development of commodity production in general, and, secondly, the existence of a labourer who is “free” in a double sense: free from all constraint or restriction on the sale of his labour power, and free from the land and all means of production in general, a free and unattached labourer, a “proletarian,” who cannot subsist except by the sale of his labour power.

There are two principal methods by which surplus value can be increased: by lengthening the working day (“absolute surplus value”), and by shortening the neces-

sary working day ("relative surplus value"). Analyzing the first method, Marx gives a most impressive picture of the struggle of the working class to shorten the working day and of governmental interference to lengthen the working day (from the fourteenth century to the seventeenth century) and to shorten the working day (factory legislation of the nineteenth century). Since the appearance of *Capital*, the history of the working-class movement in all civilized countries of the world has provided a wealth of new facts amplifying this picture.

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

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

transformation into Socialism is the more rapid growth of the constant capital share (of the total capital) as compared with the variable capital share.

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

The "*historical tendency of capitalist accumulation*" is described by Marx in the following famous words: "The expropriation of the immediate producers was accomplished with merciless vandalism, and under the stimulus of passions the most infamous, the most sordid, the pettiest, the most meanly odious. Self-earned private property" (of the peasant and handicraftsman), "that is based, so to say, on the fusing together of the isolated, independent labouring-individual with the conditions of his labour, is supplanted by capitalistic private property, which rests on exploitation of the nominally free labour of

others. . . . That which is now to be expropriated is no longer the labourer working for himself, but the capitalist exploiting many labourers. This expropriation is accomplished by the action of the immanent laws of capitalistic production itself, by the centralization of capital. One capitalist always kills many. Hand in hand with this centralization, or this expropriation of many capitalists by few, develop, on an ever extending scale, the cooperative form of the labour process, the conscious technical application of science, the methodical cultivation of the soil, the transformation of the instruments of labour into instruments of labour only usable in common, the economizing of all means of production by their use as the means of production of combined, socialized labour, the entanglement of all peoples in the net of the world market, and with this, the international character of the capitalistic regime. Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolize all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working class, a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organized by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with, and under it. Centralization of the means of production and socialization of labour at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated." (*Capital*, Vol. I.)

New and important in the highest degree, further, is the analysis Marx gives in the second volume of *Capital* of the reproduction of the aggregate social capital. Here,

too, Marx deals not with an individual phenomenon but with a mass phenomenon; not with a fractional part of the economy of society but with this economy as a whole. Correcting the mistake of the classical economists mentioned above, Marx divides the entire social production into two big sections: I) production of means of production, and II) production of articles of consumption, and examines in detail, with arithmetical examples, the circulation of the aggregate social capital—both in the case of reproduction in its former dimensions and in the case of accumulation. The third volume of *Capital* solves the problem of the formation of the *average rate of profit* on the basis of the law of value. The immense advance in economic science made by Marx consists in the fact that he conducts his analysis from the standpoint of mass economic phenomena, of the social economy as a whole, and not from the standpoint of individual cases or of the external, superficial aspects of competition, to which vulgar political economy and the modern “theory of marginal utility” are frequently limited. Marx first analyzes the origin of surplus value, and then goes on to consider its division into profit, interest, and ground rent. Profit is the ratio between the surplus value and the total capital invested in an undertaking. Capital with a “high organic composition” (i.e., with a preponderance of constant capital over variable capital exceeding the social average) yields a lower than average rate of profit; capital with a “low organic composition” yields a higher than average rate of profit. The competition of capitals, and the freedom with which they transfer from one branch to another equate the rate of profit to the average in both cases. The sum-total of the values of all the commodities of a given society coincides with the sum-total of prices of the commodities: but, owing to competition, in individual undertakings and branches of production commodities are

sold not at their values but at the *prices of production* (or production prices), which are equal to the expended capital plus the average profit.

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

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



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

nationalization of the land, which, however, frightens away the majority of the bourgeoisie, because it too closely "touches" another monopoly, which is particularly important and "sensitive" in our day—the monopoly of the means of production in general. (Marx gives a remarkably popular, concise, and clear exposition of his theory of the average rate of profit on capital and of absolute ground rent in a letter to Engels, dated August 2, 1862. See *Briefwechsel*, Vol. III, pp. 77-81; also the letter of August 9, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 86-87.)—For the history of ground rent it is also important to note Marx's analysis showing how labour rent (when the peasant creates surplus product by labouring on the lord's land) is transformed into rent in produce or in kind (when the peasant creates surplus product on his own land and cedes it to the lord due to "noneconomic constraint"), then into money rent (which is rent in kind transformed into money, the *obrok* of old Russia, due to the development of commodity production), and finally into capitalist rent, when the peasant is replaced by the agricultural entrepreneur, who cultivates the soil with the help of wage-labour. In connection with this analysis of the "genesis of capitalist ground rent," note should be made of a number of penetrating ideas (especially important for backward countries like Russia) expressed by Marx on the *evolution of capitalism in agriculture*. "The transformation of rent in kind into money rent is not only necessarily accompanied, but even anticipated by the formation of a class of propertyless day labourers, who hire themselves out for wages. During the period of their rise, when this new class appears but sporadically, the custom necessarily develops among the better-situated tributary farmers of exploiting agricultural labourers for their own account, just as the wealthier serfs in feudal times used to employ serfs for their own benefit. In this way they

gradually acquire the ability to accumulate a certain amount of wealth and to transform themselves even into future capitalists. The old self-employing possessors of the land thus give rise among themselves to a nursery for capitalist tenants, whose development is conditioned upon the general development of capitalist production outside of the rural districts." (*Capital*, Vol. III, p. 332.) "The expropriation and eviction of a part of the agricultural population not only set free for industrial capital, the labourers, their means of subsistence, and material for labour; it also created the home market." (*Capital*, Vol. I, p. 778.) The impoverishment and ruin of the agricultural population lead, in their turn, to the formation of a reserve army of labour for capital. In every capitalist country "part of the agricultural population is therefore constantly on the point of passing over into an urban or manufacturing proletariat. . . . (Manufacture is used here in the sense of all nonagricultural industries.) This source of relative surplus population is thus constantly flowing. . . . The agricultural labourer is therefore reduced to the minimum of wages, and always stands with one foot already in the swamp of pauperism." (*Capital*, Vol. I, p. 668.) The private ownership of the peasant in the land he tills constitutes the basis of small-scale production and the condition for its prospering and attaining a classical form. But such small-scale production is compatible only with a narrow and primitive framework of production and society. Under capitalism the "exploitation of the peasants differs only in form from the exploitation of the industrial proletariat. The exploiter is the same: capital. The individual capitalists exploit the individual peasants through mortgages and usury; the capitalist class exploits the peasant class through the state taxes." (*The Class Struggles in France*.) "The small holding of the peasant is now only the pretext that allows the capitalist

to draw profits, interest and rent from the soil, while leaving it to the tiller of the soil himself to see how he can extract his wages." (*The Eighteenth Brumaire*). As a rule the peasant cedes to capitalist society, i.e., to the capitalist class, even a part of the wages, sinking "to the level of the Irish tenant farmer—all under the pretence of being a private proprietor." (*The Class Struggles in France*.) What is "one of the causes which keeps the price of cereals lower in countries with a predominance of small farmers than in countries with a capitalist mode of production"? (*Capital*, Vol. III, p. 340.) It is that the peasant cedes to society (i.e., to the capitalist class) part of his surplus product without an equivalent. "This lower price (of cereals and other agricultural produce) is also a result of the poverty of the producers and by no means of the productivity of their labour." (*Capital*, Vol. III, p. 340.) The smallholding system, which is the normal form of small-scale production, deteriorates, collapses, perishes under capitalism. "Small peasants' property excludes by its very nature the development of the social powers of production of labour, the social forms of labour, the social concentration of capitals, cattle raising on a large scale, and a progressive application of science. Usury and a system of taxation must impoverish it everywhere. The expenditure of capital in the price of the land withdraws this capital from cultivation. An infinite dissipation of means of production and an isolation of the producers themselves go with it." (Cooperative societies, i.e., associations of small peasants, while playing an extremely progressive bourgeois role, only weaken this tendency without eliminating it; nor must it be forgotten that these cooperative societies do much for the well-to-do peasants, and very little, almost nothing, for the mass of poor peasants; and then the associations themselves become exploiters of wage-labour.) "Also an enormous

waste of human energy. A progressive deterioration of the conditions of production and a raising of the price of means of production is a necessary law of small peasants' property." In agriculture, as in industry, capitalism transforms the process of production only at the price of the "martyrdom of the producer." "The dispersion of the rural labourers over larger areas breaks their power of resistance while concentration increases that of the town operatives. In modern agriculture, as in the urban industries, the increased productiveness and quantity of the labour set in motion are bought at the cost of laying waste and consuming by disease labour power itself. Moreover, all progress in capitalistic agriculture is a progress in the art, not only of robbing the labourer, but of robbing the soil. . . . Capitalist production, therefore, develops technology, and the combining together of various processes into a social whole, only by sapping the original sources of all wealth—the soil and the labourer." (*Capital*, Vol. I, end of Chap. 13.)

### SOCIALISM

From the foregoing it is evident that Marx deduces the inevitability of the transformation of capitalist society into socialist society wholly and exclusively from the economic law of motion of contemporary society. The socialization of labour, which is advancing ever more rapidly in thousands of forms, and which has manifested itself very strikingly during the half-century that has elapsed since the death of Marx in the growth of large-scale production, capitalist cartels, syndicates and trusts, as well as in the gigantic increase in the dimensions and power of finance capital, forms the chief material foundation for the inevitable coming of Socialism. The intellectual and moral driving force and the physical executant of this transformation is the proletariat, which is trained

by capitalism itself. The struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, which manifests itself in various and, as to its content, increasingly multifarious forms, inevitably becomes a political struggle aiming at the conquest of political power by the proletariat ("the dictatorship of the proletariat"). The socialization of production is bound to lead to the conversion of the means of production into the property of society, to the "expropriation of the expropriators." This conversion will directly result in an immense increase in productivity of labour, a reduction of working hours, and the replacement of the remnants, the ruins of small-scale, primitive, disunited production by collective and improved labour. Capitalism finally snaps the bond between agriculture and industry; but at the same time, in its highest development it prepares new elements of this bond, of a union between industry and agriculture based on the conscious application of science and the combination of collective labour, and on a redistribution of the human population (putting an end at one and the same time to rural remoteness, isolation and barbarism, and to the unnatural concentration of vast masses of people in big cities). A new form of family, new conditions in the status of women and in the upbringing of the younger generation are being prepared by the highest forms of modern capitalism: female and child labour and the break-up of the patriarchal family by capitalism inevitably assume the most terrible, disastrous, and repulsive forms in modern society. Nevertheless "... modern industry, by assigning as it does an important part in the process of production, outside the domestic sphere, to women, to young persons, and to children of both sexes, creates a new economical foundation for a higher form of the family and of the relations between the sexes. It is, of course, just as absurd to hold the Teutonic-Christian form of the family to be absolute

and final as it would be to apply that character to the ancient Roman, the ancient Greek, or the Eastern forms which, moreover, taken together form a series in historic development. Moreover, it is obvious that the fact of the collective working group being composed of individuals of both sexes and all ages, must necessarily, under suitable conditions, become a source of humane development; although in its spontaneously developed, brutal, capitalistic form, where the labourer exists for the process of production, and not the process of production for the labourer, that fact is a pestiferous source of corruption and slavery." (*Capital*, Vol. I, end of Chap. 13.) In the factory system is to be found "the germ of the education of the future, an education that will, in the case of every child over a given age, combine productive labour with instruction and gymnastics, not only as one of the methods of adding to the efficiency of production, but as the only method of producing fully developed human beings." (Ibid.) Marxian Socialism puts the question of nationality and of the state on the same historical footing, not only in the sense of explaining the past but also in the sense of a fearless forecast of the future and of bold practical action for its achievement. Nations are an inevitable product, an inevitable form in the bourgeois epoch of social development. The working class could not grow strong, could not become mature and formed without "constituting itself within the nation," without being "national" ("though not in the bourgeois sense of the word"). But the development of capitalism more and more breaks down national barriers, destroys national seclusion, substitutes class antagonisms for national antagonisms. It is, therefore, perfectly true that in the developed capitalist countries "the workingmen have no country" and that "united action" of the workers, of the civilized countries at least, "is one of the first conditions for the emancipa-

tion of the proletariat" (*Communist Manifesto*). The state, which is organized violence, inevitably came into being at a definite stage in the development of society, when society had split into irreconcilable classes, and when it could not exist without an "authority" ostensibly standing above society and to a certain degree separate from society. Arising out of class contradictions, the state becomes "...the state of the most powerful, economically dominant class, which, through the medium of the state, becomes also the politically dominant class, and thus acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class. Thus, the state of antiquity was above all the state of the slave owners for the purpose of holding down the slaves, as the feudal state was the organ of the nobility for holding down the peasant serfs and bondsmen, and the modern representative state is an instrument of exploitation of wage labour by capital." (Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, a work in which the writer expounds his own and Marx's views.) Even the freest and most progressive form of the bourgeois state, the democratic republic, in no way removes this fact, but merely changes its form (connection between the government and the stock exchange, corruption—direct and indirect—of the officialdom and the press, etc.). Socialism, by leading to the abolition of classes, will thereby lead to the abolition of the state. "The first act," writes Engels in *Anti-Dühring*, "in which the state really comes forward as the representative of society as a whole—the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society—is at the same time its last independent act as a state. The interference of the state power in social relations becomes superfluous in one sphere after another, and then ceases of itself. The government of persons is replaced by the administration of things and the direction of the processes of production.



The state is not 'abolished,' it withers away." "The society that will organize production on the basis of a free and equal association of the producers will put the whole machinery of state where it will then belong: into the museum of antiquities, by the side of the spinning wheel and the bronze axe." (Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State.*)

Finally, as regards the attitude of Marxian Socialism towards the small peasantry, which will continue to exist in the period of the expropriation of the expropriators, we must refer to a declaration made by Engels which expresses Marx's views: "... when we are in possession of state power we shall not even think of forcibly expropriating the small peasants (regardless of whether with or without compensation), as we shall have to do in the case of the big landowners. Our task relative to the small peasant consists, in the first place, in effecting a transition of his private enterprise and private possession to cooperative ones, not forcibly but by dint of example and the proffer of social assistance for this purpose. And then of course we shall have ample means of showing to the small peasant prospective advantages that must be obvious to him even today." (Engels, *The Peasant Question in France and Germany*, p. 17, Alexeyeva ed.; there are mistakes in the Russian translation. Original in the *Neue Zeit.*)

#### TACTICS OF THE CLASS STRUGGLE OF THE PROLETARIAT

Having as early as 1844-45 examined one of the chief defects of the earlier materialism, namely, its inability to understand the conditions or appreciate the importance of practical revolutionary activity, Marx, along with his

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

or of sluggish, so-called "peaceful" development in order to develop the class consciousness, strength and fighting capacity of the advanced class, and, on the other hand, conducting all this work of utilization towards the "final aim" of the movement of this class and towards the creation in it of the faculty for practically performing great tasks in the great days in which "twenty years are concentrated." Two of Marx's arguments are of special importance in this connection: one of these is contained in *The Poverty of Philosophy* and concerns the economic struggle and economic organizations of the proletariat; the other is contained in the *Communist Manifesto* and concerns the political tasks of the proletariat. The first argument runs as follows: "Large-scale industry concentrates in one place a crowd of people unknown to one another. Competition divides their interests. But the maintenance of wages, this common interest which they have against their boss, unites them in a common thought of resistance—combination. . . . Combinations, at first isolated, constitute themselves into groups . . . and in face of always united capital, the maintenance of the association becomes more necessary to them [i.e., the workers] than that of wages. . . . In this struggle—a veritable civil war—are united and developed all the elements necessary for a coming battle. Once it has reached this point, association takes on a political character." Here we have the program and tactics of the economic struggle and of the trade union movement for several decades to come, for all the long period in which the proletariat will muster its forces for the "coming battle." Side by side with this must be placed numerous references by Marx and Engels to the example of the British labour movement; how industrial "prosperity" leads to attempts "to buy the workers" (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. I, p. 136), to divert them from the struggle; how this prosperity generally "demoralizes the

workers" (Vol. II, p. 218); how the British proletariat becomes "bourgeoisified"—"this most bourgeois of all nations is apparently aiming ultimately at the possession of a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat as well as a bourgeoisie" (Vol. II, p. 290); how its "revolutionary energy" oozes away (Vol. III, p. 124), how it will be necessary to wait a more or less long time before "the English workers will free themselves from their apparent bourgeois infection" (Vol. III, p. 127); how the British labour movement "lacks the mettle of the Chartists" (1866; Vol. III, p. 305); how the British workers' leaders are becoming a type midway between "a radical bourgeois and a worker" (in reference to Holyoak, Vol. IV, p. 209); how, owing to British monopoly, and as long as this monopoly lasts, "the British working-man will not budge" (Vol. IV, p. 433). The tactics of the economic struggle, in connection with the general course (*and outcome*) of the labour movement, are here considered from a remarkably broad, comprehensive, dialectical, and genuinely revolutionary standpoint.

The *Communist Manifesto* set forth the fundamental Marxian principle on the tactics of the political struggle: "The Communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that movement." That was why in 1848 Marx supported the party of the "agrarian revolution" in Poland, "that party which fomented the insurrection of Cracow in 1846." In Germany in 1848 and 1849 Marx supported the extreme revolutionary democracy, and subsequently never retracted what he had then said about tactics. He regarded the German bourgeoisie as an element which was "inclined from the very beginning to betray the people" (only an alliance with the peasantry could have

brought the bourgeoisie the integral fulfilment of its tasks) "and compromise with the crowned representatives of the old society." Here is Marx's summary of the analysis of the class position of the German bourgeoisie in the era of the bourgeois-democratic revolution—an analysis which, incidentally, is a sample of that materialism which examines society in motion, and, moreover, not only from the side of the motion which is directed *backwards*: "Without faith in itself, without faith in the people, grumbling at those above, trembling before those below ... intimidated by the world storm ... no energy in any respect, plagiarism in every respect ... without initiative ... an execrable old man, who saw himself doomed to guide and deflect the first youthful impulses of a robust people in his own senile interests..." (*Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, 1848; see *Literarischer Nachlass*, Vol. III, p. 212.) About twenty years later, in a letter to Engels (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. III, p. 224), Marx declared that the cause of the failure of the Revolution of 1848 was that the bourgeoisie had preferred peace with slavery to the mere prospect of a fight for freedom. When the revolutionary era of 1848-49 ended, Marx opposed every attempt to play at revolution (the fight he put up against Schapper and Willich), and insisted on ability to work in the new phase which in a seemingly "peaceful" way was preparing for new revolutions. The spirit in which Marx wanted the work to be carried on is shown by his estimate of the situation in Germany in 1856, the blackest period of reaction: "The whole thing in Germany will depend on the possibility to back the proletarian revolution by some second edition of the Peasant War." (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. II, p. 108.) As long as the democratic (bourgeois) revolution in Germany was not finished, Marx wholly concentrated attention in the tactics of the socialist proletariat on developing the democratic energy of the peasantry. He held that Las-

salle's attitude was "objectively ... a betrayal of the whole workers' movement to Prussia" (Vol. III, p. 210), incidentally because Lassalle connived at the actions of the Junkers and Prussian nationalism. "In a predominantly agricultural country," wrote Engels in 1865, exchanging ideas with Marx on the subject of an intended joint statement by them in the press, "... it is dastardly to make an exclusive attack on the bourgeoisie in the name of the industrial proletariat but never to devote a word to the patriarchal exploitation of the rural proletariat under the lash of the great feudal aristocracy." (Vol. III, p. 217.) From 1864 to 1870, when the era of the completion of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Germany, the era of the efforts of the exploiting classes of Prussia and Austria to complete this revolution in one way or another *from above*, was coming to an end, Marx not only condemned Lassalle, who was coquetting with Bismarck, but also corrected Liebknecht, who had inclined towards "Austrophilism" and the defence of particularism; Marx demanded revolutionary tactics which would combat both Bismarck and the Austrophiles with equal ruthlessness, tactics which would not be adapted to the "victor," the Prussian Junker, but which would immediately renew the revolutionary struggle against him *also on the basis* created by the Prussian military victories. (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. III, pp. 134, 136, 147, 179, 204, 210, 215, 418, 437, 440-41.) In the famous Address of the International of September 9, 1870, Marx warned the French proletariat against an untimely uprising; but when the uprising nevertheless took place (1871), Marx enthusiastically hailed the revolutionary initiative of the masses, who were "storming heaven" (letter of Marx to Kugelmann). The defeat of the revolutionary action in this situation, as in many others, was, from the standpoint of Marxian dialectical materialism, a lesser evil in

the general course *and outcome* of the proletarian struggle, than the abandonment of a position already occupied, than a surrender without battle. Such a surrender would have demoralized the proletariat and undermined its fighting capacity. Fully appreciating the use of legal means of struggle during periods when political stagnation prevails and bourgeois legality dominates, Marx, in 1877 and 1878, after the passage of the Anti-Socialist Law, sharply condemned Most's "revolutionary phrases"; but he no less, if not more sharply, attacked the opportunism that had temporarily gained sway in the official Social-Democratic Party, which did not at once display resoluteness, firmness, revolutionary spirit and a readiness to resort to an illegal struggle in response to the Anti-Socialist Law. (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. IV, pp. 397, 404, 418, 422, 424; cf. also letters to Sorge.)

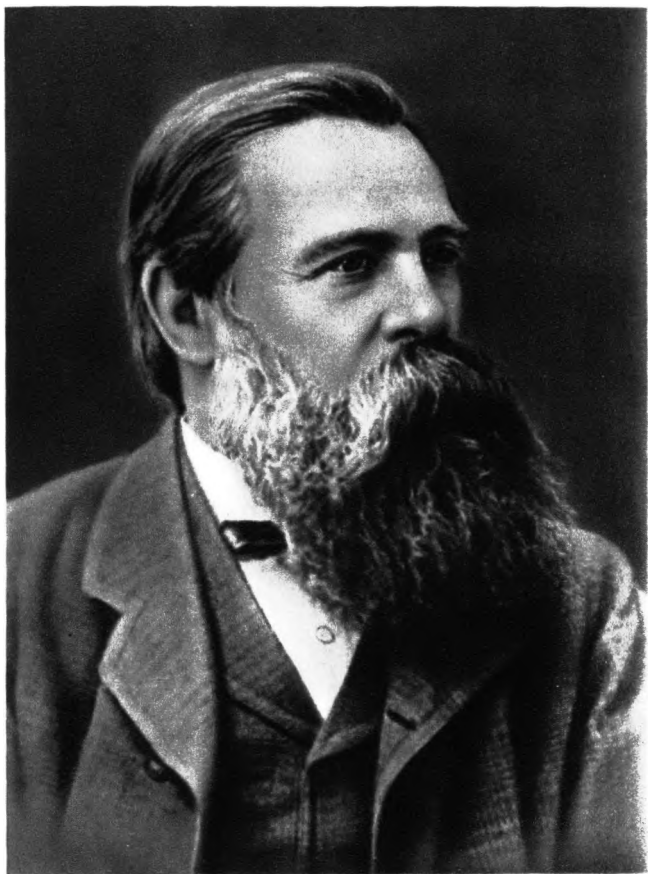
July-November, 1914

## FREDERICK ENGELS

*Oh, what a lamp of reason ceased to burn,  
Oh, what a heart then ceased to throb!*<sup>3</sup>

On August 5, 1895, Frederick Engels died in London. After his friend Karl Marx (who died in 1883), Engels was the most noteworthy scholar and teacher of the modern proletariat in all the civilized world. From the time that fate threw Karl Marx and Frederick Engels together, the life work of each of the two friends became the common cause of both. And so, to understand what Frederick Engels has done for the proletariat, one must have a clear idea of the significance of Marx's work and teaching for the development of the contemporary labour movement. Marx and Engels were the first to show that the working class and the demands of the working class are a necessary outcome of the present economic system, which together with the bourgeoisie inevitably creates and organizes the proletariat. They showed that it is not the well-meaning efforts of noble-minded individuals, but the class struggle of the organized proletariat that will deliver humanity from the evils which now oppress it. In their scientific works, Marx and Engels were the first to explain that Socialism is not the invention of dreamers, but the final aim and inevitable result of the development of the productive forces of modern society. All recorded history hitherto has been a history of class struggle, of the succession of the rule and victory of certain social classes over others. And this will continue until the foundations of class struggle and of class rule—





*F. Engels*

private property and anarchic social production—disappear. The interests of the proletariat demand the destruction of these foundations, and therefore the conscious class struggle of the organized workers must be directed against them. And every class struggle is a political struggle.

These views of Marx and Engels have now been adopted by all proletarians who are fighting for their emancipation. But when in the forties the two friends took part in the socialist literature and social movements of their time, such opinions were absolutely novel. At that time there were many people, talented and untalented, honest and dishonest, who while absorbed in the struggle for political freedom, in the struggle against the despotism of monarchs, police and priests, failed to observe the antagonism between the interests of the bourgeoisie and the interests of the proletariat. These people would not even admit the idea that the workers should act as an independent social force. On the other hand, there were many dreamers, some of them geniuses, who thought that it was only necessary to convince the rulers and the governing classes of the injustice of the contemporary social order, and it would then be easy to establish peace and general well-being on earth. They dreamt of Socialism without a struggle. Lastly, nearly all the Socialists of that time and the friends of the working class generally regarded the proletariat only as an *ulcer*, and observed with horror how this ulcer grew with the growth of industry. They all, therefore, were intent on how to stop the development of industry and of the proletariat, how to stop the "wheel of history." Far from sharing the general fear of the development of the proletariat, Marx and Engels placed all their hopes on the continued growth of the proletariat. The greater the number of proletarians, the greater would be their power as a revolutionary class, and the nearer and more possible would Socialism become.

The services rendered by Marx and Engels to the working class may be expressed in a few words thus: they taught the working class to know itself and be conscious of itself, and they substituted science for dreams.

That is why the name and life of Engels should be known to every worker. That is why in this collection of articles, the aim of which, as of all our publications, is to awaken class consciousness in the Russian workers, we must sketch the life and work of Frederick Engels, one of the two great teachers of the modern proletariat.

Engels was born in 1820 in Barmen, in the Rhine province of the kingdom of Prussia. His father was a manufacturer. In 1838, Engels, without having completed his studies at the gymnasium, was forced by family circumstances to enter one of the commercial houses of Bremen as a clerk. Commercial affairs did not prevent Engels from pursuing his scientific and political education. He came to hate autocracy and the tyranny of bureaucrats while still at the gymnasium. The study of philosophy led him further. At that time Hegel's teaching dominated German philosophy, and Engels became his follower. Although Hegel himself was an admirer of the autocratic Prussian state, in whose service he stood as a professor in the University of Berlin, Hegel's *teaching* was revolutionary. Hegel's faith in human reason and its rights, and the fundamental thesis of the Hegelian philosophy, namely, that the universe is subject to a constant process of change and development, was leading those of the disciples of the Berlin philosopher who refused to reconcile themselves to the existing state of affairs to the idea that the struggle against this state of affairs, the struggle against existing wrong and prevalent evil, is also rooted in the universal law of eternal development. If all things develop, if institutions keep giving place to other institutions, why should the autocracy of the Prussian

king or of the Russian tsar, why should the enrichment of an insignificant minority at the expense of the vast majority, or the domination of the bourgeoisie over the people, continue forever? Hegel's philosophy spoke of the development of the mind and of ideas; it was *idealistic*. From the development of the mind it deduced the development of nature, of man, and of human, social relations. Retaining Hegel's idea of the eternal process of development,\* Marx and Engels rejected the preconceived idealist view; turning to the facts of life, they saw that it was not the development of mind that explained the development of nature but that, on the contrary, the explanation of mind must be derived from nature, from matter. . . . Unlike Hegel and the other Hegelians, Marx and Engels were materialists. Regarding the world and humanity materialistically, they perceived that just as material causes lie at the basis of all the phenomena of nature, so the development of human society is conditioned by the development of material, productive forces. On the development of productive forces depend the relations which men enter into one with another in the production of the things required for the satisfaction of human needs. And in these relations lies the explanation of all the phenomena of social life, human aspirations, ideas and laws. The development of productive forces creates social relations based upon private property, but now we see that this same development of the productive forces deprives the majority of their property and concentrates it in the hands of an insignificant minority. It destroys property, the basis of the modern social order, it itself strives towards the very aim which the Socialists

\* Marx and Engels frequently pointed out that in their intellectual development they were very much indebted to the great German philosophers, particularly to Hegel. "Without German philosophy," Engels says, "there would have been no scientific Socialism."

have set themselves. All the Socialists have to do is to realize which of the social forces, owing to its position in modern society, is interested in bringing about Socialism, and to impart to this force the consciousness of its interests and of its historical mission. This force is the proletariat. Engels got to know it in England, in the centre of British industry, Manchester, where he settled in 1842, entering the service of a commercial house of which his father was a shareholder. Here Engels did not merely sit in the factory office but wandered about the slums in which the workers were cooped up. He saw their poverty and misery with his own eyes. But he did not confine himself to personal observations. He read all that had been revealed before him on the condition of the British working class and carefully studied all the official documents he could lay his hands on. The fruit of these studies and observations was the book which appeared in 1845: *The Condition of the Working Class in England*. We have already mentioned the chief service rendered by Engels as the author of *The Condition of the Working Class in England*. Many even before Engels had described the sufferings of the proletariat and had pointed to the necessity of helping it. Engels was the *first* to say that *not only* was the proletariat a suffering class, but that, in fact, the disgraceful economic condition of the proletariat was driving it irresistibly forward and compelling it to fight for its ultimate emancipation. And the fighting proletariat *would help itself*. The political movement of the working class would inevitably lead the workers to realize that their only salvation lay in Socialism. On the other hand, Socialism would become a force only when it became the aim of the *political* struggle of the working class. Such are the main ideas of Engels' book on the condition of the working class in England, ideas which have now been adopted by all thinking and fighting pro-

letarians, but which at that time were entirely new. These ideas were enunciated in a book which is written in an absorbing style and which is filled with most authentic and shocking pictures of the misery of the English proletariat. This book was a terrible indictment of capitalism and the bourgeoisie. It created a very profound impression. Engels' book began to be quoted everywhere as presenting the best picture of the condition of the modern proletariat. And, in fact, neither before 1845 nor after has there appeared so striking and truthful a picture of the misery of the working class.

It was not until he came to England that Engels became a Socialist. In Manchester he formed contacts with people active in the British labour movement at the time and began to write for English socialist publications. In 1844, while on his way back to Germany, he became acquainted in Paris with Marx, with whom he had already started a correspondence. In Paris, under the influence of the French Socialists and French life, Marx had also become a Socialist. Here the friends jointly wrote a book entitled *The Holy Family, or a Criticism of Critical Criticism*. This book, which appeared a year before *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, and the greater part of which was written by Marx, contains the foundations of revolutionary materialist Socialism, the main ideas of which we have expounded above. *The Holy Family* is a facetious nickname for the Bauer brothers, philosophers, and their followers. These gentlemen preached a criticism which stood above all reality, which stood above parties and politics, which rejected all practical activity, and which only "critically" contemplated the surrounding world and the events going on within it. These gentlemen, the Bauers, superciliously regarded the proletariat as an uncritical mass. Marx and Engels vigorously opposed this absurd and harmful trend. On behalf

of a real human personality—the worker, trampled down by the ruling classes and the state—they demanded, not contemplation, but a struggle for a better order of society. They, of course, regarded the proletariat as the power that was capable of waging this struggle and that was interested in it. Even before the appearance of *The Holy Family*, Engels had published in Marx's and Ruge's *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* the "Critical Essays in Political Economy," in which he examined the principal phenomena of the contemporary economic order from a socialist standpoint and concluded that they were necessary consequences of the rule of private property. Inter-course with Engels was undoubtedly a factor in Marx's decision to study political economy, a science in which his works have produced a veritable revolution.

From 1845 to 1847 Engels lived in Brussels and Paris, combining scientific pursuits with practical activities among the German workers in Brussels and Paris. Here Marx and Engels formed contact with the secret German Communist League, which commissioned them to expound the main principles of the Socialism they had worked out. Thus arose the famous *Manifesto of the Communist Party* of Marx and Engels, published in 1848. This little booklet is worth whole volumes: to this day its spirit inspires and motivates the organized and fighting proletariat of the entire civilized world.

The revolution of 1848, which broke out first in France and then spread to other countries of Western Europe, brought Marx and Engels back to their native country. Here, in Rhenish Prussia, they took charge of the democratic *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* published in Cologne. The two friends were the heart and soul of all revolutionary-democratic aspirations in Rhenish Prussia. They defended the interests of the people and of freedom against the reactionary forces to the last ditch. The reactionary

forces, as we know, gained the upper hand. The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* was suppressed. Marx, who during his exile had lost his Prussian citizenship, was deported; but Engels took part in the armed popular uprising, fought for liberty in three battles, and after the defeat of the rebels fled, via Switzerland, to London.

There Marx also settled. Engels soon became a clerk once more, and later a shareholder, in the Manchester commercial house in which he had worked in the forties. Until 1870 he lived in Manchester, while Marx lived in London, which, however, did not prevent them maintaining a most lively intellectual intercourse: they corresponded almost daily. In this correspondence the two friends exchanged views and knowledge and continued to collaborate in the working out of scientific Socialism. In 1870 Engels moved to London, and their common intellectual life, full of strenuous labour, continued until 1883, when Marx died. Its fruit was, on Marx's side, *Capital*, the greatest work on political economy of our age, and on Engels' side—a number of works, large and small. Marx worked on the analysis of the complex phenomena of capitalist economy. Engels, in simply written and frequently polemical works, dealt with the more general scientific problems and with diverse phenomena of the past and present in the spirit of the materialist conception of history and Marx's economic theory. Of these works of Engels we shall mention: the polemical work against Dühring (in which are analyzed highly important problems in the domain of philosophy, natural science and the social sciences),\* *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (translated into Russian, pub-

\* This is a wonderfully rich and instructive book. Unfortunately, only a small portion of it, containing an historical outline of the development of Socialism, has been translated into Russian (*The Development of Scientific Socialism*, 2nd ed., Geneva, 1892).



lished in St. Petersburg, 3rd ed., 1895), *Ludwig Feuerbach* (Russian translation with notes by G. Plekhanov, Geneva, 1892), an article on the foreign policy of the Russian government (translated into Russian in the Geneva *Sotsial-Demokrat*, Nos. 1 and 2), some remarkable articles on the housing question, and finally, two small but very valuable articles on the economic development of Russia (*Frederick Engels on Russia*, translated into Russian by Vera Zasulich, Geneva, 1894). Marx died before he could complete his vast work on capital. In the rough, however, it was already finished, and after the death of his friend, Engels undertook the onerous labour of preparing and publishing the second and third volumes of *Capital*. He published Volume II in 1885 and Volume III in 1894 (his death prevented the preparation of Volume IV). These two volumes entailed a vast amount of labour. Adler, the Austrian Social-Democrat, has rightly remarked that by publishing Volumes II and III of *Capital* Engels erected a majestic monument to the genius who had been his friend, a monument on which, without intending it, he indelibly carved his own name. And, indeed, these two volumes of *Capital* are the work of two men: Marx and Engels. Ancient stories contain many moving instances of friendship. The European proletariat may say that its science was created by two scholars and fighters, whose relations to each other surpassed the most moving stories of human friendship among the ancients. Engels always—and, on the whole, justly—placed himself after Marx. "In Marx's lifetime," he wrote to an old friend, "I played second fiddle." His love for the living Marx, and his reverence for the memory of the dead Marx were limitless. In this stern fighter and strict thinker beat a deeply loving heart.

After the movement of 1848-49, Marx and Engels in exile did not occupy themselves with science alone. In

1864 Marx founded the International Workingmen's Association, and led this society for a whole decade. Engels also took an active part in its affairs. The work of the International Association, which, in accordance with Marx's idea, united proletarians of all countries, was of tremendous significance in the development of the working-class movement. But even after the International Association came to an end in the seventies the unifying role of Marx and Engels did not cease. On the contrary, it may be said that their importance as spiritual leaders of the labour movement steadily grew, inasmuch as the movement itself grew uninterruptedly. After the death of Marx, Engels continued alone to be the counsellor and leader of the European Socialists. His advice and directions were sought for equally by the German Socialists, who, despite government persecution, grew rapidly and steadily in strength, and by representatives of backward countries, such as Spaniards, Rumanians and Russians, who were obliged to ponder over and weigh their first steps. They all drew on the rich store of knowledge and experience of the aged Engels.

Marx and Engels, who both knew Russian and read Russian books, took a lively interest in Russia, followed the Russian revolutionary movement with sympathy and maintained contact with Russian revolutionaries. They were both *democrats* before they became Socialists, and the democratic feeling of *hatred* for political despotism was exceedingly strong in them. This direct political feeling, combined with a profound theoretical understanding of the connection between political despotism and economic oppression, as well as their rich experience of life, made Marx and Engels uncommonly responsive precisely from the *political* standpoint. That is why the heroic struggle of the small handful of Russian revolutionaries against the mighty tsarist government evoked a most

sympathetic echo in the hearts of these tried revolutionaries. On the other hand, the tendency to turn away from the most immediate and important task of the Russian Socialists, namely, the conquest of political freedom, for the sake of illusory economic advantages, naturally appeared suspicious in their eyes and was even regarded by them as a direct betrayal of the great cause of the social revolution. "The emancipation of the proletariat must be the work of the proletariat itself"—Marx and Engels constantly taught. But in order to fight for its economic emancipation, the proletariat must win for itself certain *political* rights. Moreover, Marx and Engels clearly saw that a political revolution in Russia would be of tremendous significance to the West-European labour movement as well. Autocratic Russia had always been a bulwark of European reaction in general. The extraordinarily favourable international position enjoyed by Russia as a result of the war of 1870, which for a long time sowed discord between Germany and France, of course only enhanced the importance of autocratic Russia as a reactionary force. Only a free Russia, a Russia that had no need either to oppress the Poles, Finns, Germans, Armenians or any other small nations, or constantly to incite France and Germany against each other, would enable modern Europe to free itself from the burden of war, would weaken all the reactionary elements in Europe and would increase the power of the European working class. Engels therefore ardently desired the establishment of political freedom in Russia for the sake of the progress of the labour movement in the West as well. In him the Russian revolutionaries have lost their best friend.

May the memory of Frederick Engels, the great champion and teacher of the proletariat, live forever!

Autumn, 1895

## THE MARX-ENGELS CORRESPONDENCE

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

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

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

opportunism. Unfortunately, the eclectic attitude to Marx's ideological struggle against many of his opponents is becoming increasingly widespread among present-day German Social-Democrats.

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

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

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

There unfolds before the reader a strikingly vivid picture of the history of the labour movement all over the world—at its most important junctures and in its most essential points. Even more valuable is the history of the *politics* of the working class. On the most diverse occasions, in various countries of the Old World and the

New, and at diverse historical moments, Marx and Engels discuss the most important principles of the *presentation* of the *political* tasks of the working class. And the period covered by the correspondence was a period in which the working class separated off from bourgeois democracy, a period in which an independent working-class movement arose, a period in which the fundamental principles of proletarian tactics and policy were defined. The more we have occasion in our day to observe how the labour movement in various countries suffers from opportunism in consequence of the stagnation and decay of the bourgeoisie, in consequence of the attention of the labour leaders being engrossed in the trivialities of the day, and so on—the more valuable becomes the wealth of material contained in the correspondence, displaying as it does a most profound comprehension of the *basic* transformative aims of the proletariat, and providing an unusually flexible definition of the given tasks of tactics from the standpoint of these revolutionary aims, without making the slightest concession to opportunism or revolutionary phrasemongering.

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

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

## I. GENERAL REVIEW

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

While he was still in Barmen—where he was delayed a little longer by a love affair—Engels gave way to his father and worked for about two weeks in the factory office (his father was a manufacturer). "Huckstering is horrible," he writes to Marx. "Barmen is horrible, the way they spend their time is horrible, and it is most horrible of all to remain, not merely a bourgeois, but a manufacturer, a bourgeois who actively opposes the proletariat." He consoled himself, Engels goes on to say, by working on his book on the condition of the working class (this book appeared, as is known, in 1845 and is one of the best works of world socialist literature). "One

can while being a Communist remain in outward conditions a bourgeois and a huckstering beast as long as one does not write, but to carry on a wide communist propaganda and at the same time engage in huckstering and industry will not work. I am leaving. Add to this the drowsy life of a thoroughly Christian-Prussian family—I cannot stand it any longer. I might in the end become a German philistine and introduce philistinism into Communism.” Thus wrote the young Engels. After the Revolution of 1848 the exigencies of life obliged him to return to his father’s office and to become a “huckstering beast” for many long years. But he was able to stand firm and to create for himself, not Christian-Prussian surroundings, but entirely different, comradesly surroundings, and to become for the rest of his life a relentless foe of the “introduction of philistinism into Communism.”

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

The general spirit of opposition found expression in the fact that everybody declared himself to be a Communist. “The Police Commissary in Barmen is a Communist,” Engels writes to Marx. He was in Cologne . . . Düsseldorf . . . Elberfeld—and wherever you turn you stumble over Communists! “One ardent Communist, a cartoonist . . . named Seel, is going to Paris in two months. I shall give him your address; you will all like him for his enthusiastic nature, his love of music, and he could be used as a cartoonist.”



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

This is literally what Engels wrote. Everybody in Germany at that time was Communist, except the proletariat. Communism was a form of expression of the opposition sentiments of all, and chiefly of the bourgeoisie. "The most stupid, the most lazy and most philistine people, whom nothing in the world interested, are almost becoming enthusiastic for Communism." The chief preachers of Communism at that time were people of the type of our Narodniks, "Socialist-Revolutionaries," "Popularist Socialists," and so forth, that is to say, well-meaning bourgeois who were more or less furious with the government.

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

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

His attention was chiefly focussed on the most important and most widespread socialist doctrine of the time—Proudhonism. And even *before* the publication of Proudhon's *Philosophy of Poverty* (October 1846; Marx's

reply—the famous book, *The Poverty of Philosophy*—appeared in 1847), Engels, with ruthless sarcasm and remarkable profundity, criticized Proudhon's basic ideas, which were then being particularly advocated by the German Socialist Grün. His excellent knowledge of English (which Marx mastered much later) and of English literature enabled Engels at once (letter of September 16, 1846) to point to the example of the bankruptcy of the notorious Proudhonist "labour-exchange bazaars" in England. Proudhon *disgraces* Socialism, Engels exclaims indignantly—it follows from Proudhon that the workers must *buy out* capital.

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

"The Proudhon Associations' scheme," writes Engels, "was discussed for three evenings. At first I had nearly the whole clique against me. . . . The chief point was to prove the necessity for revolution by force." (October 23, 1846.) In the end he got furious, he writes, and pressed his opponents so that they were obliged to make an open attack on Communism. He demanded a vote on whether they were Communists or not. This greatly horrified the Grünites who began to argue that they met together to discuss "the good of mankind" and that they must know what Communism *really was*. Engels gave them an extremely simple definition so as to permit no

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

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

A year later, in his letter of November 23, 1847, Engels informed Marx that he had prepared a draft of the *Communist Manifesto*, incidentally declaring himself opposed to the catechism form originally proposed. "I begin: What is Communism?" writes Engels. "And then straight to the proletariat—history of its origin, difference from former workers, development of the contradiction between proletariat and bourgeoisie, crises, results. . . . In conclusion the Party policy of the Communists."

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

End of 1913.

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\* Here the article breaks off.—Ed.

## SPEECH AT THE UNVEILING OF A MEMORIAL TO MARX AND ENGELS

NOVEMBER 7, 1918

We are unveiling a memorial to the leaders of the world workers' revolution, Marx and Engels.

For ages and ages humanity has suffered and languished under the yoke of an insignificant handful of exploiters, who maltreated millions of toilers. But whereas the exploiters of an earlier period—the landlords—robbed and oppressed the peasant serfs, who were disunited, scattered and ignorant, the exploiters of the new period, the capitalists, saw facing them among the down-trodden masses the vanguard of these masses, the urban, factory, industrial workers. They were united by the factory, they were enlightened by urban life, they were steeled by the common strike struggle and by revolutionary action.

It is the great and historic merit of Marx and Engels that they proved by scientific analysis the inevitability of the collapse of capitalism and its transition to Communism, under which there will be no more exploitation of man by man.

It is the great and historic merit of Marx and Engels that they indicated to the proletarians of all countries their role, their task, their mission, namely, to be the first to rise in the revolutionary struggle against capital and to rally around themselves in this struggle *all* the toilers and exploited.

We are living in happy times, when this prophesy of the great Socialists is beginning to be realized. We see the dawn of the international socialist revolution of the proletariat breaking in a number of countries. The unspeakable horrors of the imperialist butchery of nations are everywhere evoking a heroic rise of the oppressed masses, and are lending them tenfold strength in the struggle for emancipation.

Let the memorials to Marx and Engels again and again remind the millions of workers and peasants that we are not alone in our struggle. Side by side with us the workers of more advanced countries are rising. Stern battles still await them and us. In common struggle the yoke of capital will be broken, and Socialism will be finally won!

## THE THREE SOURCES AND THREE COMPONENT PARTS OF MARXISM

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

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

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

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

## I

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

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

But Marx did not stop at the materialism of the eighteenth century: he advanced philosophy. He enriched

it with the acquisitions of German classical philosophy, especially of the Hegelian system, which in its turn led to the materialism of Feuerbach. The chief of these acquisitions is *dialectics*, i. e., the doctrine of development in its fullest and deepest form, free of one-sidedness, the doctrine of the relativity of human knowledge, which provides us with a reflection of eternally developing matter. The latest discoveries of natural science—radium, electrons, the transmutation of elements—have remarkably confirmed Marx's dialectical materialism, despite the teachings of the bourgeois philosophers with their "new" reversion to old and rotten idealism.

Deepening and developing philosophical materialism, Marx completed it, extended its knowledge of nature to the knowledge of *human society*. Marx's *historical materialism* was the greatest achievement of scientific thought. The chaos and arbitrariness that had previously reigned in the views on history and politics gave way to a strikingly integral and harmonious scientific theory, which shows how, in consequence of the growth of productive forces, out of one system of social life another and higher system develops—how capitalism, for instance, grows out of feudalism.

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

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



## II

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

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

Where the bourgeois economists saw a relation between things (the exchange of one commodity for another) Marx revealed a *relation between men*. The exchange of commodities expresses the tie between individual producers through the market. *Money* signifies that this tie is becoming closer and closer, inseparably binding the entire economic life of the individual producers into one whole. *Capital* signifies a further development of this tie: man's labour power becomes a commodity. The wage worker sells his labour power to the owner of the land, factories and instruments of labour. The worker spends one part of the day covering the cost of maintaining himself and his family (wages), while the other part of the day the worker toils without remuneration, creating *surplus value* for the capitalist, the source of profit, the source of the wealth of the capitalist class.

The doctrine of surplus value is the cornerstone of Marx's economic theory.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## III

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

March 1913

## THE HISTORICAL DESTINY OF THE DOCTRINE OF KARL MARX

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

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

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

### I

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

The Revolution of 1848 struck a fatal blow at all these vociferous, motley and ostentatious forms of *pre-Marxian* Socialism. In all countries the revolution revealed the various classes of society *in action*. The shooting down of the workers by the republican bourgeoisie in the June days of 1848 in Paris finally established the fact that the proletariat *alone* was socialist by nature. The liberal bourgeoisie feared the independence of this class a hundred times more than it did any kind of reaction. The craven liberals grovelled before reaction. The peasantry were content with the abolition of the relics of feudalism and joined the supporters of order, only wavering at times between *workers' democracy* and *bourgeois liberalism*. All doctrines of *nonclass* Socialism and *nonclass* politics proved to be sheer nonsense.

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

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

## II

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

The West entered a phase of "peaceful" preparation for the future era of change. Socialist parties, basically proletarian, were formed everywhere and learned to make use of bourgeois parliamentarism and to create their own daily press, their educational institutions, their trade unions and their cooperative societies. The Marxian doctrine gained a complete victory and *spread*. The process of selection and accumulation of the forces of the proletariat and of the preparation of the proletariat for the impending battles made slow but steady progress.

The dialectics of history were such that the theoretical victory of Marxism obliged its enemies to *disguise themselves* as Marxists. Liberalism, rotten to the core, tried to revitalize itself in the form of socialist *opportunism*. The period of the preparation of forces for great battles the opportunists interpreted as renunciation of these battles. Improvement of the conditions of the slaves to facilitate the struggle against wage slavery they interpreted as the selling, by the slaves, of their right to liberty for a mess of pottage. They cravenly preached "social peace" (i.e., peace with the slaveowners), the renunciation of the class struggle, and so forth. They had many adherents among socialist members of parliament, various officials of the working-class movement, and the "sympathizer" intellectuals.

### III

But the opportunists had scarcely congratulated themselves on the inauguration of "social peace" and on the fact that storms were needless under "democracy" when a new source of great world storms opened up in Asia. The Russian Revolution was followed by the Turkish, the Persian and the Chinese revolutions. It is in this era of storms and their "repercussion" in Europe that we are

now living. Whatever may be the fate of the great Chinese Republic, against which the various "civilized" hyenas are now gnashing their teeth, no power on earth can restore the old serfdom in Asia, or wipe out the heroic democracy of the masses of the people in the Asiatic and semi-Asiatic countries.

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

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

The Asiatic revolutions have revealed the same spinelessness and baseness of liberalism, the same exceptional importance of the independence of the democratic masses, and the same sharp demarcation between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie of all kinds. After the experience both of Europe and Asia, whoever now speaks of *nonclass* politics and of *nonclass* Socialism simply deserves to be put in a cage and exhibited alongside of the Australian kangaroo.

After Asia, Europe has also begun to stir, although not in the Asiatic way. The "peaceful" period of 1872-1904 has passed completely, never to return. The high cost of living and the oppression of the trusts is leading to an unprecedented intensification of the economic struggle, which has aroused even the British workers, who have been most corrupted by liberalism. Before our eyes a political crisis is brewing even in that extreme "diehard," bourgeois-Junker country, Germany. Feverish arming and the policy of imperialism are turning modern Europe



into a "social peace" which is more like a barrel of gunpowder than anything else. And at the same time the decay of *all* the bourgeois parties and the maturing of the proletariat are steadily progressing.

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

March 1913

## “LEFT-WING” COMMUNISM, AN INFANTILE DISORDER

(Excerpt)

### II

#### ONE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL CONDITIONS FOR THE BOLSHEVIKS' SUCCESS

Certainly, almost everyone now realizes that the Bolshheviks could not have maintained themselves in power for two-and-a-half months, let alone two-and-a-half years, unless the strictest, truly iron discipline had prevailed in our Party, and unless the latter had been rendered the fullest and unreserved support of the whole mass of the working class, that is, of all its thinking, honest, self-sacrificing and influential elements who are capable of leading or of carrying with them the backward strata.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is a most determined and most ruthless war waged by the new class against a *more powerful* enemy, the bourgeoisie, whose resistance is increased *tenfold* by its overthrow (even if only in one country), and whose power lies not only in the strength of international capital, in the strength and durability of the international connections of the bourgeoisie, but also in the *force of habit*, in the strength of *small production*. For, unfortunately, small production is still very, very widespread in the world, and small production *engenders* capitalism and the bourgeoisie continu-

ously, daily, hourly, spontaneously, and on a mass scale. For all these reasons the dictatorship of the proletariat is essential, and victory over the bourgeoisie is impossible without a long, stubborn and desperate war of life and death, a war demanding perseverance, discipline, firmness, indomitableness and unity of will.

I repeat, the experience of the victorious dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia has clearly shown even to those who are unable to think, or who have not had occasion to ponder over this question, that absolute centralization and the strictest discipline of the proletariat constitute one of the fundamental conditions for victory over the bourgeoisie.

This is often discussed. But not nearly enough thought is given to what it means, and under what conditions it is possible. Would it not be better if greetings in honour of Soviet power and the Bolsheviks were *more frequently* attended by a *profound analysis* of the reasons *why* the Bolsheviks were able to build up the discipline the revolutionary proletariat needs?

As a trend of political thought and as a political party, Bolshevism exists since 1903. Only the history of Bolshevism during the *whole* period of its existence can satisfactorily explain why it was able to build up and to maintain under most difficult conditions the iron discipline needed for the victory of the proletariat.

And first of all the question arises: how is the discipline of the revolutionary party of the proletariat maintained? How is it tested? How is it reinforced? First, by the class consciousness of the proletarian vanguard and by its devotion to the revolution, by its perseverance, self-sacrifice and heroism. Secondly, by its ability to link itself with, to keep in close touch with, and to a certain extent, if you like, to merge with the broadest masses of the toilers—primarily with the proletariat, *but*

*also with the nonproletarian toiling masses.* Thirdly, by the correctness of the political leadership exercised by this vanguard, by the correctness of its political strategy and tactics, provided that the broadest masses have been convinced *by their own experience* that they are correct. Without these conditions, discipline in a revolutionary party that is really capable of being the party of the advanced class, whose mission it is to overthrow the bourgeoisie and transform the whole of society, cannot be achieved. Without these conditions, all attempts to establish discipline inevitably fall flat and end in phrasemongering and grimacing. On the other hand, these conditions cannot arise all at once. They are created only by prolonged effort and hard-won experience. Their creation is facilitated by correct revolutionary theory, which, in its turn, is not a dogma, but assumes final shape only in close connection with the practical activity of a truly mass and truly revolutionary movement.

That Bolshevism was able, in 1917-20, under unprecedentedly difficult conditions, to build up and successfully maintain the strictest centralization and iron discipline was simply due to a number of historical peculiarities of Russia.

On the one hand, Bolshevism arose in 1903 on the very firm foundation of the theory of Marxism. And the correctness of this—and only this—revolutionary theory has been proved not only by world experience throughout the nineteenth century, but particularly by the experience of the wanderings and vacillations, the mistakes and disappointments of revolutionary thought in Russia. For nearly half a century—approximately from the forties to the nineties—advanced thought in Russia, oppressed by an unparalleled, savage and reactionary tsardom, eagerly sought for a correct revolutionary theory and followed with astonishing diligence and thoroughness each and

every "last word" in this realm in Europe and America. Russia achieved Marxism, the only correct revolutionary theory, through veritable *suffering*, through half a century of unprecedented torment and sacrifice, of unprecedented revolutionary heroism, incredible energy, devoted searching, study, practical trial, disappointment, verification and comparison with European experience. Thanks to the enforced emigration caused by tsardom, revolutionary Russia in the second half of the nineteenth century possessed such a wealth of international connections and such excellent information on world forms and theories of the revolutionary movement as no other country in the world.

On the other hand, having arisen on this granite theoretical foundation, Bolshevism passed through fifteen years (1903-17) of practical history which in wealth of experience has no equal anywhere else in the world. For no other country during these fifteen years had anything even approximating to this revolutionary experience, this rapid and varied succession of different forms of the movement—legal and illegal, peaceful and stormy, underground and open, circles and mass movements, parliamentary and terrorist. In no other country was there concentrated during so short a time such a wealth of forms, shades, and methods of struggle of *all* classes of modern society, and moreover, a struggle which, owing to the backwardness of the country and the severity of the tsarist yoke, matured with exceptional rapidity and assimilated most eagerly and successfully the appropriate "last word" of American and European political experience.

April-May 1920

## WHAT THE "FRIENDS OF THE PEOPLE" ARE AND HOW THEY FIGHT THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATS

(A REPLY TO ARTICLES IN THE "RUSSKOYE BOGATSTVO"  
OPPOSING THE MARXISTS)

*(Excerpts)*

Generally speaking, the Russian Communists, the Russian adherents of Marxism, ought more than any others to call themselves **SOCIAL-DEMOCRATS**, and in their activities they must never forget the enormous importance of **DEMOCRACY**.\*

In Russia, the remnants of medieval, semifeudal institutions are still so very strong (as compared with Western Europe), they impose such a heavy yoke upon the proletariat and the people generally, retarding the growth of political thought in all ranks and classes, that one cannot refrain from insisting how tremendously important it is for the workers to combat all feudal institutions, absolutism, the social estates system and the bureaucracy. It must be explained to the worker in the greatest detail what a terrible reactionary force these institutions are, how they intensify the oppression of labour by capital,

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\* This is a very important point. Plekhanov is quite right when he says that our revolutionaries have "two enemies: old prejudices that have not yet been entirely eradicated, on the one hand, and a narrow conception of the new program, on the other." See Appendix III (p. 106 of this book.—*Ed.*).

how they degrade the working people, how they maintain capital in its medieval forms, which, while not in the least outdone by the modern, industrial forms in the exploitation of labour, supplement this exploitation by placing enormous difficulties in the way of the struggle for emancipation. The workers must know that unless these pillars of reaction\* are overthrown, it will be utterly impossible for them to wage a successful struggle against the bourgeoisie, because as long as they exist the Russian rural proletariat, whose support is an essential condition for the victory of the working class, will never cease to be downtrodden and cowed, capable only of sullen desperation and not of intelligent and persistent protest and struggle. And therefore it is the direct duty of the working class to fight side by side with the radical democracy against absolutism and the reactionary estates and institutions—and the Social-Democrats must impress this upon the workers, while not for a moment ceasing to impress upon them also that the struggle against all these institutions is necessary only as a means of facilitating the struggle against the bourgeoisie, that the achievement of gen-

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\* A particularly imposing reactionary institution, one to which our revolutionaries have paid relatively little attention, is our *bureaucracy*, which de facto rules the Russian state. Its ranks filled mainly by commoners, this bureaucracy is both in origin and in the purpose and character of its activities profoundly bourgeois, but absolutism and the enormous political privileges of the landed nobility have lent it particularly pernicious qualities. It is ever a weathercock which regards it as its supreme task to reconcile the interests of the landlord and the bourgeois. It is a Judas using his feudal sympathies and connections to fool the workers and peasants and, on the pretext of "protecting the economically weak" and acting as their "guardian" against the kulak and usurer, resorts to measures which reduce the toilers to the status of a "base rabble," completely delivering them into the hands of the feudal landlords and making them all the more defenceless against the bourgeoisie. It is a most dangerous hypocrite—having learned from the experience of the West-European masters of reaction, it skilfully conceals its Arakcheyev<sup>4</sup> designs behind the fig leaf of phrases about loving the people.

eral democratic demands is necessary for the worker only to clear the road to victory over the chief enemy of the working people, over an institution which is purely democratic by nature, viz., *capital*, which here in Russia is particularly inclined to sacrifice its democracy and to enter into alliance with the reactionaries in order to suppress the workers and to still further retard the rise of a working-class movement.

What has been said is, I think, sufficient to define the attitude of the Social-Democrats towards absolutism and political liberty, and also towards the trend, which has been growing particularly strong of late, that aims to "amalgamate" and "unite" all the revolutionary groups for the purpose of winning political liberty.

This trend is rather peculiar and characteristic.

It is peculiar because the proposal for "unity" does not come from a definite group, or groups, with definite programs which coincide in one point or another. If it did, the question of unity could be decided in each separate case; it would be a concrete question that could be decided by the representatives of the uniting groups. Then there could be no special "amalgamation" trend. But there is such a trend, and it originates simply with people who have cut adrift from the old, and have not moored to anything new. The theory on which the fighters against absolutism have hitherto based themselves is obviously crumbling, and this is also destroying the conditions of solidarity and organization which are essential for the struggle. And so, these "amalgamators" and "uniters" seem to think that the easiest way to create such a theory is to reduce it all to a protest against absolutism and a demand for political liberty, while evading all other questions, socialist and nonsocialist. It goes without saying that this naive fallacy will inevitably be refuted at the very first attempts at such union.



But what makes this "amalgamation" trend characteristic is that it expresses one of the latest stages in that process of transformation of militant, revolutionary Narodism into political radical democracy which I have tried to outline above. A durable amalgamation of all the non-Social-Democratic revolutionary groups under the banner mentioned will be possible only when a durable program of *democratic* demands has been drawn up that will put an end to the prejudices of the old Russian exceptionalism. Of course, the Social-Democrats believe that the formation of such a democratic party would be a useful step forward; and their work of opposing Narodism should further it, should further the eradication of all prejudices and myths, the grouping of all Socialists under the banner of Marxism and the formation of a democratic party by the other groups.

The Social-Democrats could not, of course, "amalgamate" with such a party, for they consider it necessary for the workers to organize into an independent workers' party; but the workers would most strongly support any struggle the democrats put up against reactionary institutions.

The degeneration of Narodism into the most ordinary petty-bourgeois radical theory—of which (degeneration) the "friends of the people" furnish such striking testimony—shows how serious is the mistake committed by those who call upon the workers to fight absolutism without at the same time explaining to them the antagonistic character of our social relations—by virtue of which the ideologists of the bourgeoisie also stand for political liberty—without explaining to them the historical role of the Russian worker as the champion of the emancipation of all the toiling population.

The Social-Democrats are often accused of wanting to monopolize Marx's theory, whereas, it is argued, his

economic theory is accepted by all Socialists. But what, one asks, is the use of explaining to the workers the form of value, the nature of the bourgeois system and the revolutionary role of the proletariat, if here in Russia the exploitation of the toilers is generally and universally attributed not to the bourgeois organization of social economy, but, say, to land hunger, payments, or the tyranny of the administration?

What is the use of expounding the theory of the class struggle to the worker, if that theory cannot even explain his relation to the factory owner (capitalism in Russia is artificially implanted by the government), not to mention the mass of the "people," who do not belong to the fully-evolved class of factory workers?

How can one accept Marx's economic theory and its corollary—the revolutionary role of the proletariat as the organizer of Communism through the medium of capitalism—if one tries to find ways to Communism other than through capitalism and the proletariat it creates?

Obviously, to call upon the worker to fight for political liberty under such conditions would be equivalent to calling upon him to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for the progressive bourgeoisie. For it cannot be denied (it is significant that even the Narodniks and the Narodovoltsi<sup>5</sup> did not deny it) that political liberty will primarily serve the interests of the bourgeoisie and will not improve the conditions of the workers, but . . . only the conditions for their struggle . . . *against this very bourgeoisie*. I say this as against the Socialists who, while they do not accept the theory of the Social-Democrats, carry their agitation among the workers, having become convinced empirically that only among the latter are revolutionary elements to be found. The theory of these Socialists contradicts their practice, and they make the very

serious mistake of distracting the workers from their direct task of **ORGANIZING A SOCIALIST WORKERS' PARTY**.\*

This mistake arose naturally at a time when the class antagonisms of bourgeois society were as yet quite undeveloped, when they were held down by serfdom, when the latter gave rise to a unanimous protest and struggle on the part of the whole of the intelligentsia, which created the illusion that there was something peculiarly democratic about our intelligentsia, and that there was no profound gulf between the ideas of the liberals and those of the Socialists. Now, however, when economic development has advanced so far that even those who formerly denied that there was any soil for capitalism in Russia admit that it is precisely the capitalist path of development that we have entered, illusions on this score are no longer possible. The composition of the "intelligentsia" is coming to be just as clear as that of the society engaged in the production of material values: while the latter is ruled and governed by the capitalist, the "tone" of the former is set by the rapidly growing horde of careerists and bourgeois hirelings, an "intelligentsia" which is contented and satisfied, which is a stranger to all fantasy and which knows very well what it wants. Far from denying this, our radicals and liberals

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\* There are two ways of arriving at the conclusion that the worker must be roused to fight absolutism: *either* by regarding the worker as the sole champion of the socialist system, and political freedom, therefore, as one of the means of facilitating his struggle. That is the view of the Social-Democrats. *Or* by appealing to him simply as the man who suffers most from the present system, who has nothing more to lose and who can most determinedly take up the cudgels against absolutism. But that will mean compelling the worker to follow in the wake of the bourgeois radicals, who refuse to see the antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie behind the solidarity of the whole "people" against absolutism.

strongly emphasize it and strain themselves to prove how immoral it is, condemn it, strive to confound it, to shame it . . . and to destroy it. These naive efforts to make the bourgeois intelligentsia *ashamed* of being bourgeois are as ridiculous as the efforts of our petty-bourgeois economists to frighten our bourgeoisie (pleading the experience of "elder brothers") by warning them that they are making for the ruin of the people, the poverty, unemployment and starvation of the masses; this sitting in judgment on the bourgeoisie and its ideologists is reminiscent of the court which was held on the pike, and which sentenced it to be thrown into the river. Beyond these stand the liberal and radical "intelligentsia," who spout endlessly about progress, science, truth, the people, etc., and who love to lament the passing of the sixties, when there was no discord, depression, despondency and apathy, and when all hearts were fired by democracy.

With their characteristic simplicity, these gentlemen refuse to understand that the unanimity that then prevailed was due to the material conditions of the time, which can never return: serfdom oppressed all equally—the serf steward, who had saved up a bit of money and wanted to live in comfort; the thrifty muzhik, who hated the landlord because of the dues he had to pay him, and because he interfered in his business and tore him from his work; the proletarian domestic and the impoverished muzhik who was sold into bondage to the merchant; all suffered from serfdom: the merchant manufacturer, the worker, the kустar and the artisan. The only tie that linked all these people together was their hostility to serfdom; beyond that unanimity, the sharpest economic antagonisms began. How completely one must be lulled by sweet illusions to fail to perceive these antagonisms even today, when they have become so enormously developed, and to weep for the return of the times of unanimity, when the

realities of the situation demand struggle, demand that everyone who does not desire to be a **WILLING** or **UNWILLING** timeserver of the bourgeoisie shall take his stand on the side of the proletariat!

If you refuse to believe the florid talk about the "interests of the people" and try to delve deeper into the matter, you will find that you are dealing with the purest ideologists of the petty bourgeoisie, which dreams of improving, supporting and restoring its ("popular" in their jargon) husbandry by various innocent progressive measures, and which is totally incapable of understanding that, the relations of production being what they are, the only effect such progressive measures can have is to proletarianize the masses still more. We cannot but be grateful to the "friends of the people" for having done so much to reveal the class character of our intelligentsia and for thus having fortified the Marxists' theory that our small producers are petty bourgeois. They must inevitably hasten the dissipation of the old illusions and myths that have so long confused the minds of the Russian Socialists. The "friends of the people" have so mauled, vulgarized and soiled these theories that the Russian Socialists who held them are confronted with the inexorable dilemma—either to revise them, or to abandon them altogether and leave them to the exclusive use of the gentlemen who with smug solemnity announce *urbi et orbi* that the rich peasants are buying improved implements, and who with serious mien assure us that we must welcome people who have grown weary of sitting around card tables. And in this strain they talk about a "popular system" and the "intelligentsia"—talk, not only with a serious air, but in pretentious, pompous phrases about broad ideals, about an ideal treatment of the problems of life! . . .

The socialist intelligentsia can expect to perform fruit-

ful work only when it abandons its illusions and begins to seek support in the actual, and not the desired development of Russia, in the actual, and not the possible social-economic relations. Moreover, its **THEORETICAL** work must be directed towards *the concrete study of all forms of economic antagonism in Russia, the study of their connections and sequence of development; it must disclose these antagonisms wherever they have been concealed by political history, by the peculiarities of legal systems or by established theoretical prejudice.* It must present an *integral picture of our conditions as a definite system of relations of production, it must show the necessity of the exploitation and expropriation of the toilers under this system, and must point the way out of this system as indicated by economic development.*

This theory, based on a detailed study of Russian history and realities, must furnish an answer to the needs of the proletariat—and if it satisfies the requirements of science, then every awakening of the protesting thought of the proletariat will inevitably guide this thought into the channels of Social-Democracy. The farther the building up of this theory advances, the more rapidly will Social-Democracy grow; for even the most artful guardians of the present system cannot prevent the awakening of the thought of the proletariat, because this system itself necessarily and inevitably leads to the intensified expropriation of the producers, to the continuous growth of the proletariat and of its reserve army—and this simultaneously with the progress of social wealth, the enormous growth of productive forces, and the socialization of labour by capitalism. Although a great deal has still to be done to build up this theory, the accomplishment of this task by the Socialists is guaranteed by the spread among them of materialism, the only scientific method, a method which demands that every program shall be a precise for-

mulation of the actual process; it is guaranteed by the success of Social-Democracy, which has adopted these ideas—a success which has so stirred up our liberals and democrats that, as a certain Marxist puts it, their magazines have ceased to be dull.

In thus emphasizing the necessity, importance and immensity of the theoretical work of the Social-Democrats, I have not the least desire to suggest that this work must take precedence over **PRACTICAL** work\*—still less that the latter be postponed until the former is completed. Only the admirers of the “subjective method in sociology,” or the followers of utopian Socialism, could arrive at such a conclusion. Of course, if it is presumed that the task of Socialists is to seek “different” (from the actual) “paths of development” for the country, then, naturally, practical work becomes possible only when philosophical geniuses discover and indicate these “different paths”; and the discovery and indication of these paths will, in turn, mark the close of theoretical work, and the beginning of the work of those who are to direct the “fatherland” along the “newly-discovered” “different paths.” The position is altogether different when the task of the Socialists is understood to mean that they must be the ideological leaders of the proletariat in its actual struggle against actual and real enemies who stand in the *actual* path of social and economic development. In these circumstances, theoretical and practical work merge into one, which the veteran German Social-Democrat, Liebknecht, aptly described as:

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\* On the contrary, the practical work of propaganda and agitation must always take precedence, because: 1) theoretical work only provides replies to the problems which practical work raises, and 2) the Social-Democrats, for reasons over which they have no control, are too often compelled to confine themselves to theoretical work not to value highly every moment when practical work becomes possible.

Studieren, Propagandieren, Organisieren.\*

It is impossible to be an ideological leader without performing the above-mentioned theoretical work, just as it is impossible to be an ideological leader without directing this work to meet the requirements of the cause, and without propagating the results of this theory among the workers and helping them to organize.

Presenting the task in this way will guard Social-Democracy against the defects of dogmatism and sectarianism from which socialist groups so often suffer.

There can be no dogmatism where the supreme and sole criterion of a doctrine is whether or not it conforms to the actual process of social and economic development; there can be no sectarianism when the task undertaken is to assist the organizing of the proletariat, and when, therefore, the role of the "intelligentsia" is to make special leaders from among the intelligentsia unnecessary.

Hence, notwithstanding the differences of opinion that exist among Marxists on various theoretical questions, the methods of their political activity have remained unchanged ever since the group arose.

The political activities of the Social-Democrats consist in assisting the development and organization of the working-class movement in Russia, in transforming it from its present state of sporadic attempts at protests, "riots" and strikes which lack a guiding idea, into an organized struggle of the **W H O L E** Russian working **C L A S S** directed against the bourgeois regime and striving for the expropriation of the expropriators and the abolition of the social system which is based on the oppression of the working people. Underlying these activities is the common conviction of all Marxists that the Russian worker is the sole

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\* Study, propaganda, organization.—Tr.



and natural representative of the whole toiling and exploited population of Russia.\*

He is their natural representative because the exploitation of the toilers in Russia is *everywhere capitalistic in nature*, if we leave out of account the moribund remnants of serf economy; only the exploitation of the mass of producers is on a small scale, scattered and undeveloped, whereas the exploitation of the factory proletariat is on a large scale, socialized and concentrated. In the former case, exploitation is still enmeshed by medieval forms, by various political, legal and social trappings, tricks and devices, which hinder the toiler and his ideologist in perceiving the essence of the system which oppresses the toiler, and the way out of this system. In the latter case, on the contrary, exploitation is fully developed and emerges in its pure form, without any confusing minutiae. The worker can no longer fail to see that it is *capital* that is oppressing him, and that his struggle must be waged against the bourgeois *class*. And this struggle, which is a struggle for the satisfaction of his immediate economic needs, for the improvement of his material conditions, inevitably demands that the workers organize, and inevitably becomes a war not against individuals, but against a *class*, the class which oppresses and crushes the toilers not only in the factories, but everywhere. That is why the factory worker is none other than the foremost representative of the whole exploited population. And in order that he may fulfil his function of representative in an organized and sustained struggle, it is not at all necessary to enthuse him with "perspectives"; all that is needed is *to make him understand his position*, to make him un-

\* The man of the future in Russia is the muzhik—thought the representatives of peasant Socialism, the Narodniks in the broadest sense of the term. The man of the future in Russia is the worker—think the Social-Democrats. That is how the view of the Marxists was formulated in a certain manuscript.

derstand the political and economic structure of the system that oppresses him and the necessity and inevitability of class antagonisms under this system. The position of the factory worker in the general system of capitalist relations makes him the sole fighter for the emancipation of the working class, for only the higher stage of development of capitalism, large-scale machine industry, creates the material conditions and the social forces necessary for this struggle. In all other places, where the forms of development of capitalism are low, these material conditions are absent; production is scattered among thousands of tiny enterprises (and they do not cease to be scattered *enterprises* even under the most equalitarian forms of communal landownership), the exploited for the most part still possess tiny enterprises, and are thus tied to the very bourgeois system they should be fighting: this retards and hinders the development of the social forces that are capable of overthrowing capitalism. Scattered, individual, petty exploitation binds the toilers to a particular place, keeps them disunited, prevents them from appreciating their class solidarity, prevents them from uniting and understanding that the cause of their exploitation is not any particular individual, but the whole economic system. Large-scale capitalism, on the contrary, inevitably severs all the workers' ties with the old society, with a particular locality and a particular exploiter; it unites them, compels them to think and puts them in conditions which enable them to commence an organized struggle. Accordingly, it is on the working class that the Social-Democrats concentrate all their attention and all their activities. When its advanced representatives have mastered the ideas of scientific Socialism, the idea of the historical role of the Russian worker, when these ideas spread far and wide, and when there arise among the workers durable organizations which will transform the present sporadic economic war

of the workers into a conscious class struggle—then the Russian **WORKER**, rising at the head of all the democratic elements, will overthrow absolutism and lead the **RUSSIAN PROLETARIAT** (side by side with the proletariat of **ALL COUNTRIES**) *along the straight road of open political struggle towards the VICTORIOUS COMMUNIST REVOLUTION.*

The End

1894

*Appendix III*

When I speak of the narrow conception of Marxism, I have the Marxists themselves in mind. One cannot help remarking in this connection that Marxism is most atrociously narrowed and garbled when our liberals and radicals undertake to expound it in the pages of the legal press. What an exposition it is! Only think how this revolutionary doctrine must be mutilated in order to fit it into the Procrustean bed of the Russian censorship! Yet our publicists lightheartedly perform that operation! Marxism as they expound it is practically reduced to a doctrine of how under the capitalist system individual property, based on the labour of the owner, undergoes its dialectical development, how it becomes converted into its negation, and is then socialized. And with a serious mien, they assume that the whole content of Marxism lies in this "scheme" and ignore all the specific features of its sociological method, the doctrine of the class struggle, and the direct purpose of the enquiry, namely, to disclose all the forms of antagonism and exploitation in order to help the proletariat get rid of them. It is not surprising that the result is something so pale and wan that our radicals begin to bewail the poor Russian Marxists. We should think so! Russian absolutism and Russian reaction would not be absolutism and reaction if it were possible, while

they exist, to expound Marxism fully, accurately and completely, setting forth its conclusions without reservation! And if our liberals and radicals knew Marxism properly (if only, from German literature), they would be ashamed to disfigure it so in the pages of the censored press. If a theory cannot be expounded—keep silent, or make the reservation that you are expounding it far from completely, that you are omitting what is most essential in it; but when you are expounding only fragments how can you say that it is narrow?

That, indeed, is the only reason for the curious fact, possible only in Russia, that people are counted Marxists who have no conception of the class struggle, of the antagonisms that are necessarily inherent in capitalist society, and of the development of these antagonisms; who have no idea of the revolutionary role of the proletariat; who even directly come forward with bourgeois projects, provided only they contain such catchwords as "money economy," its "necessity," and similar expressions, to regard which as specifically Marxist requires all the intellectual profundity of a Mr. Mikhailovsky.

Marx, on the other hand, considered that the whole value of his theory lay in the fact that it is "in its essence critical\* and revolutionary." And this latter quality is indeed completely and unconditionally characteristic of *Marxism*, for this theory directly sets out to *disclose* all the forms of antagonism and exploitation in modern society, to trace their evolution, demonstrate their transient

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\* Note that Marx is speaking here of materialist criticism, which alone he regards as scientific—a criticism, that is, which compares the political, legal, social, living and other facts with economics, with the system of relations of production, with the interests of the classes that inevitably spring from all antagonistic social relations. That Russian social relations are antagonistic, nobody could surely doubt. But nobody has yet endeavoured to take them as a basis for *such* a criticism.

character, the inevitability of their transformation into a different form, *and thus help the proletariat as quickly and easily as possible to put an end to all exploitation.* The irresistible power of attraction that draws the Socialists of all countries to this theory lies indeed in the fact that it combines strict and profound science (being the last word in social science) with revolutionism, and combines them not by chance, not only because the founder of the doctrine combined in his own person the qualities of a scientist and a revolutionary, but intrinsically and inseparably, in the theory itself. For, indeed, the purpose of theory, the aim of science, as directly laid down here, is to assist the oppressed class in its actual economic struggle.

*“We do not say to the world: Cease struggling—your whole struggle is futile. All we do is to provide it with a true slogan of the struggle.”*

Hence, according to Marx, the direct purpose of science is to provide a true slogan of the struggle, that is, to be able to present this struggle objectively, as the product of a definite system of relations of production, to be able to *understand* the necessity of this struggle, its meaning, course and conditions of development. It is impossible to provide a “slogan of the struggle” unless every separate form of the struggle is minutely studied, unless every one of its steps in the transition from one form to another is traced, so as to make it possible to define the situation at any given moment, without losing sight of the general character of the struggle and its general aim, namely, the complete and final abolition of all exploitation and all oppression.

Try to compare with Marx’s “critical and revolutionary” theory the insipid trash which “our well-known” N. K. Mikhailovsky set forth in his “criticism” and filted at, and you will be astonished that there can really be

people who regard themselves as "ideologists of the toiling class," yet confine themselves . . . to that "flat disc" into which our publicists transform the Marxian theory by expunging everything that is vital in it.

Try to compare with the demands of this theory our Narodnik literature, which, after all, is also prompted by the desire to be the ideological leader of the toiler, a literature devoted to the history and to the present state of our economic system in general and of the peasantry in particular, and you will be astonished that Socialists could remain satisfied with such a theory, which confined itself to studying and describing distress and to moralizing over it. Serfdom is depicted, not as a definite form of economic organization which gives rise to exploitation of such and such a kind, to such and such antagonistic classes, to such and such political, legal and other systems, but simply as an abuse of power on the part of the landlords and an injustice to the peasants. The Peasant Reform is depicted, not as a clash of definite economic forms and of definite economic classes, but as a measure taken by the authorities, who "chose" a "false path" by mistake, despite their very best intentions. Post-Reform Russia is depicted as a deviation from the true path, accompanied by the distress of the toiler, and not as a definite system of antagonistic relations of production with such and such a course of development.

There can be no doubt now, however, that this theory is utterly discredited, and the sooner Russian Socialists realize that with the present level of knowledge there can be no revolutionary theory except Marxism, the sooner they devote all their efforts to applying this theory to Russia, theoretically and practically—the surer and quicker will be the success of revolutionary work.

## A PROTEST BY RUSSIAN SOCIAL-DEMOCRATS

AT A MEETING OF SOCIAL-DEMOCRATS, SEVENTEEN IN NUMBER, HELD AT A CERTAIN PLACE (IN RUSSIA), THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY PASSED AND IT WAS RESOLVED TO PUBLISH IT AND TO SUBMIT IT TO ALL THE COMRADES FOR THEIR CONSIDERATION

A tendency has been observed among Russian Social-Democrats recently to depart from the fundamental principles of Russian Social-Democracy that were proclaimed by the founders and front-rank members of the "Emancipation of Labour" group,<sup>6</sup> as well as in the Social-Democratic publications of the Russian workers' organizations of the nineties. The "Credo" reproduced below, which is presumed to express the fundamental views of certain ("young") Russian Social-Democrats, represents an attempt at a systematic and definite exposition of the "new views." The following is the "Credo" in full.

"The handicraft and manufacture period in the West laid a sharp impress on all subsequent history and particularly on the history of Social-Democracy. The fact that the bourgeoisie was obliged to fight for free forms, that it strove for release from the guild regulations which fettered production, made the bourgeoisie a revolutionary element, everywhere in the West it began with *liberté, fraternité, égalité* (liberty, fraternity, equality), with the achievement of free political forms. By these gains, however, as Bismarck expressed it, it drew a bill on the future payable to its antipode—the working class. Almost everywhere in the West, the working class, as a class, did not win the democratic institutions—

it made use of them. Against this it may be argued that the working class took part in revolutions. A reference to history will refute this opinion because, precisely in 1848, when the consolidation of Constitutions took place in the West, the working class consisted of the urban artisan element, the urban democracy; a factory proletariat hardly existed, while the proletariat employed in large-scale industry (the German weavers—Hauptmann, the weavers of Lyons) represented a wild mass capable only of rioting, but not of advancing any political demands. It can be definitely stated that the Constitutions of 1848 were won by the bourgeoisie and the small urban artisans. On the other hand, the working class (artisans, manufactory workers, printers, weavers, watchmakers, etc.) have been accustomed since the Middle Ages to membership in organizations, in mutual aid societies, religious societies, etc. This spirit of organization is still alive among the skilled workers in the West and sharply distinguishes them from the factory proletariat who submit to organization badly and slowly and are capable only of *lose organisation* (temporary organizations) and not of permanent organizations with rules and regulations. It was these manufactory and skilled workers that comprised the core of the Social-Democratic parties. Thus, the following picture was obtained: on the one hand, relatively easy and complete opportunity for political struggle; on the other hand, opportunity for the systematic organization of this struggle with the aid of the workers who had been trained in the manufacturing period. It was on this basis that theoretical and practical Marxism grew up in the West. The starting point was the parliamentary political struggle with the prospect—only superficially resembling Blanquism, but of totally different origin—of capturing power, on the one hand, and of a *Zusammenbruch* (cataclysm) on the other. Marxism was the theoretical expression of the prevailing practice: of the political struggle, which predominated over the economic struggle. In Belgium and in France, and particularly in Germany, the workers organized the political struggle with incredible ease, but it was with enormous difficulty and tremendous friction that they organized the economic struggle. Even to this day the economic organizations compared with the political organizations (leaving aside England) are extraordinarily weak and unstable, and everywhere *laissez à désirer quelque chose* (leave much to be desired). So long as the energy in the political struggle had not been completely exhausted, *Zusammenbruch* was an essential organizational *Schlagwort* (catchword) destined to play an extremely important historical role. The fundamental law that



can be discerned in studying the labour movement is the line of least resistance. In the West, this line was political activity, and Marxism, in the way it was formulated in the *Communist Manifesto*, was the best possible form the movement could assume. But when all energy had been exhausted in the political activity, when the political movement had reached a point of intensity beyond which it was difficult and almost impossible to carry it (the slow increase in votes lately, the apathy of the public at meetings, the note of despondency in literature), on the other hand, the ineffectiveness of parliamentary action and the entry into the arena of the ignorant masses of the unorganized and almost unorganizable factory proletariat gave rise in the West to what is now called Bernsteinism, the crisis of Marxism. A more logical course of things than the period of development of the labour movement from the *Communist Manifesto* to Bernsteinism it is difficult to imagine, and a careful study of this whole process can determine with astronomical exactitude the outcome of this "crisis." The point here is, of course, not the defeat or victory of Bernsteinism—that is of little interest; it is the radical change in practical activity that has been gradually taking place for a long time within the parties.

"This change will take place not only in the direction of a more energetic prosecution of the economic struggle and of consolidation of the economic organizations, but also, and this is the most important, in the direction of a change in the attitude of the parties towards other opposition parties. Intolerant Marxism, negative Marxism, primitive Marxism (whose conception of the class division of society is too schematic), will give way to democratic Marxism, and the social position of the party in modern society must undergo a sharp change. The party *will recognize* society; its narrow corporative and, in the majority of cases, sectarian tasks will be widened to social tasks, and its striving to seize power will be transformed into a striving for change, a striving to reform present-day society in a democratic direction adapted to the present state of affairs with the object of protecting the rights (all rights) of the toiling classes in the most effective and fullest way. The concept 'politics' will be enlarged and acquire a truly social meaning, and the practical demands of the moment will acquire greater weight and will be able to count on receiving greater attention than they have been getting up to now.

"From this brief description of the course of development of the labour movement in the West, it is not difficult to draw conclusions for Russia. In Russia, the line of least resistance will never tend in

the direction of political activity. The incredible political oppression will prompt much talk about it and cause attention to be concentrated precisely on this question, but it will never prompt practical action. While, in the West, the fact that the workers were drawn into political activity served to strengthen and crystallize their weak forces, in Russia, on the contrary, these weak forces are confronted with a wall of political oppression, and not only do they lack practical means of fighting this oppression, and hence, also of their own development, but they are systematically strangled and cannot even give forth weak shoots. If to this we add that the working class in our country has not inherited the spirit of organization which distinguished the fighters in the West, we get a gloomy picture, one that is likely to drive into despondency the most optimistic Marxist who believes that an extra factory chimney stack will by the very fact of its existence bring great welfare. The economic struggle too is hard, infinitely hard, but it is possible to wage it, and it is in fact being waged by the masses themselves. By learning in this struggle to organize, and coming into constant conflict with the political regime in the course of it, the Russian worker will at last create what may be called the form of a labour movement, the organization or organizations that best conform to Russian conditions. At the present, it can be said with certainty that the Russian labour movement is still in the amoeba state and has not yet acquired any form. The strike movement, which goes on with any form of organization, cannot yet be described as the crystallized form of the Russian movement, while the underground organizations are not worth consideration even from the mere quantitative point of view (quite apart from the question of their usefulness under present conditions).

"That is the situation. If to this we add the famine and the process of ruination of the countryside, which facilitate Streikbrecher-ism,\* and, consequently, the even greater difficulty of raising the masses of the workers to a more tolerable cultural level, then . . . well, what is there for the Russian Marxist to do?! The talk about an independent workers' political party is nothing but the product of an attempt to transplant alien aims and alien results to our soil. The Russian Marxist, so far, is a sad spectacle. His practical aims at the present time are paltry, his theoretical knowledge, in so far as he utilizes it *not as an instrument for research* but as a scheme for activity, is worthless for the purpose of fulfilling even those paltry practical aims. Moreover, these borrowed schemes are

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\* Strikebreaking, scabbing.— *Tr.*

harmful from the practical point of view. Our Marxists, forgetting that the working class in the West entered the field of political activity after it had already been cleared, are much too contemptuous of the radical or liberal opposition activity of all other nonworker strata of society. The slightest attempt to concentrate attention on public manifestations of a liberal political character rouses the protest of the orthodox Marxists, who forget that a number of historical conditions prevent us from being Western Marxists and demand of us a different Marxism, applicable to and necessary in Russian conditions. Obviously, the fact that every Russian citizen lacks political feeling and sense cannot be compensated by talk about politics or by appeals to a nonexistent power. This political sense can only be acquired by training, i.e., by participating in the life (however un-Marxian it may be) that is offered by Russian conditions. However appropriate (temporarily) 'negation' may have been in the West, it is harmful in Russia, because negation coming from something that is organized and has real power is one thing, whereas negation coming from an amorphous mass of scattered individuals is another thing.

"There is only one way out for the Russian Marxist: he must participate, i.e., assist in the economic struggle of the proletariat, and take part in liberal opposition activity. As a 'negator,' the Russian Marxist came on the scene very early, and this negation has weakened that share of his energy that should be turned in the direction of political radicalism. For the time being, this is not terrible: but if the class scheme prevents the Russian intellectual from taking an active part in life and keeps him too far removed from opposition circles, it will be a serious loss to all who are compelled to fight for constitutional forms separately from the working class, which has not yet put forward political aims. The political innocence which is concealed behind the Russian Marxist's mental reasonings on political topics may play mischief with him."

We do not know whether there are many Russian Social-Democrats who share these views. But there is no doubt that ideas of this kind have their adherents, and we therefore feel obliged to protest categorically against such views and to warn all comrades of the danger of Russian Social-Democracy being deflected from the path it has already marked out, viz., the formation of an independent political workers' party which shall be insepa-

rable from the class struggle of the proletariat, and which shall have for its immediate aim the winning of political liberty.

The above-quoted "Credo" represents, firstly, "a brief description of the process of development of the labour movement in the West," and, secondly, "conclusions for Russia."

First of all, the authors of the "Credo" have an entirely wrong conception of the history of the West-European labour movement. It is not true to say that the working class in the West did not take part in the struggle for political liberty and in political revolutions. The history of the Chartist movement and the revolutions of 1848 in France, Germany and Austria prove the opposite. It is absolutely untrue to say that "Marxism was the theoretical expression of the prevailing practice; of the political struggle, which predominated over the economic struggle." On the contrary, "Marxism" appeared at a time when nonpolitical socialism prevailed (Owenism, "Fourierism," "true socialism") and the *Communist Manifesto* took up the cudgels at once against nonpolitical socialism. Even when Marxism came out fully armed with theory (*Capital*) and organized the celebrated International Workingmen's Association, the political struggle was by no means the prevailing practice (narrow trade unionism in England, anarchism and Proudhonism in the Latin countries). The great historic service performed by Lassalle in Germany lay in the fact that he transformed the working class from a tail of the liberal bourgeoisie into an independent political party. Marxism linked up the economic and the political struggles of the working class into a single inseparable whole; and the effort of the authors of the "Credo" to separate these forms of struggle represents one of their most clumsy and deplorable departures from Marxism.

Further, the authors of the "Credo" also have an entirely wrong conception of the present state of the West-European labour movement and of the theory of Marxism, under the banner of which that movement is marching. To talk about a "crisis of Marxism" is merely to repeat the nonsense of the bourgeois hacks who are doing all they can to exaggerate every disagreement among the Socialists and represent it as a split in the Socialist parties. The notorious Bernsteinism<sup>7</sup>—in the sense in which it is commonly understood by the general public, and by the authors of the "Credo" in particular—is an attempt to narrow the theory of Marxism, an attempt to convert the revolutionary workers' party into a reformist party; and, as was to be expected, this attempt has been strongly condemned by the majority of the German Social-Democrats. Opportunist trends have more than once revealed themselves in the ranks of German Social-Democracy, and on every occasion they have been repudiated by the Party, which loyally guards the principles of revolutionary international Social-Democracy. We are convinced that every attempt to transplant opportunist views to Russia will encounter equally determined resistance on the part of the overwhelming majority of Russian Social-Democrats.

Similarly, there can be no suggestion of a "radical change in the practical activity" of the West-European workers' parties, in spite of what the authors of the "Credo" say: the tremendous importance of the economic struggle of the proletariat, and the necessity for such a struggle, was recognized by Marxism from the very outset; and already in the forties Marx and Engels opposed the utopian socialists who denied the importance of this struggle.

When about twenty years later, the International Workingmen's Association was formed, the question of the importance of trade unions and of the economic strug-

gle was raised at its very first Congress, at Geneva in 1866. The resolution adopted at that Congress spoke explicitly of the importance of the economic struggle and warned the Socialists and the workers, on the one hand, against exaggerating its importance (which the English workers were inclined to do at that time) and, on the other, against underestimating its importance (which the French and the Germans, particularly the Lassalleans, were inclined to do). The resolution declared that the trade unions were not only a natural, but also an essential phenomenon under capitalism and saw in them an extremely important means of organizing the working class in its daily struggle against capital and for the abolition of wage labour. The resolution declared that the trade unions must not devote attention exclusively to the "immediate struggle against capital," must not remain aloof from the general political and social movement of the working class; they must not pursue "narrow" aims, but must strive for general emancipation of the oppressed labouring millions. Since that time, the workers' parties in the various countries have many a time discussed the question and, of course, will discuss it again and again, whether to devote more or less attention at any given moment to the economic or to the political struggle of the proletariat; but, the general question, or the question in principle, stands today as it was presented by Marxism. The conviction that the class struggle must necessarily combine the political and the economic struggle has become part of the flesh and blood of international Social-Democracy. The experience of history has, further, incontrovertibly proved that absence of liberty, or restriction of the political rights of the proletariat, always leads to the necessity of putting the political struggle in the forefront.

Still less can there be any suggestion of any serious change in the attitude of the workers' party towards the

other opposition parties. In this respect, too, Marxism has mapped out the correct line, which is equally remote from exaggerating the importance of politics, from conspiratorialism (Blanquism, etc.) and from decrying politics or reducing it to opportunist, reformist social tinkering (anarchism, utopian and petty-bourgeois socialism, state socialism, professorial socialism, etc.). The proletariat must strive to form independent political workers' parties, the main aim of which must be the capture of political power by the proletariat for the purpose of organizing socialist society. The proletariat must not regard the other classes and parties as "one reactionary mass";<sup>8</sup> on the contrary, it must take part in all political and social life, support the progressive classes and parties against the reactionary classes and parties, support every revolutionary movement against the present system, champion the interests of every oppressed nation or race, of every persecuted religion, disfranchised sex, etc. The arguments the authors of the "Credo" advance on this subject merely reveal a desire to obscure the class character of the struggle of the proletariat, to weaken this struggle by a meaningless "recognition of society," to reduce revolutionary Marxism to a trivial reformist trend. We are convinced that the overwhelming majority of Russian Social-Democrats will totally reject this distortion of the fundamental principles of Social-Democracy. Their erroneous premises regarding the West-European labour movement led the authors of the "Credo" to draw still more erroneous "conclusions for Russia."

The assertion that the Russian working class "has not yet put forward political aims" simply reveals ignorance of the Russian revolutionary movement. Even the Northern Union of Russian Workers formed in 1878 and the South Russian Workers' Union formed in 1875 put forward the demand for political liberty in their program.

After the reaction of the eighties, the working class repeatedly put forward the same demand in the nineties. The assertion that "the talk about an independent workers' political party is nothing but the product of an attempt to transplant alien aims and alien results to our soil" only reveals a complete failure to understand the historical role of the Russian working class and the most vital tasks of Russian Social-Democracy. Apparently, the program of the authors of the "Credo" inclines to the idea that the working class, following "the line of least resistance," should confine itself to the economic struggle while the "liberal opposition elements" fight, with the "participation" of the Marxists, for "constitutional forms." The application of such a program would be tantamount to political suicide for Russian Social-Democracy, would immensely retard and debase the Russian labour movement and the Russian revolutionary movement (for us the two latter terms are synonymous). The mere fact that it was possible for a program like this to appear shows how well grounded were the fears expressed by one of the foremost champions of Russian Social-Democracy, P. B. Axelrod, when, at the end of 1897, he wrote of the possibility of the following prospect:

"The labour movement keeps to the narrow rut of purely economic conflicts between the workers and employers and, in itself, taken as a whole, is not of a political character, while in the struggle for political liberty the advanced strata of the proletariat follow the revolutionary circles and factions of the so-called intelligentsia." (Axelrod, *The Present Tasks and Tactics of the Russian Social-Democrats*, Geneva 1898, p. 19.)

Russian Social-Democrats must declare determined war against the whole body of ideas expressed in the "Credo," for these ideas lead straight to the translation of this prospect into reality. Russian Social-Democrats must bend every effort to translate into reality an-



other prospect, depicted by P. B. Axelrod in the following words:

"The other prospect: Social-Democracy organizes the Russian proletariat into an independent political party which fights for liberty, *partly, side by side and in alliance with* the bourgeois revolutionary factions (if such should exist), and partly by recruiting directly into its ranks or securing the following of the most democratic and revolutionary elements of the intelligentsia." (*Ibid.*, p. 20.)

At the time P. B. Axelrod wrote the above lines the declarations made by Social-Democrats in Russia showed clearly that the overwhelming majority of them adhered to the same point of view. It is true that one St. Petersburg workers' paper, *Rabochaya Mysl*, seemed to incline toward the ideas of the authors of the "Credo" and in the leading article on its program (in issue No. 1, Oct. 1897) it, regrettably, expressed the utterly erroneous idea, which runs counter to Social-Democracy, that the "economic basis of the movement" may be "obscured by the effort constantly to keep in mind the political ideal." At the same time, however, another St. Petersburg workers' newspaper, the *St. Petersburg Rabochy Listok* (No. 2, Sept. 1897) emphatically expressed the opinion that "the overthrow of the autocracy . . . can be achieved only by a well organized and numerically strong workers' party" and that "organized in a strong party" the workers will "emancipate themselves, and the whole of Russia, from all political and economic oppression." A third newspaper, the *Rabochaya Gazeta*, in its leading article in issue No. 2 (November 1897), wrote: "The fight against the autocratic government for political liberty is the immediate task of the Russian labour movement." "The Russian labour movement will increase its forces tenfold if it comes out as a single, harmonious whole, with a common name and a well-knit organization. . . ." "The sepa-

rate workers' circles should combine into a single, common party." "The Russian workers' party will be a Social-Democratic Party." That the overwhelming majority of Russian Social-Democrats fully shared these views of *Rabochaya Gazeta* is seen from the fact that the Congress of Russian Social-Democrats which was held in the spring of 1898 formed the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, published its *Manifesto* and recognized the *Rabochaya Gazeta* as the official organ of the Party. Thus, the authors of the "Credo" are making an enormous step backward from the stage of development which Russian Social-Democracy has already achieved and which it recorded in the *Manifesto of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party*. If, as the result of desperate persecution by the Russian government, the activities of the Party have at the present time temporarily subsided and its official organ is no longer appearing, it is the task of all Social-Democrats to exert every effort finally to consolidate the Party, to draw up the Party program and to revive its official organ. In view of the vacillation of mind evidenced by the fact that programs like the above-examined "Credo" can appear, we think it particularly necessary to emphasize the following fundamental principles that were expounded in the *Manifesto* and which are of enormous importance for Russian Social-Democracy. First: Russian Social-Democracy "desires to be and remain the class movement of the organized working masses." Hence it follows that the motto of Social-Democracy must be to help the workers not only in their economic, but also in their political struggle; to carry on agitation not only in connection with immediate economic needs, but also in connection with all manifestations of political oppression; to carry on propaganda not only of the ideas of scientific Socialism, but also of the ideas of democracy. The only banner the class movement of

the workers can have is the theory of revolutionary Marxism, and Russian Social-Democracy must see that it is further developed and put into practice, and at the same time protect it against those distortions and vulgarizations to which "fashionable theories" are often subjected (and the successes of revolutionary Social-Democracy in Russia have already made Marxism a "fashionable" theory). While concentrating all their efforts at the present time on activity among factory and mine workers, Social-Democrats must not forget that with the expansion of the movement they must also recruit into the ranks of the worker masses they organize the home workers, artisans, agricultural labourers and the millions of ruined and starving peasants.

Second: "On his strong shoulders the Russian worker must and will carry the cause of winning political liberty to a finish." Since the immediate aim it sets itself is to overthrow absolutism, Social-Democracy must act as the vanguard in the fight for democracy, and consequently, if for no other reason, must give every support to all democratic elements of the population of Russia and win them as allies. Only an independent workers' party can serve as a firm bulwark in the fight against the autocracy, and only in alliance with such a party, only by supporting it, can all the other fighters for political liberty actively display themselves.

Third and last: "As a socialist movement and trend, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party carries on the cause and traditions of the whole preceding revolutionary movement in Russia: considering the winning of political liberty to be the most important of the immediate tasks of the Party as a whole, Social-Democracy marches towards the goal that was already clearly mapped out by the glorious representatives of the old Narodnaya Volya." The traditions of the whole preceding revolution-

ary movement demand that the Social-Democrats shall at the present time concentrate all their efforts on the organization of the Party, on strengthening its internal discipline, and on developing the technique of secrecy. If the representatives of the old Narodnaya Volya managed to play an enormous role in the history of Russia in spite of the fact that only narrow social strata supported the few heroes, and in spite of the fact that it was by no means a revolutionary theory that served as the banner of the movement, then Social-Democracy, relying on the class struggle of the proletariat, will succeed in becoming invincible. "The Russian proletariat will throw off the yoke of autocracy in order with still greater energy to continue the struggle against capital and the bourgeoisie for the complete victory of Socialism."

We invite all groups of Social-Democrats and all workers' circles in Russia to discuss the above-quoted "Credo" and our resolution, and to express a definite opinion on the question raised, in order that all differences may be removed and the work of organizing and strengthening the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party may be accelerated.

Groups and circles may send their resolutions to the League of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad which, on the basis of point 10 of the decision of the Congress of Russian Social-Democrats held in 1898, is a part of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party and its representative abroad.

August-September 1899

## OUR PROGRAM

International Social-Democracy is at present in a state of mental wavering. Hitherto the doctrines of Marx and Engels were considered to be the firm foundation of revolutionary theory, but voices are now being raised on all hands declaring that these doctrines are inadequate and obsolete. Whoever declares himself to be a Social-Democrat and intends to publish a Social-Democratic organ must precisely define his attitude to a question which is by no means agitating the German Social-Democrats alone.

We stand wholly on the basis of the Marxist theory: it was the first to transform Socialism from a utopia into a science, to lay a firm foundation for this science and to indicate the path that must be followed in further developing this science and elaborating it in all its parts. It disclosed the nature of modern capitalist economy by explaining how the hire of the labourer, the purchase of labour power, masks the enslavement of millions of propertyless people by a handful of capitalists, the owners of the land, factories, mines and so forth. It showed how the whole development of modern capitalism tends toward the ousting of small-scale production by large-scale production and creates the conditions which render a socialist order of society possible and necessary. It taught us how, beneath the surface of rooted customs, political intrigues, abstruse laws and intricate doctrines, to discern the *class struggle*, the struggle between all species of propertied classes and the propertyless mass, the *proletariat*,

which stand at the head of all the propertyless. It made clear the real task of a revolutionary socialist party: not to invent plans for refashioning society, not to preach to the capitalists and their hangers-on about improving the lot of the workers, not to hatch conspiracies, *but to organize the class struggle of the proletariat and to lead this struggle, the ultimate aim of which is the conquest of political power by the proletariat and the organization of a socialist society.*

And we now ask: Has anything new been introduced into this theory by its loud-voiced "renovators" who are raising so much noise in our day and have grouped themselves around the German Socialist Bernstein? *Absolutely nothing.* They have not advanced one single step the science which Marx and Engels enjoined us to develop; they have not taught the proletariat any new methods of struggle; they have only retreated, borrowing fragments of backward theories and preaching to the proletariat not the theory of struggle but the theory of cession, cession to the most vicious enemies of the proletariat, the governments and bourgeois parties, who never cease to seek for new means of baiting the Socialists. Plekhanov, one of the founders and leaders of Russian Social-Democracy, was absolutely right in mercilessly criticizing the latest "critique," Bernstein's, whose views have now been rejected by the representatives of the German workers as well (at the Hanover Congress).

We know that a flood of accusations will be showered on us for these words; it will be cried that we want to convert the Socialist Party into an order of "true believers" which persecutes "heretics" for deviations from "dogma," for every independent opinion, and so forth. We know all about these fashionable and trenchant phrases. Only there is not a grain of truth or sense in them. There can be no strong Socialist Party without a revolutionary

theory which unites all Socialists, from which they draw all their convictions, and which they apply in their methods of struggle and means of action. To defend such a theory, which to the best of your knowledge you consider to be true, against unfounded attacks and attempts to vitiate it, does not imply that you are an enemy of *all* criticism. We do not regard Marxist theory as something completed and inviolable; on the contrary, we are convinced that it has only laid the cornerstone of the science which Socialists *must* further advance in all directions if they wish to keep pace with life. We think that an *independent* elaboration of the Marxist theory is especially essential for Russian Socialists, for this theory provides only general *guiding* principles, which, *in particular*, are applied in England differently from France, in France differently from Germany, and in Germany differently from Russia. We shall therefore gladly afford space in our paper for articles on theoretical questions and we invite all comrades openly to discuss controversial points.

What are the main questions which arise in applying the program common to all Social-Democrats to Russia? We have already said that the essence of this program is to organize the class struggle of the proletariat and to lead this struggle, the ultimate aim of which is the conquest of political power by the proletariat and the establishment of a socialist society. The class struggle of the proletariat falls into an economic struggle (a struggle against individual capitalists or against individual groups of capitalists for the improvement of the condition of the workers), and a political struggle (a struggle against the government for the broadening of the rights of the people, i.e., for democracy, and for the broadening of the political power of the proletariat). Some Russian Social-Democrats (among them apparently those who run the *Rabochaya Mysl*) regard the economic struggle as incomparably more

important and almost go so far as to relegate the political struggle to the more or less distant future. This standpoint is absolutely wrong. All Social-Democrats are agreed that it is necessary to organize the economic struggle of the working class, that it is necessary to carry on agitation among the workers on this basis, i.e., to help the workers in their day-to-day struggle against the employers, to draw their attention to every form and every case of oppression and in this way to make clear to them the necessity for combination. But to forget the political for the economic struggle would mean departing from the basic principle of international Social-Democracy, would mean forgetting what the entire history of the labour movement teaches us. The confirmed adherents of the bourgeoisie and of the government which serves it, have even made repeated attempts to organize purely economic unions of workers and to divert them in this way from "politics," from Socialism. It is quite possible that the Russian government, too, may undertake something of the kind, as it has always endeavoured to throw some paltry sops or, rather, sham sops, to the people, only to turn their thoughts away from the fact that they are oppressed and without rights. No economic struggle can bring the workers any solid improvement, or even be conducted on a large scale, unless the workers have the right freely to organize meetings and unions, to have their own newspapers and to send their representatives to the national assemblies, as do the workers in Germany and all other European countries (with the exception of Turkey and Russia). But in order to win these rights it is necessary to wage a *political struggle*. In Russia, not only the workers, but all citizens are deprived of political rights. Russia is an absolute and unlimited monarchy. The tsar alone promulgates laws, appoints officials and controls them. For this reason, *it seems* as though in Russia the tsar and



the tsarist government are independent of any classes and accord equal treatment to all. But *in reality* all the officials are chosen exclusively from the possessing class and all are subject to the influence of the big capitalists, who make the ministers dance to their tune and who achieve whatever they want. The Russian working class is burdened by a double yoke; it is robbed and plundered by the capitalists and the landowners, and to prevent it from fighting them, it is bound hand and foot by the police, it is gagged and every attempt to defend the rights of the people is persecuted. Every strike against a capitalist results in the military and police being let loose on the workers. Every economic struggle of necessity turns into a political struggle, and Social-Democracy must indissolubly combine the one with the other into a *single class struggle of the proletariat*. The first and the chief aim of such a struggle must be the conquest of political rights, *the conquest of political liberty*. If the workers of St. Petersburg alone, with the scant support of the Socialists, have rapidly succeeded in wringing concessions from the government—the passing of the law reducing the working day—then the Russian working class as a whole, led by a united Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, will be able, by waging a persistent struggle, to win incomparably more important concessions.

The Russian working class will wage its economic and political struggle alone, even if no other class comes to its aid. But in the political struggle the workers do not stand alone. The utter disfranchisement of the people and the arbitrary misrule of the bashi-bazouk officials rouses the indignation of all who have any pretensions to honesty and education, who cannot reconcile themselves to the persecution of all free speech and free thought; it rouses the indignation of the persecuted Poles, Finns, Jews and Russian sects; it rouses the indignation of the small

merchants, manufacturers and peasants, who can nowhere find protection from the persecution of the officials and the police. All these groups of the population are incapable, separately, of carrying on a persistent political struggle. But when the working class raises the banner of this struggle, it will be supported on all sides. Russian Social-Democracy will place itself at the head of all the fighters for the rights of the people, of all the fighters for democracy, and then it will be invincible.

These are our fundamental views, and we shall develop them systematically and from every aspect in our paper. We are convinced that in this way we shall tread the path which has been indicated by the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party in its published Manifesto.

Latter half of 1899

# WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

BURNING QUESTIONS OF OUR MOVEMENT

*(Excerpts)*

## I

### DOGMATISM AND "FREEDOM OF CRITICISM"

#### A. WHAT IS "FREEDOM OF CRITICISM"?

"Freedom of criticism" is undoubtedly the most fashionable slogan at the present time, and the one most frequently employed in the controversies between the Socialists and democrats of all countries. At first sight, nothing would appear to be more strange than the solemn appeals by one of the parties to the dispute to freedom of criticism. Have voices been raised in the advanced parties against the constitutional law of the majority of European countries which guarantees freedom to science and scientific investigation? "Something must be wrong here," will be the comment of the onlooker, who has not yet fully grasped the essence of the disagreements among the disputants, but has heard this fashionable slogan repeated at every crossroad. "Evidently this slogan is one of the conventional phrases which, like a nickname, becomes legitimized by use, and becomes almost an appellative," he will conclude.

In fact, it is no secret that two trends have taken shape in the present-day international\* Social-Democracy. The fight between these trends now flares up in a bright flame, and now dies down and smoulders under the ashes of imposing "truce resolutions." What this "new" trend, which adopts a "critical" attitude towards "obsolete dogmatic" Marxism, represents has with sufficient precision been *stated* by Bernstein, and *demonstrated* by Millerand.<sup>9</sup>

Social-Democracy must change from a party of the social revolution into a democratic party of social reforms. Bernstein has surrounded this political demand with a whole battery of symmetrically arranged "new" arguments and reasonings. The possibility of putting Socialism on a scientific basis and of proving from the point of view of the materialist conception of history that it is necessary and inevitable was denied, as was also the growing impoverishment, proletarianization and the intensification of capitalist contradictions. The very conception, "*ultimate aim*," was declared to be unsound, and the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat was absolutely rejected. It was denied that there is any counter-

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\* Incidentally, this perhaps is the only occasion in the history of modern Socialism in which controversies between various trends within the socialist movement have grown from national into international controversies; and this, in its own way, is extremely encouraging. Formerly, the disputes between the Lassalleans and the Eisenachers, between the Guesdites and the Possibilists, between the Fabians and the Social-Democrats, and between the Narodnaya Volya-ites and Social-Democrats, remained purely national disputes, reflected purely national features and proceeded, as it were, on different planes. At the present time (this is quite evident now), the English Fabians, the French Ministerialists, the German Bernsteinians and the Russian critics—all belong to the same family, all extol each other, learn from each other, and together come out against "dogmatic" Marxism. Perhaps in this first really international battle with socialist opportunism, international revolutionary Social-Democracy will become sufficiently strengthened to put an end to the political reaction that has long reigned in Europe?

distinction in principle between liberalism and Socialism. *The theory of the class struggle* was rejected on the grounds that it could not be applied to a strictly democratic society, governed according to the will of the majority, etc.

Thus, the demand for a resolute turn from revolutionary Social-Democracy to bourgeois social-reformism was accompanied by a no less resolute turn towards bourgeois criticism of all the fundamental ideas of Marxism. As this criticism of Marxism has been going on for a long time now, from the political platform, from university chairs, in numerous pamphlets and in a number of learned treatises, as the entire younger generation of the educated classes has been systematically trained for decades on this criticism, it is not surprising that the "new, critical" trend in Social-Democracy should spring up, all complete, like Minerva from the head of Jupiter. The content of this new trend did not have to grow and take shape, it was transferred bodily from bourgeois literature to socialist literature.

To proceed. If Bernstein's theoretical criticism and political yearnings are still unclear to anyone, the French have taken the trouble graphically to demonstrate the "new method." In this instance, too, France has justified its old reputation of being the country in which "more than anywhere else, the historical class struggles were each time fought out to a decision..." (Engels, in his introduction to Marx's *Der 18 Brumaire*.\*) The French Socialists have begun, not to theorize, but to act. The democratically more highly developed political conditions in France have permitted them to put "Bernsteinism into practice" immediately, with all its consequences. Millerand has provided an excellent example of practical Bernstein-

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\* *The Eighteenth Brumaire*.—Tr.

ism; not without reason did Bernstein and Vollmar rush so zealously to defend and praise him! Indeed, if Social-Democracy, in essence, is merely a party of reform, and must be bold enough to admit this openly, then not only has a Socialist the right to join a bourgeois cabinet, but must always strive to do so. If democracy, in essence, means the abolition of class domination, then why should not a Socialist minister charm the whole bourgeois world by orations on class collaboration? Why should he not remain in the cabinet even after the shooting down of workers by gendarmes has exposed, for the hundredth and thousandth time, the real nature of the democratic collaboration of classes? Why should he not personally take part in greeting the tsar, for whom the French Socialists now have no other name than hero of the gallows, knout and exile (knouteur, pendeur et déportateur)? And the reward for this utter humiliation and self-degradation of Socialism in the face of the whole world, for the corruption of the socialist consciousness of the worker masses—the only basis that can guarantee our victory—the reward for this is pompous *plans* for niggardly reforms, so niggardly in fact that much more has been obtained from bourgeois governments!

He who does not deliberately close his eyes cannot fail to see that the new "critical" trend in Socialism is nothing more nor less than a new variety of *opportunism*. And if we judge people not by the brilliant uniforms they don, not by the high-sounding appellations they give themselves, but by their actions, and by what they actually advocate, it will be clear that "freedom of criticism" means freedom for an opportunistic trend in Social-Democracy, the freedom to convert Social-Democracy into a democratic party of reform, the freedom to introduce bourgeois ideas and bourgeois elements into Socialism.

"Freedom" is a grand word, but under the banner of free trade the most predatory wars were conducted; under the banner of free labour, the toilers were robbed. The modern use of the term "freedom of criticism" contains the same inherent falsehood. Those who are really convinced that they have advanced science would demand, not freedom for the new views to continue side by side with the old, but the substitution of the new views for the old. The cry "Long live freedom of criticism," that is heard today, too strongly calls to mind the fable of the empty barrel.

We are marching in a compact group along a precipitous and difficult path, firmly holding each other by the hand. We are surrounded on all sides by enemies, and we have to advance under their almost constant fire. We have combined voluntarily, precisely for the purpose of fighting the enemy, and not to retreat into the adjacent marsh, the inhabitants of which, from the very outset, have reproached us with having separated ourselves into an exclusive group and with having chosen the path of struggle instead of the path of conciliation. And now several among us begin to cry out: let us go into this marsh! And when we begin to shame them, they retort: how conservative you are! Are you not ashamed to deny us the liberty to invite you to take a better road! Oh, yes, gentlemen! You are free not only to invite us, but to go yourselves wherever you will, even into the marsh. In fact, we think that the marsh is your proper place, and we are prepared to render *you* every assistance to get there. Only let go of our hands, don't clutch at us and don't besmirch the grand word "freedom," for we too are "free" to go where we please, free to fight not only against the marsh, but also against those who are turning towards the marsh!

#### D. ENGELS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE THEORETICAL STRUGGLE

“Dogmatism, doctrinairism,” “ossification of the Party—the inevitable retribution that follows the violent strait-lacing of thought”—these are the enemies against which the knightly champions of “freedom of criticism” in the *Rabocheye Dyelo* rise up in arms. We are very glad that this question has been placed on the order of the day and we would only propose to add to it another question: Who are the judges?

Before us lie two publisher's announcements. One, *The Program of the Periodical Organ of the Union of Russian Social-Democrats—the “Rabocheye Dyelo”* (reprint from No. 1 of the *Rabocheye Dyelo*), and the other an announcement of the resumption of the publications of the Emancipation of Labour group. Both are dated 1899, a time when the “crisis of Marxism” had long since been under discussion. And what do we find? You would seek in vain in the first announcement for any reference to this phenomenon, or a definite statement of the position the new organ intends to adopt on this question. Of theoretical work and the urgent tasks that now confront it not a word is said, either in this program or in the supplements to it that were adopted by the Third Congress of the Union in 1901 (*Two Congresses*, pp. 15-18). During the whole of this time the editorial board of the *Rabocheye Dyelo* ignored theoretical questions, in spite of the fact that these questions were agitating the minds of all Social-Democrats all over the world.

The other announcement, on the contrary, points first of all to the decreased interest in theory observed in recent years, imperatively demands “vigilant attention to the theoretical aspect of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat,” and calls for “ruthless criticism of the Bern-



steinian and other antirevolutionary tendencies" in our movement. The issues of the *Zarya*<sup>10</sup> that have appeared show how this program has been carried out.

Thus we see that high-sounding phrases against the ossification of thought, etc., conceal unconcern for and impotence in the development of theoretical thought. The case of the Russian Social-Democrats very strikingly illustrates the phenomenon observed in the whole of Europe (and long ago noted also by the German Marxists) that the celebrated freedom of criticism does not imply the substitution of one theory for another, but freedom from all integral and considered theory; it implies eclecticism and lack of principle. Those who have the slightest acquaintance with the actual state of our movement cannot but see that the wide spread of Marxism was accompanied by a certain lowering of the theoretical level. Quite a number of people with very little, and even a total lack of theoretical training joined the movement because of its practical significance and its practical successes. We can judge from that how tactless the *Rabocheye Dyelo* is when, with an air of triumph, it quotes Marx's statement: "Every step of real movement is more important than a dozen programs." To repeat these words in a period of theoretical chaos is like wishing mourners at a funeral "many happy returns of the day." Moreover, these words of Marx are taken from his letter on the Gotha Program, in which he *sharply condemns* eclecticism in the formulation of principles: If you must unite, Marx wrote to the party leaders, then enter into agreements to satisfy the practical aims of the movement, but do not allow any bargaining over principles, do not make "concessions" in questions of theory. This was Marx's idea, and yet there are people among us who strive—in his name—to belittle the significance of theory!

Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revo-

lutionary movement. This thought cannot be insisted upon too strongly at a time when the fashionable preaching of opportunism goes hand in hand with an infatuation for the narrowest forms of practical activity. Yet, for Russian Social-Democrats the importance of theory is enhanced by three more circumstances, which are often forgotten: firstly, by the fact that our Party is only in process of formation, its features are only just becoming outlined, and it is yet far from having settled accounts with other trends of revolutionary thought, which threaten to divert the movement from the correct path. On the contrary, precisely the very recent past was marked by a revival of non-Social-Democratic revolutionary trends (which Axelrod long ago warned the Economists would happen). Under these circumstances, what at first sight appears to be an "unimportant" mistake may lead to most deplorable consequences, and only shortsighted people can consider factional disputes and a strict differentiation between shades inopportune or superfluous. The fate of Russian Social-Democracy for many, many years to come may depend on the strengthening of one or other "shade."

Secondly, the Social-Democratic movement is in its very essence an international movement. This means not only that we must combat national chauvinism, but also that a movement that is starting in a young country can be successful only if it implements the experience of other countries. And in order to implement this experience, it is not enough merely to be acquainted with it, or simply to transcribe the latest resolutions. What it requires is the ability to treat this experience critically and to test it independently. Anybody who realizes how enormously the modern working-class movement has grown and branched out will understand what a reserve of theoretical forces and political (as well as revolutionary) experience is required to fulfil this task.

Thirdly, the national tasks of Russian Social-Democracy are such as have never confronted any other socialist party in the world. Further on we shall have occasion to deal with the political and organizational duties which the task of emancipating the whole people from the yoke of autocracy imposes upon us. At this point, we only wish to state that *the role of vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory*. In order to get some concrete understanding of what this means, let the reader recall such predecessors of Russian Social-Democracy as Herzen, Belinsky, Chernyshevsky and the brilliant galaxy of revolutionaries of the seventies; let him ponder over the world significance which Russian literature is now acquiring; let him . . . but that is enough!

Let us quote what Engels said in 1874 concerning the significance of theory in the Social-Democratic movement. Engels recognizes *not two* forms of the great struggle of Social-Democracy (political and economic), as is the fashion among us, *but three, placing on a par with the first two the theoretical struggle*. His recommendations to the German working-class movement, which had become strong, practically and politically, are so instructive from the standpoint of present-day problems and controversies, that we hope the reader will not be vexed with us for quoting a long passage from his prefatory note to *Der deutsche Bauernkrieg*,\* which has long become a great bibliographical rarity.

“The German workers have two important advantages over those of the rest of Europe. First, they belong to the most theoretical people of Europe; and they have retained that sense of theory which the so-called ‘educated’

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\* Dritter Abdruck. Leipzig, 1875. Verlag der Genossenschaftsbuchdruckerei. (*The Peasant War in Germany*. Third edition. Leipzig, 1875. Cooperative Publishers.—Tr.)

classes of Germany have almost completely lost. Without German philosophy which preceded it, particularly that of Hegel, German scientific Socialism—the only scientific Socialism that has ever existed—would never have come into being. Without a sense of theory among the workers, this scientific Socialism would never have entered their flesh and blood as much as is the case. What an immeasurable advantage this is may be seen, on the one hand, from the indifference towards all theory, which is one of the main reasons why the English working-class movement crawls along so slowly in spite of the splendid organization of the individual unions; on the other hand, from the mischief and confusion wrought by Proudhonism, in its original form, among the French and Belgians, and, in the form further caricatured by Bakunin, among the Spaniards and Italians.

“The second advantage is that, chronologically speaking, the Germans were about the last to come into the workers’ movement. Just as German theoretical Socialism will never forget that it rests on the shoulders of Saint-Simon, Fourier and Owen—three men who, in spite of all their fantastic notions and all their utopianism, have their place among the most eminent thinkers of all times, and whose genius anticipated innumerable things the correctness of which is now being scientifically proved by us—so the practical workers’ movement in Germany ought never to forget that it has developed on the shoulders of the English and French movements, that it was able simply to utilize their dearly-bought experience, and could now avoid their mistakes, which in their time were mostly unavoidable. Without the precedent of the English trade unions and French workers’ political struggles, without the gigantic impulse given especially by the Paris Commune, where would we be now?

“It must be said to the credit of the German workers

that they have used the advantages of their situation with rare understanding. For the first time since the working-class movement has existed, the struggle is being waged in a planned way from its three coordinated and interconnected sides, the theoretical, the political and the practical-economic (resistance to the capitalists). It is precisely in this, as it were, concentric attack, that the strength and invincibility of the German movement lies.

“Due to this advantageous situation, on the one hand, and to the insular peculiarities of the English and the forcible suppression of the French movement, on the other, the German workers have for the moment been placed in the vanguard of the proletarian struggle. How long events will allow them to occupy this post of honour cannot be foretold. But let us hope that as long as they occupy it, they will fill it fittingly. This demands redoubled efforts in every field of struggle and agitation. In particular, it will be the duty of the leaders to gain an ever clearer insight into all theoretical questions, to free themselves more and more from the influence of traditional phrases inherited from the old world outlook, and constantly to keep in mind that Socialism, since it has become a science, demands that it be pursued as a science, i.e., that it be studied. The task will be to spread with increased zeal among the masses of the workers the ever more clarified understanding thus acquired, to knit together ever more firmly the organization both of the Party and of the trade unions.

“...If the German workers proceed in this way, they will not be marching exactly at the head of the movement—it is not at all in the interest of this movement that the workers of any particular country should march at its head—but will, nevertheless, occupy an honourable place in the battle line; and they will stand armed for battle when either unexpectedly grave trials or momentous

events demand of them increased courage, increased determination and energy."

Engels' words proved prophetic. Within a few years the German workers were subjected to unexpectedly grave trials in the shape of the Anti-Socialist Law. And the German workers really met them armed for battle and succeeded in emerging from them victoriously.

The Russian proletariat will have to undergo trials immeasurably more grave; it will have to fight a monster compared with which the Anti-Socialist Law in a constitutional country seems but a pigmy. History has now confronted us with an immediate task which is the *most revolutionary* of all the *immediate* tasks that confront the proletariat of any country. The fulfilment of this task, the destruction of the most powerful bulwark, not only of European, but also (it may now be said) of Asiatic reaction, would make the Russian proletariat the vanguard of the international revolutionary proletariat. And we have the right to count upon acquiring this honourable title already earned by our predecessors, the revolutionaries of the seventies, if we succeed in inspiring our movement—which is a thousand times broader and deeper—with the same devoted determination and vigour.

## II

### THE SPONTANEITY OF THE MASSES AND THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATS

#### A. THE BEGINNING OF THE SPONTANEOUS UPSURGE

In the previous chapter we pointed out how *universally* absorbed the educated youth of Russia was in the theories of Marxism in the middle of the nineties. The strikes that followed the famous St. Petersburg industrial war of 1896

assumed a similar wholesale character. The fact that these strikes spread over the whole of Russia clearly showed how deep the newly awakening popular movement was, and if we are to speak of the "spontaneous element" then, of course, it is this movement which, first and foremost, must be regarded as spontaneous. But there is spontaneity and spontaneity. Strikes occurred in Russia in the seventies and sixties (and even in the first half of the nineteenth century), and were accompanied by the "spontaneous" destruction of machinery, etc. Compared with these "riots" the strikes of the nineties might even be described as "conscious," to such an extent do they mark the progress which the working-class movement had made in that period. This shows that the "spontaneous element," in essence, represents nothing more nor less than consciousness in an *embryonic form*. Even the primitive riots expressed the awakening of consciousness to a certain extent: the workers were losing their age-long faith in the permanence of the system which oppressed them. They began... I shall not say to understand, but to sense the necessity for collective resistance, and definitely abandoned their slavish submission to their superiors. But this was, nevertheless, more in the nature of outbursts of desperation and vengeance than of *struggle*. The strikes of the nineties revealed far greater flashes of consciousness: definite demands were advanced, the strike was carefully timed, known cases and examples in other places were discussed, etc. While the riots were simply revolts of the oppressed, the systematic strikes represented the class struggle in embryo, but only in embryo. Taken by themselves, these strikes were simply trade union struggles, but not yet Social-Democratic struggles. They testified to the awakening antagonisms between workers and employers, but the workers were not, and could not be, conscious of the irreconcilable antagonism of their inter-

ests to the whole of the modern political and social system, i.e., theirs was not yet Social-Democratic consciousness. In this sense, the strikes of the nineties, in spite of the enormous progress they represented as compared with the "riots," remained a purely spontaneous movement.

We have said that *there could not yet be* Social-Democratic consciousness among the workers. It could only be brought to them from without. The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness, i.e., the conviction that it is necessary to combine in unions, fight the employers and strive to compel the government to pass necessary labour legislation, etc.\* The theory of Socialism, however, grew out of the philosophic, historical and economic theories that were elaborated by the educated representatives of the propertied classes, the intellectuals. According to their social status, the founders of modern scientific Socialism, Marx and Engels, themselves belonged to the bourgeois intelligentsia. In the very same way, in Russia, the theoretical doctrine of Social-Democracy arose quite independently of the spontaneous growth of the working-class movement, it arose as a natural and inevitable outcome of the development of ideas among the revolutionary socialist intelligentsia. At the time of which we are speaking, i.e., the middle of the nineties, this doctrine not only represented the completely formulated program of the Emancipation of Labour group, but had already won over to its side the majority of the revolutionary youth in Russia.

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\* Trade unionism does not exclude "politics" altogether, as some imagine. Trade unions have always conducted some political (but not Social-Democratic) agitation and struggle. We shall deal with the difference between trade union politics and Social-Democratic politics in the next chapter.



Hence, we had both the spontaneous awakening of the masses of the workers, the awakening to conscious life and conscious struggle, and a revolutionary youth, armed with the Social-Democratic theory, eager to come into contact with the workers. In this connection it is particularly important to state the oft-forgotten (and comparatively little-known) fact that the *early* Social-Democrats of that period *zealously carried on economic agitation* (being guided in this by the really useful instructions contained in the pamphlet *On Agitation* that was still in manuscript), but they did not regard this as their sole task. On the contrary, *right from the very beginning* they advanced the widest historical tasks of Russian Social-Democracy in general, and the task of overthrowing the autocracy in particular. For example, already towards the end of 1895, the St. Petersburg group of Social-Democrats, which founded the League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class,<sup>11</sup> prepared the first issue of a newspaper called the *Rabocheye Dyelo*. This issue was ready to go to press when it was seized by the gendarmes who, on the night of December 8, 1895, raided the house of one of the members of the group, Anatoli Alexeyevich Vaneyev,\* and so the original *Rabocheye Dyelo* was not destined to see the light of day. The leading article in this issue (which perhaps in some thirty years' time some *Russkaya Starina* will unearth in the archives of the Department of Police) described the historical tasks of the working class in Russia, of which the achievement of political liberty is regarded as the most important. This

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\* A. A. Vaneyev died in Eastern Siberia in 1899 from consumption, which he contracted during solitary confinement in prison prior to his banishment. That is why we considered it possible to publish the above information, the authenticity of which we guarantee, for it comes from persons who were closely and directly acquainted with A. A. Vaneyev.

issue also contained an article entitled "What Are Our Cabinet Ministers Thinking Of?" which dealt with the breaking up of the elementary education committees by the police. In addition, there was some correspondence, not only from St. Petersburg, but from other parts of Russia too (for example, a letter about the assault on the workers in Yaroslavl Gubernia). This, if we are not mistaken, "first effort" of the Russian Social-Democrats of the nineties was not a narrow, local, and certainly not an "economic" newspaper, but one that aimed to unite the strike movement with the revolutionary movement against the autocracy, and to win all who were oppressed by the policy of reactionary obscurantism over to the side of Social-Democracy. No one in the slightest degree acquainted with the state of the movement at that period could doubt that such a paper would have met with warm response among the workers of the capital and the revolutionary intelligentsia and would have had a wide circulation. The failure of the enterprise merely showed that the Social-Democrats of that period were unable to meet the immediate requirements of the time owing to their lack of revolutionary experience and practical training. The same thing must be said with regard to the *St. Petersburg Rabochy Listok* and particularly with regard to the *Rabochaya Gazeta* and the *Manifesto* of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party which was founded in the spring of 1898. Of course, we would not dream of blaming the Social-Democrats of that time for this unpreparedness. But in order to profit from the experience of that movement, and to draw practical lessons from it, we must thoroughly understand the causes and significance of this or that shortcoming. For that reason it is extremely important to establish the fact that part (perhaps even a majority) of the Social-Democrats, operating in the period of 1895-98, quite justly considered it possible even then,

at the very beginning of the "spontaneous" movement, to come forward with a most extensive program and militant tactics.\* The lack of training of the majority of the revolutionaries, being quite a natural phenomenon, could not have aroused any particular fears. Since the tasks were correctly defined, since the energy existed for repeated attempts to fulfil these tasks, temporary failures were not such a great misfortune. Revolutionary experience and organizational skill are things that can be acquired provided the desire is there to acquire them, provided the shortcomings are recognized—which in revolutionary activity is more than halfway towards removing them!

But what was not a great misfortune became a real misfortune when this consciousness began to grow dim (it was very much alive among the workers of the group mentioned), when people—and even Social-Democratic organs—appeared who were prepared to regard shortcomings as virtues, who even tried to invent a *theoretical* basis for *slavish cringing before spontaneity*. It is time to summarize this trend, the substance of which is incorrectly and too narrowly described as "Economism."

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\* "In adopting a hostile attitude towards the activities of the Social-Democrats of the end of the nineties, the *Iskra* ignores the fact that at that time the conditions for any other kind of work except the struggle for petty demands were absent," declare the Economists in their *Letter to Russian Social-Democratic Organs*. (*Iskra*, No. 12.) The facts quoted above show that the assertion about "absent conditions" is the very opposite of the truth. Not only at the end, but even in the middle of the nineties, all the conditions existed for other work, besides fighting for petty demands, all the conditions—except sufficient training of the leaders. Instead of frankly admitting our, the ideologists', the leaders', lack of sufficient training—the "Economists" want to shift the blame entirely upon the "absent conditions," upon the influences of material environment that determine the road from which it will be impossible for any ideologist to divert the movement. What is this but slavish cringing before spontaneity, but the infatuation of the "ideologists" with their own shortcomings?

B. BOWING TO SPONTANEITY.  
THE *RABOCHAYA MYSL*

Before dealing with the literary manifestation of this subservience, we should like to note the following characteristic fact (communicated to us from the above-mentioned source), which throws some light on the circumstances in which the two future conflicting trends in Russian Social-Democracy arose and grew among the comrades working in St. Petersburg. In the beginning of 1897, just prior to their banishment, A. A. Vaneyev and several of his comrades attended a private meeting<sup>12</sup> at which "old" and "young" members of the League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class gathered. The conversation centred chiefly around the question of organization, and particularly around the "rules for the workers' benefit fund," which, in their final form, were published in the *Listok Rabotnika*, No. 9-10, p. 46. Sharp differences were immediately revealed between the "old" members ("Decembrists," as the St. Petersburg Social-Democrats jestingly called them) and several of the "young" members (who subsequently actively collaborated on the *Rabochaya Mysl*), and a very heated discussion ensued. The "young" members defended the main principles of the rules in the form in which they were published. The "old" members said that the prime necessity was not this, but the consolidation of the League of Struggle into an organization of revolutionaries to which all the various workers' benefit funds, students' propaganda circles, etc., should be subordinated. It goes without saying that the controversialists had no suspicion at that time that these disagreements were the beginning of a divergence; on the contrary, they regarded them as being of an isolated and casual nature. But this fact shows that in Russia too "Economism" did not arise and

spread without a fight against the "old" Social-Democrats (the Economists of today are apt to forget this). And if, in the main, this struggle has not left "documentary" traces behind it, it is *solely* because the membership of the circles functioning at that time underwent such constant change that no continuity was established and, consequently, differences were not recorded in any documents.

The appearance of the *Rabochaya Mysl* brought Economism to the light of day, but not all at once. We must picture to ourselves concretely the conditions of the work and the short-lived character of the majority of the Russian circles (and only those who have experienced this can have any exact idea of it), in order to understand how much there was accidental in the successes and failures of the new trend in various towns, and for how long a time neither the advocates nor the opponents of this "new" trend could make up their minds—indeed they had no opportunity to do so—as to whether this was really a distinct trend or whether it was merely an expression of the lack of training of certain individuals. For example, the first mimeographed copies of the *Rabochaya Mysl* never reached the great majority of Social-Democrats, and we are able to refer to the leading article in the first number only because it was reproduced in an article by V. I. (*Listok Rabotnika*, No. 9-10, p. 47 et seq.), who, of course, did not fail to extol with more zeal than reason the new paper, which was so different from the papers and the plans for papers mentioned above.\* And this leading article deserves to be dealt with because it so

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\*It should be stated in passing that the praise of the *Rabochaya Mysl* in November 1898, when Economism had become fully defined, especially abroad, emanated from that same V. I., who very soon after became one of the editors of the *Rabocheye Dyelo*. And yet the *Rabocheye Dyelo* denied that there were two trends in Russian Social-Democracy, and continues to deny it to this day!

strongly expresses *the spirit* of the *Rabochaya Mysl* and Economism generally.

After stating that the arm of the "bluecoats"<sup>13</sup> could never stop the progress of the working-class movement, the leading article goes on to say: "...The virility of the working-class movement is due to the fact that the workers themselves are at last taking their fate into their own hands, and out of the hands of the leaders," and this fundamental thesis is then developed in greater detail. As a matter of fact the leaders (i.e., the Social-Democrats, the organizers of the League of Struggle) were, one might say, torn out of the hands of the workers\* by the police; yet it is made to appear that the workers were fighting against the leaders, and liberated themselves from their yoke! Instead of sounding the call to go forward, towards the consolidation of the revolutionary organization and to the expansion of political activity, the call for a *retreat* to the purely trade union struggle was issued. It was announced that "the economic basis of the movement is eclipsed by the effort never to forget the political ideal," and that the watchword for the working-class movement was "Fight for economic conditions" (!) or, still better, "The workers for the workers." It was declared that strike funds "are more valuable for the movement than a hundred other organizations" (compare this statement made in October 1897 with the controversy between the "Decembrists" and the young members in the beginning of 1897), and so forth. Catchwords like: We must concentrate, not on the "cream" of the workers, but on the "average,"

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\* That this simile is a correct one is shown by the following characteristic fact. When, after the arrest of the "Decembrists," the news was spread among the workers of the Schlüsselburg Road that the discovery and arrest were facilitated by an agent-provocateur, N. N. Mikhailov, a dental surgeon, who had been in contact with a group associated with the "Decembrists," the workers were so enraged that they decided to kill him.

mass worker; "Politics always obediently follows economics,"\* etc., etc., became the fashion, and exercised an irresistible influence upon the masses of the youth who were attracted to the movement, but who, in the majority of cases, were acquainted only with such fragments of Marxism as were expounded in legally appearing publications.

Consciousness was completely overwhelmed by spontaneity—the spontaneity of the "Social-Democrats" who repeated Mr. V. V.'s "ideas," the spontaneity of those workers who were carried away by the arguments that a kopek added to a ruble was worth more than Socialism and politics, and that they must "fight, knowing that they are fighting not for some future generation, but for themselves and their children." (Leading article in the *Rabochaya Mysl*, No. 1.) Phrases like these have always been the favourite weapons of the West-European bourgeoisie, who, in their hatred for Socialism, strove (like the German "Sozial-Politiker" Hirsch) to transplant English trade unionism to their native soil and to preach to the workers that by engaging in the purely trade union struggle\*\* they would be fighting for themselves and for their children, and not for some future generation with some future Socialism. And now the "V. V.'s of Russian Social-Democracy" have set about repeating these bourgeois phrases.

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\* These quotations are taken from the leading article in the first number of the *Rabochaya Mysl* already referred to. One can judge from this the degree of theoretical training possessed by these "V. V.'s of Russian Social-Democracy,"<sup>14</sup> who kept repeating the crude vulgarization of "economic materialism" at a time when the Marxists were carrying on a literary war against the real Mr. V. V., who had long ago been dubbed "a past master of reactionary deeds," for holding *similar* views on the relations between politics and economics!

\*\* The Germans even have a special expression: "Nur-Gewerkschaftler," which means an advocate of the "purely trade union" struggle.

It is important at this point to note three circumstances which will be useful to us in our further analysis of *contemporary* differences.\*

First of all, the overwhelming of consciousness by spontaneity, to which we referred above, also took place *spontaneously*. This may sound like a pun, but, alas, it is the bitter truth. It did not take place as a result of an open struggle between two diametrically opposed points of view, in which one triumphed over the other; it occurred because an increasing number of "old" revolutionaries were "torn away" by the gendarmes and because increasing numbers of "young" "V. V.'s of Russian Social-Democracy" appeared on the scene. Everyone, who—I shall not say has participated in the *contemporary* Russian movement, but has at least breathed its atmosphere—knows perfectly well that this is precisely the case. And the reason why we, nevertheless, strongly insist that the reader be fully clear on this universally known fact, and why in order to be quite explicit, so to speak, we cite the details concerning the *Rabocheye Dyelo* as it first appeared, and concerning the controversy between the "old" and the "young" at the beginning of 1897—is that certain persons are speculating on the public's (or the very youthful youths') ignorance of this fact, and are boasting of their "democracy." We shall return to this point further on.

Secondly, in the very first literary manifestation of Economism, we can already observe the extremely curious phenomenon—one highly characteristic for an under-

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\* We emphasize the word *contemporary* for the benefit of those who may pharisaically shrug their shoulders and say: it is easy enough to attack the *Rabochaya Mysl* now, but is not all this ancient history? Mutato nomine de te fabula narratur (change the name and the tale refers to you—*Tr.*), we reply to such contemporary pharisees whose complete subjection to the ideas of the *Rabochaya Mysl* will be proved further on.



standing of all the differences prevailing among contemporary Social-Democrats—that the adherents of the “pure” working-class movement, the worshippers of the closest “organic” (the term used by the *Rabocheye Dyelo*) contacts with the proletarian struggle, the opponents of any nonworker intelligentsia (even if it be a socialist intelligentsia) are compelled, in order to defend their positions, to resort to the arguments of the *bourgeois* “pure” trade unionists. This shows that from the very outset the *Rabochaya Mysl* began—unconsciously—to carry out the program of the *Credo*. This shows (something the *Rabocheye Dyelo* cannot understand at all) that all worship of the spontaneity of the working-class movement, all belittling of the role of “the conscious element,” of the role of Social-Democracy, means, quite irrespective of whether the belittler wants to or not, strengthening the influence of the bourgeois ideology over the workers. All those who talk about “overrating the importance of ideology,”\* about exaggerating the role of the conscious element,\*\* etc., imagine that the pure working-class movement can work out, and will work out, an independent ideology for itself, if only the workers “wrest their fate from the hands of the leaders.” But this is a profound mistake. To supplement what has been said above, we shall quote the following profoundly just and important utterances by Karl Kautsky on the new draft program of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party:\*\*\*

“Many of our revisionist critics believe that Marx asserted that economic development and the class struggle create not only the conditions for socialist production, but also, and directly, the con-

\* Letter of the “Economists,” in the *Iskra*, No. 12.

\*\* *Rabocheye Dyelo*, No. 10.

\*\*\* *Neue Zeit*, 1901-02, XX, I, No. 3, p. 79. The committee’s draft to which Kautsky refers was adopted by the Vienna Congress (at the end of last year) in a slightly amended form.

*consciousness* (K. K.'s italics) of its necessity. And these critics aver that England, the country most highly developed capitalistically, is more remote than any other from this consciousness. Judging from the draft, one might assume that this allegedly orthodox-Marxist view, which is thus refuted, was shared by the committee that drafted the Austrian program. In the draft program it is stated: 'The more capitalist development increases the numbers of the proletariat, the more the proletariat is compelled and becomes fit to fight against capitalism. The proletariat becomes conscious' of the possibility and of the necessity for Socialism. In this connection socialist consciousness appears to be a necessary and direct result of the proletarian class struggle. But this is absolutely untrue. Of course, Socialism, as a doctrine, has its roots in modern economic relationships just as the class struggle of the proletariat has, and, just as the latter, emerges from the struggle against the capitalist-created poverty and misery of the masses. But Socialism and the class struggle arise side by side and not one out of the other; each arises under different conditions. Modern socialist consciousness can arise only on the basis of profound scientific knowledge. Indeed, modern economic science is as much a condition for socialist production as, say, modern technology, and the proletariat can create neither the one nor the other, no matter how much it may desire to do so; both arise out of the modern social process. The vehicle of science is not the proletariat, but the *bourgeois intelligentsia* (K. K.'s italics): it was in the minds of individual members of this stratum that modern Socialism originated, and it was they who communicated it to the more intellectually developed proletarians who, in their turn, introduce it into the proletarian class struggle where conditions allow that to be done. Thus, socialist consciousness is something introduced into the proletarian class struggle from without (von Aussen Hineingetragenes) and not something that arose within it spontaneously (urwüchsig). Accordingly, the old Hainfeld program quite rightly stated that the task of Social-Democracy is to imbue the proletariat (literally: saturate the proletariat) with the *consciousness* of its position and the consciousness of its task. There would be no need for this if consciousness arose of itself from the class struggle. The new draft copied this proposition from the old program, and attached it to the proposition mentioned above. But this completely broke the line of thought. . . ."

Since there can be no talk of an independent ideology being developed by the masses of the workers themselves

in the process of their movement\* the *only* choice is: either the bourgeois or the socialist ideology. There is no middle course (for humanity has not created a "third" ideology, and, moreover, in a society torn by class antagonisms there can never be a nonclass or above-class ideology). Hence, to belittle the socialist ideology *in any way*, to *turn away from it in the slightest degree* means to strengthen bourgeois ideology. There is a lot of talk about spontaneity, but the *spontaneous* development of the working-class movement leads to its becoming subordinated to the bourgeois ideology, *leads to its developing according to the program* of the *Credo*, for the spontaneous working-class movement is trade unionism, is *Nur-Gewerkschaftlerei*, and trade unionism means the ideological enslavement of the workers by the bourgeoisie. Hence, our task, the task of Social-Democracy, is to *combat spontaneity*, to *divert* the working-class movement from this spontaneous, trade-unionist striving to come under the wing of the bourgeoisie, and to bring it under the wing of revolutionary Social-Democracy. The phrase employed by the authors of the "economic" letter in the

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\* This does not mean, of course, that the workers have no part in creating such an ideology. But they take part not as workers, but as socialist theoreticians, as Proudhons and Weitlings; in other words, they take part only when, and to the extent that they are able, more or less, to acquire the knowledge of their age and advance that knowledge. And in order that workingmen *may be able to do this more often*, every effort must be made to raise the level of the consciousness of the workers generally; the workers must not confine themselves to the artificially restricted limits of "*literature for workers*" but should learn to master *general literature* to an increasing degree. It would be even more true to say "are not confined," instead of "must not confine themselves," because the workers themselves wish to read and do read all that is written for the intelligentsia and it is only a few (bad) intellectuals who believe that it is sufficient "for the workers" to be told a few things about factory conditions, and to have repeated to them over and over again what has long been known.

*Iskra*, No. 12, about the efforts of the most inspired ideologists not being able to divert the working-class movement from the path that is determined by the interaction of the material elements and the material environment, is *absolutely tantamount* therefore to the abandonment of Socialism, and if only the authors of this letter were capable of fearlessly, consistently and thoroughly considering what they say, as everyone who enters the arena of literary and public activity should do, there would be nothing left for them but to "fold their useless arms over their empty breasts" and . . . leave the field of action to Messrs. the Struves and Prokopoviches who are dragging the working-class movement "along the line of least resistance," i.e., along the line of bourgeois trade unionism, or to the Zubatovs,<sup>15</sup> who are dragging it along the line of clerical and gendarme "ideology."

Recall the example of Germany. What was the historical service Lassalle rendered to the German working-class movement? It was that he *diverted* that movement from the path of trade unionism and cooperation preached by the Progressives along which it had been travelling spontaneously (*with the benign assistance of Schulze-Delitzsch and those like him*). To fulfil a task like that it was necessary to do something altogether different from indulging in talk about underrating the spontaneous element, about tactics-as-a-process, about the interaction between elements and environment, etc. A *fierce struggle against spontaneity* was necessary, and only after such a struggle, extending over many years, was it possible, for instance, to convert the working population of Berlin from a bulwark of the Progressive Party into one of the finest strongholds of Social-Democracy. This fight is by no means finished even now (as might seem to those who learn the history of the German movement from Prokopovich, and its philosophy from Struve). Even now the German work-

ing class is, so to speak, broken up among a number of ideologies. A section of the workers is organized in Catholic and monarchist labour unions; another section is organized in the Hirsch-Duncker unions,<sup>16</sup> founded by the bourgeois worshippers of English trade unionism, while a third section is organized in Social-Democratic trade unions. The last is immeasurably more numerous than all the rest, but the Social-Democratic ideology was able to achieve this superiority, and will be able to maintain it, only by unswervingly fighting against all other ideologies.

But why, the reader will ask, does the spontaneous movement, the movement along the line of the least resistance, lead to the domination of the bourgeois ideology? For the simple reason that the bourgeois ideology is far older in origin than the socialist ideology; because it is more fully developed and because it possesses *immeasurably* more opportunities for being spread.\* And the younger the socialist movement is in any given country, the more vigorously must it fight against all attempts to entrench nonsocialist ideology, and the more strongly must the workers be warned against those bad counsellors who shout against "overrating the conscious element," etc. The authors of the economic letter, in unison with the *Rabocheye Dyelo*, declaim against the intolerance that is

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\* It is often said: the working class *spontaneously* gravitates towards Socialism. This is perfectly true in the sense that socialist theory defines the causes of the misery of the working class more profoundly and more correctly than any other theory, and for that reason the workers are able to assimilate it so easily, *provided*, however, that this theory does not itself yield to spontaneity, *provided* it subordinates spontaneity to itself. Usually this is taken for granted, but it is precisely this which the *Rabocheye Dyelo* forgets or distorts. The working class spontaneously gravitates towards Socialism, but the more widespread (and continuously revived in the most diverse forms) bourgeois ideology nevertheless spontaneously imposes itself upon the working class still more.

characteristic of the infancy of the movement. To this we reply: yes, our movement is indeed in its infancy, and in order that it may grow up the more quickly, it must become infected with intolerance against those who retard its growth by their subservience to spontaneity. Nothing is so ridiculous and harmful as pretending that we are "old hands" who have long ago experienced all the decisive episodes of the struggle.

Thirdly, the first number of the *Rabochaya Mysl* shows that the term "Economism" (which, of course, we do not propose to abandon because, however it may be, this appellation has already established itself) does not adequately convey the real character of the new trend. The *Rabochaya Mysl* does not altogether repudiate the political struggle: the rules for a workers' benefit fund published in the *Rabochaya Mysl*, No. 1, contains a reference to combating the government. The *Rabochaya Mysl* believes, however, that "politics always obediently follows economics" (and the *Rabocheye Dyelo* gives a variation of this thesis when, in its program, it asserts that "in Russia more than in any other country, the economic struggle is inseparable from the political struggle"). If by politics is meant Social-Democratic politics, then the postulates advanced by the *Rabochaya Mysl* and the *Rabocheye Dyelo* are absolutely wrong. The economic struggle of the workers is very often connected (although not inseparably) with bourgeois politics, clerical politics, etc., as we have already seen. The *Rabocheye Dyelo's* postulates are correct if by politics is meant trade union politics, i.e., the common striving of all workers to secure from the government measures for the alleviation of the distress characteristic of their position, but which do not abolish that position, i.e., which do not remove the subjection of labour to capital. That striving indeed is common to the British trade unionists who are hostile to Socialism, to the

Catholic workers, to the "Zubatov" workers, etc. There are politics and politics. Thus, we see that the *Rabochaya Mysl* does not so much deny the political struggle as bow to its *spontaneity*, to its lack of consciousness. While fully recognizing the political struggle (it would be more correct to say the political desires and demands of the workers), which arises spontaneously from the working-class movement itself, it absolutely refuses *independently to work out* a specifically *Social-Democratic policy* corresponding to the general tasks of Socialism and to contemporary conditions in Russia. Further on we shall show that the *Rabocheye Dyelo* commits the same error.

Autumn 1901-February 1902

## ONE STEP FORWARD, TWO STEPS BACK

(THE CRISIS IN OUR PARTY)

(*Excerpt*)

### R. A FEW WORDS ON DIALECTICS. TWO REVOLUTIONS

A general glance at the development of our Party crisis will readily show that in the main, with minor exceptions, the composition of the two contending sides remained unchanged throughout. It was a struggle between the revolutionary wing and the opportunist wing in our Party. But this struggle passed through the most varied stages, and anyone who wants to make his way through the vast amount of literature that has already been accumulated, the mass of fragmentary evidence, passages torn from their context, isolated accusations, and so on and so forth, must thoroughly familiarize himself with the peculiarities of each of these stages.

Let us enumerate the principal and clearly distinct stages: 1) The dispute over §1 of the Rules. A purely ideological struggle over the basic principles of organization. Plekhanov and I are in the minority. Martov and Axelrod propose an opportunist formulation and find themselves in the arms of the opportunists. 2) The split in the *Iskra* organization over the lists of candidates to the Central Committee: Fomin or Vasilyev in a committee of five, or Trotsky or Travinsky in a committee of three. Plekhanov and I gain the majority (nine to seven), partly



because of the very fact that we were in the minority on §1. Martov's coalition with the opportunists confirmed my worst fears raised by the Organization Committee incident. 3) Continuation of the debate on the details of the Rules. Martov is again saved by the opportunists. We are again in the minority and fight for the rights of the minority on the central bodies. 4) The seven extreme opportunists withdraw from the Congress. We become the majority and defeat the coalition (the *Iskra* minority, the "Marsh" and the anti-*Iskra*-ists) in the elections. Martov and Popov decline to accept seats in our trios. 5) The post-Congress squabble over co-option. An orgy of anarchist behaviour and anarchist phrasemongering. The least consistent and stable elements of the "minority" gain the upper hand. 6) To avert a split, Plekhanov adopts the policy of "killing with kindness." The "minority" occupy the editorial board of the Central Organ and the Council and attack the Central Committee with all their might. The squabble continues to pervade everything. 7) First attack on the Central Committee repulsed. The squabble seems to be somewhat subsiding. It becomes possible to discuss in comparative calm two purely ideological questions which profoundly agitate the Party: a) what is the political significance and explanation of the division of our Party into a "majority" and a "minority" which took shape at the Second Congress and replaced all earlier divisions and b) what is the significance from the standpoint of principle of the new position of the new *Iskra* on the question of organization?

In each of these stages the circumstances of the struggle and the immediate object of attack are essentially different; each stage is, as it were, a separate battle in one general military campaign. Our struggle cannot be understood at all unless the concrete circumstances of each battle are studied. But once that is done we shall clearly

find that the development does actually proceed dialectically, by way of contradictions: the minority becomes the majority, and the majority becomes the minority; each side passes from the defensive to the offensive, and from the offensive to the defensive; the starting point of the ideological struggle (§1) is "negated" and gives place to an all-pervading squabble;\* but then begins the "negation of the negation," and, having found a way of living more or less in "peace and harmony" on the various central bodies, we return to the starting point, the purely ideological struggle; but by now this "thesis" has been enriched by all the results of the "antithesis" and has become a higher synthesis, in which the isolated, casual error in connection with §1 has grown into a quasi system of opportunist views on matters of organization, and in which the connection between this fact and the basic division of our Party into a revolutionary wing and an opportunist wing becomes increasingly apparent to all. In a word, not only do oats grow according to Hegel, but the Russian Social-Democrats war among themselves according to Hegel.

But the great Hegelian dialectics which Marxism made its own, having first turned it right side up, must never be confused with the vulgar trick of justifying the zig-zags of politicians who swing over from the revolutionary wing to the opportunist wing of the Party, or with the vulgar habit of lumping together distinct statements, distinct incidents in the development of different stages of a single process. Genuine dialectics does not justify individual errors, but studies the inevitable turns, proving that they were inevitable by a detailed study of the process of

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\* The difficult problem of drawing a line between squabbling and a difference of principle now solves itself: all that relates to co-optation is squabbling; all that relates to an analysis of the struggle at the Congress, to the dispute over §1 and to the swing towards opportunism and anarchism is a difference of principle.

development in all its concreteness. The basic principle of dialectics is that there is no such thing as abstract truth, truth is always concrete. . . . And, one thing more, the great Hegelian dialectics should never be confused with that vulgar worldly wisdom so well expressed by the Italian saying: *mettere la coda dove non va il capo* (sticking in the tail where the head will not go through).

The result of the dialectical development of our Party struggle reduces itself to two revolutions. The Party Congress was a real revolution, as Comrade Martov justly remarked in his "Once More in the Minority." The wits of the minority are also right when they say: "The world moves in revolutions; well, we have made a revolution!" They did indeed carry through a revolution after the Congress; and it is true, too, that generally speaking the world does move in revolutions. But the concrete significance of each concrete revolution is not defined by this general aphorism; there are revolutions which are more like reaction, to paraphrase the unforgettable expression of the unforgettable Comrade Makhov. We must know whether it was the revolutionary wing or the opportunist wing of the Party which was the actual force that made the revolution, we must know whether it was revolutionary or opportunist principles that inspired the fighters, before we can determine whether the "world" (our Party) was moved forward or backward by any concrete revolution.

Our Party Congress was unique and unprecedented in the entire history of the Russian revolutionary movement. For the first time a secret revolutionary party succeeded in emerging from the darkness of underground life into broad daylight, displaying to the world the whole course and outcome of the struggle within our Party, the whole nature of our Party and of each of its more or less noticeable sections on questions of program, tactics and organization. For the first time we succeeded in throwing off the

traditions of circle looseness and revolutionary philistinism, in bringing together dozens of the most varied groups, many of which had been fiercely warring among themselves and had been linked together solely by the force of an idea and were prepared (in principle, that is) to sacrifice all their group aloofness and group independence for the sake of the great whole which we were for the first time actually creating—the *Party*. But in politics sacrifices are not obtained gratis, they have to be won in battle. The battle over the slaughter of the organizations was bound to be terribly fierce. The fresh breeze of free and open struggle blew into a gale. The gale swept away—and a good thing that it did!—every conceivable remnant of the circle interests, sentiments and traditions without exception, and for the first time created authoritative bodies that were really Party bodies.

But it is one thing to call oneself something, and another to be it. It is one thing to sacrifice the circle system in principle for the sake of the Party, and another to renounce one's own circle. The fresh breeze proved to be as yet too fresh for those who were used to musty philistinism. "The Party was unable to stand the strain of its first congress," as Comrade Martov rightly put it (inadvertently) in his "Once More in the Minority." The sense of injury over the slaughter of the organizations was too strong. The furious gale raised all the mud from the bottom of our Party stream; and the mud took its revenge. The old hidebound circle spirit overpowered the still young Party spirit. The opportunist wing of the Party, utterly routed though it had been, gained—temporarily, of course—the upper hand over the revolutionary wing, having been accidentally reinforced by the Akimov windfall.

The result is the new *Iskra*, which is compelled to develop and deepen the error its editors committed at the Party Congress. The old *Iskra*<sup>17</sup> taught the truths of rev-

olutionary struggle. The new *Iskra* teaches the worldly wisdom of yielding and living in harmony with everyone. The old *Iskra* was the organ of militant orthodoxy. The new *Iskra* treats us to a recrudescence of opportunism—chiefly on questions of organization. The old *Iskra* earned the honour of being disliked by the opportunists, both Russian and West-European. The new *Iskra* has “grown wise” and will soon cease to be ashamed of the praises lavished on it by the extreme opportunists. The old *Iskra* marched unswervingly towards its goal, and there was no discrepancy between its word and its deed. The inherent falsity of the position of the new *Iskra* inevitably leads—independently even of anyone’s will or intention—to political hypocrisy. It cries out against the circle spirit in order to conceal the victory of the circle spirit over the Party spirit. It pharisaically condemns splits, as if one can imagine any way of avoiding splits in any at all organized party worthy of the name except by the subordination of the minority to the majority. It says that heed must be paid to revolutionary public opinion, yet, while concealing the praises of the Akimovs, it indulges in petty scandalmongering about the committees of the revolutionary wing of the Party.\* How shameful! How they have disgraced our old *Iskra*!

One step forward, two steps back.... It happens in the lives of individuals, and it happens in the history of nations and in the development of parties. It would be the greatest criminal cowardice to doubt even for a moment the inevitable and complete triumph of the principles of revolutionary Social-Democracy, of proletarian organization and Party discipline. We have already won a great deal, and we must go on fighting, without being dis-

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\* A stereotyped form has even been worked out for this charming pastime: our special correspondent X informs us that Committee Y of the majority has badly treated Comrade Z of the minority.

couraged by reverses, fighting steadfastly, scorning the philistine methods of circle scrapping, doing our very utmost to preserve the single Party tie among all the Russian Social-Democrats which has been established at the cost of so much effort, and striving by dint of stubborn and systematic work to make all Party members, and the workers in particular, fully and intelligently acquainted with the duties of Party members, with the struggle at the Second Party Congress, with all the causes and all the stages of our disagreements, and with the utter disastrousness of opportunism, which, in the sphere of organization, as in the sphere of our program and our tactics, helplessly surrenders to the bourgeois psychology, uncritically adopts the point of view of bourgeois democracy, and blunts the weapon of the class struggle of the proletariat.

In its struggle for power the proletariat has no other weapon but organization. Disunited by the rule of anarchic competition in the bourgeois world, ground down by forced labour for capital, constantly thrust back to the "lower depths" of utter destitution, savagery and degeneration, the proletariat can become, and inevitably will become, an invincible force only when its ideological unification by the principles of Marxism is consolidated by the material unity of an organization which will weld millions of toilers into an army of the working class. Neither the decrepit rule of Russian tsardom, nor the senile rule of international capital will be able to withstand this army. Its ranks will become more and more serried, in spite of all zigzags and backward steps, in spite of the opportunist phrasemongering of the Girondists of present-day Social-Democracy, in spite of the smug praise of the antiquated circle spirit, and in spite of the tinsel and fuss of *intellectual* anarchism.

February-May 1904

## MARX ON THE AMERICAN “CLEAN REDISTRIBUTION”

In No. 12 of *Vperyod* mention was made of an article by Marx on the agrarian question in opposition to Kriege. This was not in 1848, as is erroneously stated in the article by Comrade——, but in 1846. Hermann Kriege, a collaborator of Marx and at that time a very young man, went to America in 1845 and established a journal there, the *Volkstribun* (*People's Tribune*), for the propaganda of Communism. But he conducted this propaganda in such a way that Marx was obliged to protest very strongly in the name of the German Communists against the manner in which Hermann Kriege was discrediting the Communist Party. The criticism of Kriege's trend published in 1846 in the *Westfälisches Dampfboot* and reprinted in Volume II of Mehring's edition of Marx's works is of enormous interest for present-day Russian Social-Democrats.

The point is that at that time the agrarian question was being brought to the forefront by the very course of the American social movement just as it is being brought to the forefront in Russia at the present time, and the question precisely at issue was not developed capitalist society, but the creation of the primary and fundamental conditions for the proper development of capitalism. This latter circumstance is of particular importance in drawing a parallel between Marx's attitude towards the American ideas of a “clean redistribution” and the attitude of

Russian Social-Democrats to the present peasant movement.

Kriege gave no material in his journal for a study of the concrete social peculiarities of the American system or for the elucidation of the true character of the movement of the agrarian reformers of those days who strove for the abolition of rent. Instead, Kriege (quite in the style of our "Socialist-Revolutionaries") clothed the question of the agrarian revolution in bombastic and high-sounding phrases. "Every poor person," wrote Kriege, "will at once become a useful member of human society as soon as he is given the opportunity for productive labour. Such an opportunity is assured him for all time as soon as society grants him a piece of land on which he can maintain himself and his family.... If this gigantic area (the 1,400,000,000 acres of North American state lands) is withdrawn from commerce and is secured in restricted amounts for labour,\* an end will be put to poverty in America at one stroke...."

To this Marx replies: "One might have expected him to understand that it is not within the power of legislators to hinder by means of decrees the evolution of the patriarchal system desired by Kriege into an industrial system, or to throw back the industrial and commercial states of the East coast into patriarchal barbarism."

And so, we have before us a regular plan for an American clean redistribution: the withdrawal of the bulk of the land from commerce, the right to land, the limitation of the amount of land that may be owned or occupied. And from the very outset Marx comes forward with a

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\* Recall what *Revolutsionnaya Rossiya*, beginning with No. 8, wrote on the transfer of land from capital to labour, the importance of the state lands in Russia, equal land tenure, the bourgeois idea of drawing land into commerce, etc. Exactly the same as Kriege!



sober criticism of its utopianism and points out that the transformation of the patriarchal system into an industrial system is inevitable, i.e., in present-day language, that the development of capitalism is inevitable. But it would be a big mistake to think that the utopian dreams of the members of the movement caused Marx to take up a hostile attitude to the movement in general. Nothing of the kind. Already at that time, at the very beginning of his literary career, Marx understood how to strip the real and progressive content of a movement of the ideological tinsel which clothed it. In the second part of his criticism entitled "The Economics (i.e., the political economy) of the *People's Tribune* and Its Attitude to Young America," Marx writes:

"We fully recognize the historical justification of the movement of the American National Reformers. We know that this movement strives to attain results which, it is true, would temporarily further the industrialization of modern bourgeois society, but which, as the fruit of the proletarian movement, as an attack on landed property in general, especially under the conditions prevailing in America, must eventually, by its own consequences, lead to Communism. Kriege, who, with the German Communists in New York, joined the anti-rent movement, clothes this simple fact in bombastic phrases without even troubling about the content of the movement itself and thereby proves that he is very unclear about the connection between young America and American conditions. We will quote another example of how he pours out his enthusiasm for humanity over a parcelling out of the land on an American scale suitable to the agrarians.

"In No. 10 of the *People's Tribune*, in an article entitled 'What We Want,' it is stated: 'The American National Reformers call the land the common heritage

of all men—and demand that the national legislature pass measures to preserve the 1,400,000,000 acres of land that have not yet fallen into the hands of the grabbing speculators as the inalienable common heritage of all mankind.' In order to preserve this 'inalienable common heritage' for all mankind he accepts the plan of the National Reformers: 'to provide every peasant, whatever his country of origin, with 160 acres of American land for his subsistence'; or as it is expressed in No. 14, 'Au Answer to Conze': 'of this still untouched heritage of the people nobody is to take possession of more than 160 acres, and this only on condition that he cultivates them himself.' The land is thus to be preserved as an 'inalienable common heritage,' and for 'all mankind' at that, by immediately starting to share it out. Kriege moreover imagines that he can avert the necessary consequences of this division—concentration, industrial progress, and the like—by legislation. He regards 160 acres of land as an always fixed quantity, as though the value of such an area does not vary according to its quality. The 'peasants' will have to exchange among themselves and with other people, if not the land itself, at least the produce of the land; and once they go so far, it will soon turn out that one 'peasant,' even without capital, thanks to his labour and the greater natural fertility of his 160 acres, will have reduced another peasant to the position of his farmhand. And then is it not all the same whether 'the land' or the products of the land 'fall into the hands of grabbing speculators'? Let us seriously examine Kriege's gift to mankind. One thousand four hundred million acres are to be preserved as 'the inalienable common heritage of all mankind.' Every 'peasant' is to receive 160 acres. We can therefore calculate the size of Kriege's 'mankind': exactly 8,750,000 'peasants,' who, counting five persons to a family, represent 43,750,000 persons. We can likewise cal-

culate the duration of this 'for all time' during which 'the proletariat, as the representative of all mankind,' at least in the U.S.A., can lay claim 'to all the land.' If the population of the U.S.A. continues to increase as rapidly as it has done until now, i.e., double itself in 25 years, this 'for all time' will last for not quite 40 years; by this time these 1,400,000,000 acres will be occupied and future generations will have nothing to lay claim to. But as the free grant of land will greatly increase immigration, Kriege's 'for all time' may come to an end even sooner, particularly if it is borne in mind that land sufficient for 44,000,000 persons will not be enough even to serve as a channel for diverting present European pauperism, for in Europe one out of every ten persons is a pauper and there are 7,000,000 paupers in the British Isles alone. We meet with a similar example of naïveté in economics in No. 13 in the article 'To the Women,' in which Kriege says that if the city of New York released its 52,000 acres of land on Long Island it would be sufficient 'at one stroke' to rid New York of all pauperism, misery and crime forever.

"If Kriege had regarded the movement for freeing the land as an initial form of the proletarian movement, necessary under certain conditions, if he had regarded it as a movement which, by reason of the position in life of the class from which it proceeds, must necessarily develop into a communist movement, if he had shown why the communist tendencies in America had at first to reveal themselves in this agrarian form, which seems to contradict all Communism, there would have been nothing to object to. But he declares what is only a subordinate form of a movement of certain definite people to be the cause of mankind in general; he represents it as the final and highest aim of every movement in general and thus transforms the definite aims of the movement into sheer bom-

hastic nonsense. In the same article in No. 10, he continues unperturbed to chant his song of triumph: 'And thus the old dreams of the Europeans would at last come true. A place would be prepared for them on this side of the ocean which they would only have to take and to fructify with the labour of their hands and they would be able proudly to declare to all the tyrants of the world: This is *my* cabin which you have not built; this is *my* hearth whose glow fills your hearts with envy.'

"He might have added: This is *my* dungheap which I, my wife, my children, my manservant and my cattle have produced. And who are the Europeans whose 'dreams' would thus come true? Not the communist workers, but bankrupt shopkeepers and handicraftsmen, or ruined cottars, who yearn for the good fortune of once again becoming petty bourgeois and peasants in America. And what is the 'dream' that is to be realized by means of these 1,400,000,000 acres? No other than that all men be converted into private owners, a dream which is as practical and as communistic as the dream of converting all men into emperors, kings and popes."

Marx's criticism is full of venom and sarcasm. He castigates Kriege for precisely those aspects of his views which we now observe among our "Socialist-Revolutionaries": the predominance of phrases, petty-bourgeois utopias advanced as the highest revolutionary utopianism, failure to understand the real foundations of the modern economic system and its development. With remarkable penetration, Marx, who was then only a *future* economist, points to the role of exchange and commodity production. The peasants will exchange, if not land, then at least the produce of the land, he says—and that says everything! The whole presentation of the question is in many, many respects applicable to the Russian peasant movement and its petty-bourgeois "socialist" ideologists.

But at the same time, Marx does not simply "repudiate" this petty-bourgeois movement, does not dogmatically ignore it, for fear, as is characteristic of many pedants, of soiling his hands by contact with revolutionary petty-bourgeois democracy. While mercilessly ridiculing the absurdity of the ideological integument of the movement, Marx strives in a sober materialist manner to determine its *real* historical content, the consequences which must inevitably follow from it because of objective conditions regardless of the will and consciousness, the dreams and theories of various individuals. Marx, therefore, does not condemn, but fully approves of Communists supporting the movement. Adopting the dialectical standpoint, i.e., examining the movement from every side, taking into account both the past and the future, Marx notes the revolutionary aspect of the attack on private property in land. Marx recognizes the petty-bourgeois movement as a peculiar initial form of the proletarian, communist movement. You will not achieve what you dream of by means of this movement, says Marx to Kriege: instead of fraternity, you will get petty-bourgeois isolation, instead of inalienable peasant allotments, the land will be drawn into commerce, instead of a blow at the grabbing speculators, the basis for capitalist development will be expanded. But the capitalist evil you are vainly hoping to avoid is historically good, for it will frightfully accelerate social development and bring ever so much nearer new and higher forms of the communist movement. A blow struck at landed property will facilitate further blows at property in general which are inevitable. The revolutionary action of the lower class for a change that will temporarily provide a restricted prosperity, and by no means for all, will facilitate the inevitable further revolutionary action of the very lowest class for a change that will really ensure complete human happiness for all toilers.

Marx's presentation of the case against Kriege should serve as a model for us Russian Social-Democrats. There can be no doubt about the real petty-bourgeois nature of the present peasant movement in Russia. This we must explain by every means in our power, and we must ruthlessly and irreconcilably combat all the illusions of all the "Socialist-Revolutionaries" or primitive Socialists on this score. The separate organization of an independent party of the proletariat which, through all democratic changes, will strive for a complete socialist revolution, must be our constant aim, which must not be lost sight of for a moment. But to turn our backs on the peasant movement on this ground would be hopeless philistinism and pedantry. No, there is no doubt about the revolutionary democratic nature of this movement, and we must support it with all our might, develop it, make it a politically conscious and definitely class movement, push it forward, march hand in hand with it to the end—for we are marching far beyond the end of any peasant movement; we are marching to the very end of the division of society into classes. There is hardly another country in the world where the peasantry is experiencing such suffering, such oppression and degradation as in Russia. The more gloomy this oppression of the peasantry has been, the more powerful will now be its awakening, the more invincible its revolutionary onslaught. It is the business of the class-conscious revolutionary proletariat to support this onslaught with all its might, so that it may leave no stone standing of this old, accursed, feudal and autocratic slavish Russia, so that it may create a new generation of bold and free people, a new republican country in which our proletarian struggle for Socialism will have room to expand.

April 1905

## TWO TACTICS OF SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY IN THE DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

(Excerpt)

### POSTSCRIPT

ONCE AGAIN "OSVOBOZHDENIYE"<sup>18</sup>-ISM, ONCE AGAIN  
NEW "ISKRA"-ISM

### III. THE VULGAR BOURGEOIS REPRESENTATION OF DICTATORSHIP AND MARX'S VIEW OF IT

Mehring tells us in his notes to Marx's articles from the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* of 1848 that he published, that one of the reproaches levelled at this newspaper by bourgeois publications was that it had allegedly demanded "the immediate introduction of a dictatorship as the sole means of achieving democracy" (Marx, *Nachlass*, Vol. III, p. 53). From the vulgar bourgeois standpoint the terms dictatorship and democracy are mutually exclusive. Failing to understand the theory of class struggle, and accustomed to seeing in the political arena the petty squabbling of the various bourgeois circles and coteries, the bourgeois conceives dictatorship to mean the annulment of all the liberties and guarantees of democracy, tyranny of every kind, and every sort of abuse of power in the personal interests of a dictator. In essence, it is precisely this vulgar bourgeois view that is manifested in the writings of our Martynov, who winds up his "new campaign" in the new *Iskra* by

attributing the partiality of the *Vperгод* and the *Proletary* for the slogan of dictatorship to Lenin's "passionate desire to try his luck" (*Iskra*, No. 103, p. 3, col. 2). In order to explain to Martynov the meaning of the term class dictatorship as distinct from personal dictatorship, and the tasks of a democratic dictatorship as distinct from those of a socialist dictatorship, it would not be amiss to dwell on the views of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*.

"Every provisional organization of the state after a revolution," wrote the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* on September 14, 1848, "requires a dictatorship, and an energetic dictatorship at that. From the very beginning we have reproached Camphausen (the head of the Ministry after March 18, 1848) for not acting dictatorially, for not having immediately smashed up and eliminated the remnants of the old institutions. And while Herr Camphausen was lulling himself with constitutional illusions, the defeated party (i.e., the party of reaction) strengthened its positions in the bureaucracy, and in the army, and here and there even began to venture upon open struggle."

These words, Mehring justly remarks, sum up in a few propositions all that was propounded in detail in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* in long articles on the Camphausen Ministry. What do these words of Marx tell us? That a provisional revolutionary government *must* act dictatorially (a proposition which the *Iskra* was totally unable to grasp since it was fighting shy of the slogan: dictatorship) and that the task of such a dictatorship is to destroy the remnants of the old institutions (which is precisely what was clearly stated in the resolution of the Third Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party about the struggle against counterrevolution, and what was omitted in the resolution of the Conference, as we showed above). Thirdly, and lastly, it follows from these words that Marx castigated the bourgeois democrats for entertaining "con-



stitutional illusions" in a period of revolution and open civil war. The meaning of these words becomes particularly obvious from the article in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* of June 6, 1848. "A Constituent National Assembly," wrote Marx, "must first of all be an active, revolutionary-active assembly. The Frankfurt Assembly, however, is busying itself with school exercises in parliamentarism while allowing the government to act. Let us assume that this learned assembly succeeds after mature consideration in working out the best possible agenda and the best possible constitution. But what is the use of the best possible agenda and of the best possible constitution, if the German governments have in the meantime placed the bayonet on the agenda?"

That is the meaning of the slogan: dictatorship. We can judge from this what Marx's attitude would have been towards resolutions which call a "decision to organize a constituent assembly" a decisive victory, or which invite us to "remain the party of extreme revolutionary opposition"!

Major questions in the life of nations are settled only by force. The reactionary classes themselves are usually the first to resort to violence, to civil war; they are the first to "place the bayonet on the agenda," as the Russian autocracy has been doing systematically and undeviatingly everywhere ever since January 9.<sup>19</sup> And since such a situation has arisen, since the bayonet has really become the main point on the political agenda, since insurrection has proved to be imperative and urgent—constitutional illusions and school exercises in parliamentarism become only a screen for the bourgeois betrayal of the revolution, a screen to conceal the fact that the bourgeoisie is "recoiling" from the revolution. It is therefore the slogan of dictatorship that the genuinely revolutionary class must advance.

On the question of the tasks of this dictatorship Marx wrote, already in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*: "The National Assembly should have acted dictatorially against the reactionary attempts of the obsolete governments; the force of public opinion in its favour would then have been so strong as to shatter all bayonets.... But this Assembly bores the German people instead of carrying the people with it or being carried away by it." In Marx's opinion, the National Assembly should have "eliminated from the regime actually existing in Germany everything that contradicted the principle of the sovereignty of the people," then it should have "consolidated the revolutionary ground on which it stands in order to make the sovereignty of the people, won by the revolution, secure against all attacks."

Thus, the tasks which Marx set before a revolutionary government or dictatorship in 1848 amounted in substance primarily to a *democratic* revolution: defence against counterrevolution and the actual elimination of everything that contradicted the sovereignty of the people. This is nothing else than a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship.

To proceed: which classes, in Marx's opinion, could and should have achieved this task (actually to exercise to the full the principle of the sovereignty of the people and to beat off the attacks of the counterrevolution)? Marx speaks of the "people." But we know that he always ruthlessly combated the petty-bourgeois illusions about the unity of the "people" and about the absence of a class struggle within the people. In using the word "people," Marx did not thereby gloss over class distinctions, but combined definite elements that were capable of carrying the revolution to completion.

After the victory of the Berlin proletariat on March 18, wrote the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, the results of the rev-

olution proved to be twofold: "On the one hand the arming of the people, the right of association, the sovereignty of the people actually attained; on the other hand, the preservation of the monarchy and the Camphausen-Hanse-mann Ministry, i.e., the government of representatives of the big bourgeoisie. Thus, the revolution had two series of results, which had inevitably to diverge. The people had achieved victory; it had won liberties of a decisive democratic nature, but the direct power passed not into its hands, but into those of the big bourgeoisie. In a word, the revolution was not completed. The people allowed the formation of a ministry of big bourgeois, and the big bourgeois immediately displayed their strivings by offering an alliance to the old Prussian nobility and bureaucracy. Arnim, Canitz and Schwerin joined the Ministry.

*"The upper bourgeoisie, ever antirevolutionary, concluded a defensive and offensive alliance with the reaction out of fear of the people, that is to say, the workers and the democratic bourgeoisie."* (Our italics.)

Thus, not only a "decision to organize a constituent assembly," but even its actual convocation is insufficient for a decisive victory of the revolution! Even after a partial victory in an armed struggle (the victory of the Berlin workers over the troops on March 18, 1848) an "incomplete" revolution, a revolution "that has not been carried to completion," is possible. On what, then, does its completion depend? It depends on whose hands the immediate rule passes into, whether into the hands of the Petrunkeviches and Rodichevs, that is to say, the Camphausens and the Hansemanns, or into the hands of the *people*, i.e., the workers and the democratic bourgeoisie. In the first case the bourgeoisie will possess power, and the proletariat "freedom of criticism," freedom to "remain the party of extreme revolutionary opposition." Immediately after the victory, the bourgeoisie will conclude an

alliance with the reaction (this would inevitably happen in Russia too, if, for example, the St. Petersburg workers gained only a partial victory in street fighting with the troops and left it to Messrs. Petrunkeviches and Co. to form a government). In the second case, a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship, i.e., the complete victory of the revolution, would be possible.

It now remains to define more precisely what Marx really meant by "democratic bourgeoisie" (demokratische Bürgerschaft), which together with the workers he called the people, in contradistinction to the big bourgeoisie.

A clear answer to this question is supplied by the following passage from an article in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* of July 29, 1848: "...The German revolution of 1848 is only a parody of the French revolution of 1789.

"On August 4, 1789, three weeks after the storming of the Bastille, the French people in a single day prevailed over all the feudal burdens.

"On July 11, 1848, four months after the March barricades, the feudal burdens prevailed over the German people. Teste Gierke cum Hansemanno.\*

"The French bourgeoisie of 1789 did not for a moment leave its allies, the peasants, in the lurch. It knew that the foundation of its rule was the destruction of feudalism in the countryside, the creation of a free land-owning (grundbesitzenden) peasant class.

\* "Witnesses: Herr Gierke and Herr Hansemann." Hansemann was a minister who represented the party of the big bourgeoisie (Russian counterpart: Trubetskoy or Rodichev, and the like); Gierke was Minister of Agriculture in the Hansemann Cabinet, who drew up a plan, a "bold" plan for "abolishing feudal burdens," professedly "without compensation," but in fact for abolishing only the minor and unimportant burdens while preserving or granting compensation for the more essential ones. Herr Gierke was something like the Russian Messrs. Kablukov, Manuilov, Hertenstein and similar bourgeois liberal friends of the muzhik who desire the "extension of peasant landownership" but do not wish to offend the landlords.

"The German bourgeoisie of 1848 is without the least compunction betraying the peasants, who are its most natural allies, the flesh of its flesh, and without whom it is powerless against the nobility.

"The continuance of feudal rights, their sanction under the guise of (illusory) redemption—such is the result of the German revolution of 1848. The mountain brought forth a mouse."

This is a very instructive passage: it gives us four important propositions: 1) The incompleted German revolution differs from the completed French revolution in that the German bourgeoisie betrayed not only democracy in general, but also the peasantry in particular. 2) The foundation for the full consummation of a democratic revolution is the creation of a free class of peasants. 3) The creation of such a class means the abolition of feudal burdens, the destruction of feudalism, but does not yet mean a socialist revolution. 4) The peasants are the "most natural" allies of the bourgeoisie, that is to say, of the democratic bourgeoisie, which without them is "powerless" against the reaction.

Making proper allowances for concrete national peculiarities and substituting serfdom for feudalism, all these propositions can be fully applied to Russia in 1905. There is no doubt that by learning from the experience of Germany, as elucidated by Marx, we cannot arrive at any other slogan for a decisive victory of the revolution than: a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. There is no doubt that the chief components of the "people," whom Marx in 1848 contrasted with the resisting reactionaries and the treacherous bourgeoisie, are the proletariat and the peasantry. There is no doubt that in Russia too the liberal bourgeoisie and the gentlemen of the Osvobozhdeniye League are betraying and will continue to betray the peasantry, i.e., will

confine themselves to a pseudo reform and taking the side of the landlords in the decisive battle between them and the peasantry. Only the proletariat is capable of supporting the peasantry to the end in this struggle. There is no doubt, finally, that in Russia also the success of the peasant struggle, i.e., the transfer of the whole of the land to the peasantry, will signify a complete democratic revolution and constitute the social support of the revolution carried to its completion, but it will by no means be a socialist revolution, or "socialization" that the ideologists of the petty bourgeoisie, the Socialist-Revolutionaries, talk about. The success of the peasant insurrection, the victory of the democratic revolution will merely clear the way for a genuine and decisive struggle for Socialism on the basis of a democratic republic. In this struggle the peasantry as a landowning class will play the same treacherous, vacillating part as is now being played by the bourgeoisie in the struggle for democracy. To forget this is to forget Socialism, to deceive oneself and others as to the real interests and tasks of the proletariat.

In order to leave no gaps in the presentation of the views held by Marx in 1848, it is necessary to note one essential difference between German Social-Democracy of that time (or the Communist Party of the Proletariat, to use the language of that period) and present-day Russian Social-Democracy. Here is what Mehring says:

"The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* appeared in the political arena as the 'organ of democracy.' The red thread that ran through all its articles is unmistakable. But directly, it championed the interests of the bourgeois revolution against absolutism and feudalism more than the interests of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. Very little is to be found in its columns about the separate working-class movement during the years of the revolution, although one should not forget that along with it

there appeared twice a week, under the editorship of Moll and Schapper, a special organ of the Cologne Workers' League. At any rate, the present-day reader will be struck by the little attention the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* paid to the German working-class movement of its day, although its most capable mind, Stephan Born, was a pupil of Marx and Engels in Paris and Brussels and in 1848 was the Berlin correspondent for their newspaper. Born relates in his *Memoirs* that Marx and Engels never expressed a single word in disapproval of his agitation among the workers; nevertheless, it appears probable from subsequent declarations of Engels' that they were dissatisfied, at least with the methods of this agitation. Their dissatisfaction was justified inasmuch as Born was obliged to make many concessions to the as yet totally undeveloped class consciousness of the proletariat in the greater part of Germany, concessions which do not stand the test of criticism from the viewpoint of the *Communist Manifesto*. Their dissatisfaction was unjustified inasmuch as Born managed nonetheless to maintain the agitation conducted by him on a relatively high plane.... Without doubt, Marx and Engels were historically and politically right in thinking that the primary interest of the working class was to push the bourgeois revolution forward as far as possible.... Nevertheless, a remarkable proof of how the elementary instinct of the working-class movement is able to correct the conceptions of the greatest minds is provided by the fact that in April 1849 they declared in favour of a specific workers' organization and decided to participate in the workers' congress, which was being prepared especially by the East Elbe (Eastern Prussia) proletariat."

Thus, it was only in April 1849, after the revolutionary newspaper had been appearing for almost a year (the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* began publication on June 1,

1848) that Marx and Engels declared in favour of a special workers' organization! Until then they were merely running an "organ of democracy" unconnected by any organizational ties with an independent workers' party. This fact, monstrous and improbable as it may appear from our present-day standpoint, clearly shows us what an enormous difference there is between the German Social-Democratic Party of those days and the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party of today. This fact shows how much less the proletarian features of the movement, the proletarian current within it, were in evidence in the German democratic revolution (because of the backwardness of Germany in 1848 both economically and politically—its disunity as a state). This should not be forgotten in judging Marx's repeated declarations during this period and somewhat later about the need for organizing an independent proletarian party. Marx arrived at this practical conclusion only as a result of the experience of the democratic revolution, almost a year later—so philistine, so petty-bourgeois was the whole atmosphere in Germany at that time. To us this conclusion is an old and solid acquisition of half a century's experience of international Social-Democracy—an acquisition with which we *began* to organize the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. In our case there can be no question, for instance, of revolutionary proletarian newspapers being outside the Social-Democratic Party of the proletariat, or of their appearing even for a moment simply as "organs of democracy."

But the contrast which had hardly begun to reveal itself between Marx and Stephan Born exists in our case in a form which is more developed by reason of the more powerful manifestation of the proletarian current in the democratic stream of our revolution. Speaking of the probable dissatisfaction of Marx and Engels with the agitation conducted by Stephan Born, Mehring expresses



himself too mildly and too evasively. This is what Engels wrote of Born in 1885 (in his preface to the *Enthüllungen über den Kommunistenprocess zu Köln*. Zürich, 1885\*):

The members of the Communist League everywhere stood at the head of the extreme democratic movement, proving thereby that the League was an excellent school of revolutionary action. "...the compositor Stephan Born, who had worked in Brussels and Paris as an active member of the League, founded a Workers' Brotherhood" ("Arbeiterverbrüderung") "in Berlin which became fairly widespread and existed until 1850. Born, a very talented young man, who, however, was a bit too much in a hurry to become a political figure, 'fraternized' with the most miscellaneous ragtag and bobtail (Kreti und Plethi) in order to get a crowd together, and was not at all the man who could bring unity into the conflicting tendencies, light into the chaos. Consequently, in the official publications of the association the views represented in the *Communist Manifesto* were mingled hodgepodge with guild recollections and guild aspirations, fragments of Louis Blanc and Proudhon, protectionism, etc.; in short, they wanted to please everybody" (allen alles sein). "*In particular, strikes, trade unions and producers' cooperatives were set going and it was forgotten that above all it was a question of first conquering, by means of political victories, the field in which alone such things could be realized on a lasting basis.* (Our italics.) When, afterwards, the victories of the reaction made the leaders of the Brotherhood realize the necessity of taking a direct part in the revolutionary struggle, they were naturally left in the lurch by the confused mass which they had grouped around themselves. Born took part in the Dresden uprising in May 1849 and had a lucky escape. But, in contrast

\* *Revelations About the Trial of the Communists at Cologne*, Zürich, 1885.—Tr.

to the great political movement of the proletariat, the Workers' Brotherhood proved to be a pure separate league, which to a large extent existed only on paper and played such a subordinate role that the reaction did not find it necessary to suppress it until 1850, and its surviving branches until several years later. Born, whose real name was Buttermilch (Buttermilk),\* has not become a big political figure but a petty Swiss professor, who no longer translates Marx into guild language but the meek Renan into his own fulsome German."

That is how Engels judged the two tactics of Social-Democracy in the democratic revolution!

Our new *Iskra*-ists are also pushing towards "Economicism," and with such unreasonable zeal as to earn the praises of the monarchist bourgeoisie for their "seeing the light." They too collect around themselves a motley crowd, flattering the "Economists," demagogically attracting the undeveloped masses by the slogans of "initiative," "democracy," "autonomy," etc., etc. Their labour unions, too, exist only on the pages of the Khlestakov<sup>20</sup> new *Iskra*. Their slogans and resolutions betray a similar failure to understand the tasks of the "great political movement of the proletariat."

June-July 1905

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\* In translating Engels I made a mistake in the first edition by taking the word *Buttermilch* to be not a proper noun but a common noun. This mistake naturally afforded great delight to the Mensheviks. Koltsov wrote that I had "Rendered Engels more profound" (reprinted in *Two Years*, a collection of articles) and Plekhanov even now recalls this mistake in the *Tovarishch*—in short, it afforded an excellent pretext to slur over the question of the two tendencies in the working-class movement of 1848 in Germany, the Born tendency (akin to our Economists) and the Marxist tendency. To take advantage of the mistake of an opponent, even if it was only on the question of Born's name, is more than natural. But to use a correction to a translation to slur over the question of the two tactics is to dodge the real issue. (Author's note to the 1907 edition.—Ed.)

## PARTISAN WARFARE

The question of partisan action is one that greatly interests our party and the mass of the workers. We have dealt with this question in passing several times, and now we propose to give the more complete statement of our views we have promised.

### I

Let us begin from the beginning. What are the fundamental demands which every Marxist should make of an examination of the question of the forms of struggle? In the first place, Marxism differs from all primitive forms of Socialism by the fact that it does not bind the movement to any one particular form of struggle. It admits the most varied forms of struggle; and it does not "concoct" them, but only generalizes, organizes, gives conscious expression to those forms of struggle of the revolutionary classes which arise of themselves in the course of the movement. Absolutely hostile to all abstract formulas and to all doctrinaire recipes, Marxism demands an attentive attitude to the *mass* struggle in progress, which, as the movement develops, as the class consciousness of the masses grows, as economic and political crises become acute, continually gives rise to new and more varied methods of defence and offence. Marxism, therefore, positively does not reject any form of struggle. Under no circumstances does Marxism confine itself to the forms of struggle that are possible and that exist at the given mo-

ment only, recognizing as it does that new forms of struggle, unknown to the participants of the given period, *inevitably* arise as the given social situation changes. In this respect Marxism *learns*, if we may so express it, from mass practice, and makes no claim whatever to *teach* the masses forms of struggle invented by "systematizers" in the seclusion of their studies. We know—said Kautsky, for instance, when examining the forms of social revolution—that the coming crisis will introduce new forms of struggle that we are now unable to foresee.

In the second place, Marxism demands an absolutely *historical* examination of the question of the forms of struggle. To treat the question apart from the concrete historical situation is to betray ignorance of the very rudiments of dialectical materialism. At different stages of economic evolution, depending on differences in political, national-cultural, living and other conditions, different forms of struggle come to the fore and become the principal forms of struggle; and in connection with this, the secondary, auxiliary forms of struggle undergo change in their turn. To attempt to answer yes or no to the question whether any particular means of struggle should be used, without making a detailed examination of the concrete situation of the given movement at the given stage of its development, means completely to abandon the Marxist position.

These are the two principal theoretical precepts by which we must be guided. The history of Marxism in Western Europe provides an infinite number of examples corroborating what has been said. European Social-Democracy at the present time regards parliamentarism and the trade union movement as the principal forms of struggle; it recognized insurrection in the past, and is quite prepared to recognize it, should conditions change,

in the future—despite the opinion of bourgeois liberals like the Russian Cadets and the *Bezzaglavtsi*.<sup>21</sup> Social-Democracy in the seventies rejected the general strike as a social panacea, as a means of overthrowing the bourgeoisie at one stroke by nonpolitical means—but Social-Democracy fully recognizes the mass political strike (especially after the experience of Russia in 1905) as *one* of the methods of struggle essential under *certain* conditions. Social-Democracy recognized street barricade fighting in the forties, rejected it for definite reasons at the end of the nineteenth century, and expressed complete readiness to revise the latter view and to admit the expediency of barricade fighting after the experience of Moscow, which, in the words of K. Kautsky, initiated new tactics of barricade fighting.

## II

Having established the general Marxist precepts, let us turn to the Russian revolution. Let us recall the historical development of the forms of struggle it initiated. First there were the economic strikes of workers (1896-1900), then the political demonstrations of workers and students (1901-02), peasant revolts (1902), the beginning of mass political strikes variously combined with demonstrations (Rostov 1902, the strikes in the summer of 1903, January 9, 1905), the all-Russian political strike accompanied by local cases of barricade fighting (October 1905), mass barricade fighting and armed insurrection (1905, December), the peaceful parliamentary struggle (April-June 1906), partial military revolts (June 1905-July 1906) and partial peasant revolts (autumn 1905-autumn 1906).

Such is the position of affairs in the autumn of 1906 as concerns forms of struggle in general. The “retaliatory” form of struggle adopted by the autocracy is the Black-

Hundred pogrom, from Kishinev in the spring of 1903 to Sedletz in the autumn of 1906. All through this period the organization of Black-Hundred pogroms and the beating up of Jews, students, revolutionaries and class-conscious workers continued to progress and perfect itself, combining the violence of Black-Hundred troops with the violence of hired ruffians, going as far as the use of artillery in villages and towns and merging with punitive expeditions, punitive trains and so forth.

Such is the principal background of the picture. Against this background there stands out—unquestionably as something partial, secondary and auxiliary—the phenomenon to the study and assessment of which the present article is devoted. What is this phenomenon? What are its forms? What are its causes? When did it arise and how far has it spread? What is its significance in the general march of the revolution? What is its relation to the struggle of the working class organized and led by Social-Democracy? Such are the questions which we must now proceed to examine after having painted the general background of the picture.

The phenomenon in which we are interested is the *armed* struggle. It is conducted by individuals and by small groups. Some belong to revolutionary organizations, while others (the *majority* in certain parts of Russia) do not belong to any revolutionary organization. Armed struggle pursues two *different* aims, which must be *strictly* distinguished: in the first place, this struggle aims at assassinating individuals, chiefs and subordinates in the army and police; in the second place, it aims at the confiscation of monetary funds both from the government and from private persons. The confiscated funds go partly into the treasury of the party, partly for the special purpose of arming and preparing for insurrection, and partly for the maintenance of persons engaged in the struggle

we are describing. The big expropriations (such as the Caucasian, involving over 200,000 rubles, and the Moscow, involving 875,000 rubles) went in fact first and foremost to revolutionary parties—small expropriations go mostly, and sometimes entirely, to the maintenance of the “expropriators.” This form of struggle undoubtedly became widely developed and extensive only in 1906, i.e., after the December insurrection. The accentuation of the political crisis to the point of an armed struggle and, in particular, the accentuation of poverty, hunger and unemployment in town and country, was one of the important causes of the struggle we are describing. This form of struggle was adopted as the preferable and even *exclusive* form of social struggle by the vagabond elements of the population, the lumpen-proletariat and anarchist groups. Declaration of martial law, mobilization of fresh troops, Black-Hundred pogroms (Sedletz), and courts-martial must be regarded as the “retaliatory” form of struggle adopted by the autocracy.

### III

The common opinion of the struggle we are describing is that it is anarchism, Blanquism, the old terrorism, the acts of individuals isolated from the masses, which demoralize the workers, repel wide strata of the population, disorganize the movement and injure the revolution. Examples in support of this opinion can easily be found in the events reported every day in the newspapers.

But are such examples convincing? In order to verify this, let us take a locality where the form of struggle we are examining is *most* developed—the Lettish region. This is the way *Novoye Vremya* (in its issues of September

9 and 12) complains of the activities of the Lettish Social-Democrats. The Lettish Social-Democratic Labour Party (a section of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party) regularly issues its paper in 30,000 copies. The announcement columns publish lists of spies whom it is the duty of every decent person to exterminate. People who assist the police are proclaimed "enemies of the revolution," liable to execution and, moreover, to confiscation of property. The public is instructed to give money to the Social-Democratic Party only against signed and stamped receipt. In the party's latest report, showing a total revenue of 48,000 rubles for the year, there figures a sum of 5,600 rubles contributed by the Libau branch for arms which was obtained by expropriation. Naturally, *Novoye Vremya* rages and fumes against this "revolutionary law," against this "sinister government."

Nobody will be so bold as to call these activities of the Lettish Social-Democrats anarchism, Blanquism or terrorism. But why? Because here we have a *clear* connection between the new form of struggle and the insurrection which broke out in December and which is again brewing. This connection is not so perceptible in the case of Russia as a whole, but it exists. The fact that "partisan" warfare became widespread precisely after December, and its connection with the accentuation not only of the economic crisis but also of the political crisis is beyond dispute. The old Russian terrorism was an affair of the intellectual conspirator; today as a general rule partisan warfare is waged by the worker combatant, or simply by the unemployed worker. Blanquism and anarchism easily occur to the minds of people who have a weakness for stereotype; but under circumstances of insurrection, which are so apparent in the Lettish region, the inappropriateness of such trite labels is only too obvious.



The example of the Letts clearly demonstrates how incorrect, unscientific and unhistorical is the practice so very common among us of analyzing partisan warfare without reference to the circumstances of insurrection. These circumstances must be borne in mind, we must reflect on the peculiar features of an intermediate period between big acts of insurrection, we must realize what forms of struggle inevitably arise under such circumstances, and not try to shirk the issue by a collection of words learned by rote, such as are used equally by the Cadets and the *Novoye Vremya*-ites: anarchism, robbery, vagabondry!

It is said that partisan acts disorganize our work. Let us apply this argument to the situation that has existed since December 1905, to the period of Black-Hundred pogroms and martial law. What disorganizes the movement more in *such* a period: the absence of resistance or organized partisan warfare? Compare the centre of Russia with her western borders, with Poland and the Lettish region. It is unquestionable that partisan warfare is far more widespread and far more developed in the western border regions. And it is equally unquestionable that the revolutionary movement in general, and the Social-Democratic movement in particular, are *more disorganized* in central Russia than in the western border regions. Of course, it would not enter our heads to conclude from this that the Polish and Lettish Social-Democratic movements are less disorganized *thanks* to partisan warfare. No. The only conclusion that can be drawn is that partisan warfare is not to blame for the state of disorganization of the Social-Democratic labour movement in Russia in 1906.

Allusion is often made in this respect to the peculiarities of national conditions. But this allusion very clearly betrays the weakness of the current argument. If it is a

matter of national conditions then it is not a matter of anarchism, Blanquism or terrorism—sins that are common to Russia in general and even to the Russians especially—but of something else. Analyze this something else *concretely*, gentlemen! You will then find that national oppression or antagonism explain nothing, because they have always existed in the western border regions, whereas partisan warfare has been engendered only by the present historical period. There are many places where there is national oppression and antagonism, but no partisan struggle, which sometimes develops where there is no national oppression whatever. A concrete analysis of the question will show that it is not a matter of national oppression, but of conditions of insurrection. Partisan warfare is an inevitable form of struggle at a time when the mass movement has actually reached the point of insurrection and when fairly large intervals occur between the “big engagements” in the civil war.

It is not partisan actions which disorganize the movement, but the weakness of a party which is incapable of taking such actions *under its control*. That is why the anathemas which we Russians usually hurl against partisan actions go hand in hand with secret, casual, unorganized partisan actions which really do disorganize the party. Being incapable of understanding what historical conditions give rise to this struggle, we are incapable of neutralizing its noxious aspects. Yet the struggle is going on. It is engendered by powerful economic and political causes. It is not in our power to eliminate these causes or to eliminate this struggle. Our complaints against partisan warfare are complaints against our party weakness in the matter of insurrection.

What we have said about disorganization also applies to demoralization. It is not partisan warfare which de-

moralizes, but *unorganized*, irregular, nonparty partisan acts. We shall not rid ourselves one least bit of this *most unquestionable* demoralization by condemning and cursing partisan actions, for condemnation and curses are absolutely incapable of putting a stop to a phenomenon which has been engendered by profound economic and political causes. It may be objected that if we are incapable of putting a stop to an abnormal and demoralizing phenomenon, this is no reason why the *Party* should adopt abnormal and demoralizing methods of struggle. But such an objection would be a purely bourgeois-liberal and not a Marxist objection, because a Marxist cannot regard civil war, or partisan warfare, which is one of its forms, as abnormal and demoralizing *in general*. A Marxist stands by class struggle, and not social peace. In certain periods of acute economic and political crises the class struggle ripens into a direct civil war, i.e., into an armed struggle between two sections of the people. In such periods a Marxist is *obliged* to take the stand of civil war. Any moral condemnation of civil war would be absolutely impermissible from the standpoint of Marxism.

In a period of civil war the ideal party of the proletariat is a *fighting party*. This is absolutely incontrovertible. We are quite prepared to grant that it is possible to argue and prove the *inexpediency* from the standpoint of civil war of particular forms of civil war at any particular moment. We fully admit criticism of diverse forms of civil war from the standpoint of *military expediency* and absolutely agree that in *this* question it is the Social-Democratic practical workers in each particular locality who must have the deciding say. But we absolutely demand in the name of the principles of Marxism that an analysis of the conditions of civil war should not be evaded by hackneyed and stereotyped talk about

anarchism, Blanquism and terrorism, and that senseless methods of partisan activity adopted by some organization or other of the Polish Socialist Party at some moment or other should not be used as a bugbear when discussing the question of the participation of the Social-Democratic Party itself in partisan warfare in general.

The argument that partisan warfare disorganizes the movement must be regarded critically. *Every* new form of struggle, accompanied as it is by new dangers and new sacrifices, inevitably "disorganizes" organizations which are unprepared for this new form of struggle. Our old propagandist circles were disorganized by recourse to methods of agitation. Our committees were subsequently disorganized by recourse to demonstrations. Every military action in any war to a certain extent disorganizes the ranks of the fighters. But this does not mean that one must not fight. It means that one must *learn* to fight. That is all.

When I see Social-Democrats proudly and smugly declaring "we are not anarchists, thieves, robbers, we are superior to all this, we reject partisan warfare,"—I ask myself: do these people realize what they are saying? Armed collisions and conflicts between the Black-Hundred government and the population are taking place all over the country. This is an absolutely inevitable phenomenon at the present stage of development of the revolution. The population is spontaneously and in an unorganized way—and for that very reason often in unfortunate and *undesirable* forms—reacting to this phenomenon also by armed conflicts and attacks. I can understand us refraining from party leadership of *this* spontaneous struggle in a particular place or at a particular time because of the weakness and unpreparedness of our organization. I realize that this question must be settled by the local prac-

tical workers, and that the remoulding of weak and unprepared organizations is no easy matter. But when I see a Social-Democratic theoretician or publicist not displaying regret over this unpreparedness, but rather a proud smugness and a self-exalted tendency to repeat phrases learnt by rote in early youth about anarchism, Blanquism and terrorism, I am hurt by this degradation of the most revolutionary doctrine in the world.

It is said that partisan warfare approximates the class-conscious proletariat to the position of a degraded, drunken vagabond. That is true. But it only means that the party of the proletariat can never regard partisan warfare as the only, or even as the chief, method of struggle; it means that this method must be subordinated to other methods, that it must be commensurate with the chief methods of warfare, and must be ennobled by the enlightening and organizing influence of Socialism. And without this *latter* condition, *every*, positively every, method of struggle in bourgeois society approximates the proletariat to the position of the various nonproletarian strata above and below it and, if left to the spontaneous course of events, becomes frayed, corrupted and prostituted. Strikes, if left to the spontaneous course of events, become corrupted into "alliances"—agreements between the workers and the masters *against* the interests of the consumers. Parliament becomes corrupted into a brothel, where a gang of bourgeois politicians barter wholesale and retail "national freedom," "liberalism," "democracy," republicanism, anticlericalism, socialism and all other salable wares. A newspaper becomes corrupted into a public pimp, into a means of corrupting the masses, of pandering to the low instincts of the mob, and so on and so forth. Social-Democracy knows of no universal methods of struggle, such as would shut off the proletariat by a Chinese Wall from the strata standing slightly above

or slightly below it. At different periods Social-Democracy applies different methods, *always* qualifying the choice of them by *strictly* defined ideological and organizational conditions.\*

#### IV

The forms of struggle in the Russian revolution are distinguished by their colossal variety as compared with the bourgeois revolutions in Europe. Kautsky partly foretold this in 1902 when he said that the future revolution (with the exception *perhaps* of Russia, he added) would be not so much a struggle between people and government as a struggle between two sections of the people. In Russia we are undoubtedly witnessing a wider development of the *latter* struggle than was the case in the bourgeois revolutions in the West. The enemies of our revolution among the people are few in number, but they are more and more organizing as the struggle grows more acute and are receiving support from the reactionary

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\* The Bolshevik Social-Democrats are often accused of a frivolous passion for partisan actions. It would therefore not be amiss to recall that in the draft resolution on partisan actions (*Partiiniye Izvestia*, No. 2, and Lenin's report on the Congress), the section of the Bolsheviks who defend partisan actions suggested the following conditions for their recognition: "exes" of private property were not to be permitted under any circumstances; "exes" of government property were not to be recommended but only *allowed*, provided that they *were controlled by the Party* and their proceeds used *for the needs of insurrection*. Partisan acts in the form of terrorism were to be *recommended* against brutal government officials and active members of the Black Hundreds, but on condition that 1) the sentiments of the masses be taken into account; 2) the conditions of the working-class movement in the given locality be reckoned with, and 3) care be taken that the forces of the proletariat should not be frittered away. The practical difference between this draft and the resolution which was adopted at the Unity Congress lies *exclusively* in the fact that "exes" of government property are not allowed.

strata of the bourgeoisie. It is therefore absolutely natural and inevitable that in *such* a period, a period of nationwide political strikes, *insurrection* cannot assume the old form of individual acts confined to very short intervals of time and to very limited areas. It is absolutely natural and inevitable that the insurrection should assume the higher and more complex form of a prolonged civil war embracing the whole country, i.e., an armed struggle between two sections of the people. Such a war cannot be conceived otherwise than as a series of a few big engagements at comparatively long intervals and a large number of small collisions during these intervals. That being so—and it is undoubtedly so—the Social-Democrats must absolutely make it their duty to create organizations best adapted to lead the masses in these big engagements and, as far as possible, in these small collisions as well. In a period when the class struggle has become accentuated to the point of civil war, Social-Democrats must make it their duty not only to participate but also to play the leading role in *this civil war*. The Social-Democrats must train and prepare their organizations to be really able to act as a *belligerent side* which does not lose a single opportunity of inflicting damage on the enemy's forces.

This is a difficult task, there is no denying. It cannot be accomplished at once. Just as the whole people are being re-trained and are learning to fight in the course of the civil war, so our organizations must be trained, must be reconstructed in conformity with the lessons of experience for the performance of this task.

We have not the slightest intention of foisting on practical workers any artificial form of struggle, or even of deciding from our armchair what part any particular form of partisan warfare should play in the general course of the civil war in Russia. We are far from the thought of regarding a concrete assessment of particular partisan

actions as indicative of a *trend* in Social-Democracy. But we do regard it as our duty as far as possible to help to arrive at a correct *theoretical* assessment of the new forms of struggle engendered by practical life. We do regard it as our duty relentlessly to combat stereotypes and prejudices which hamper the class-conscious workers in correctly formulating a new and difficult problem and in correctly approaching its solution.

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**PREFACE TO THE RUSSIAN TRANSLATION  
OF THE LETTERS OF K. MARX  
TO L. KUGELMANN**

Our aim in issuing as a separate pamphlet the full collection of Marx's letters to Kugelmann published in the German Social-Democratic weekly, *Neue Zeit*, is to acquaint the Russian public more closely with Marx and Marxism. A good deal of space in Marx's correspondence, as was to be expected, is devoted to personal matters. For the biographer, this is exceedingly valuable material. But for the broad public in general and for the Russian working class in particular those passages in the letters which contain theoretical and political material are infinitely more important. For us especially, in the revolutionary period we are passing through, it is very instructive to study the material which reveals Marx as a man who directly responded to all questions of the labour movement and world politics. The editors of the *Neue Zeit* are quite right when they remark that "we are elevated by an acquaintance with the personality of men whose thoughts and wills took shape in times of great upheaval." Such an acquaintance is doubly necessary to the Russian Socialist in 1907, for it provides a wealth of very valuable indications concerning the direct tasks confronting the Socialists in every revolution passed through by his country. Russia is passing through a "great upheaval" at this very moment. Marx's policy in the comparatively stormy sixties should serve very often as a direct model for the

policy of the Social-Democrat in the present Russian revolution.

We shall therefore only very briefly note the passages in Marx's correspondence which are of particular importance from the theoretical standpoint, and shall deal in greater detail with his revolutionary policy as a representative of the proletariat.

Of outstanding interest for a fuller and profounder understanding of Marxism is the letter of July 11, 1868 (pp. 42 et seq.). In the form of polemical remarks against the vulgar economists, Marx in this letter very clearly expounds *his* conception of what is called the "labour" theory of value. Those very objections to Marx's theory of value which naturally arise in the minds of the least-trained readers of *Capital*, and which for this reason are most eagerly seized upon by the common or garden representatives of "professorial" bourgeois "science," are here analyzed by Marx briefly, simply and with remarkable lucidity. Marx here shows the road he took and the road that should be taken to elucidate the law of value. He teaches us his *method*, using the most common objections as illustrations. He makes clear the connection between such a purely (it would seem) theoretical and abstract question as the theory of value and "the interests of the ruling classes," which are "*to perpetuate confusion.*" It is only to be hoped that everyone who begins to study Marx and to read *Capital* will read and re-read this letter when studying the first and most difficult chapters of *Capital*.

Other very interesting passages in the letters from the theoretical standpoint are those in which Marx passes judgment on diverse writers. When you read these opinions of Marx—vividly written, full of passion and revealing a profound interest in all the great ideological trends and their analysis—you feel that you are listening to the

words of a great thinker. Apart from the remarks on Dietzgen made in passing, the comments on the Proudhonists deserve the particular attention of the reader (p. 17). The "brilliant" young bourgeois intellectuals who throw themselves "among the proletariat" at times of social uplift and who are incapable of acquiring the standpoint of the working class or of carrying on persistent and serious work among the "rank and file" of the proletarian organizations, are depicted by a few strokes with remarkable vividness.

Take the comment on Dühring (p. 35), which, as it were, anticipates the contents of the famous *Anti-Dühring* written by Engels (in conjunction with Marx) nine years later. There is a Russian translation of this book by Zederbaum which unfortunately is guilty not only of omissions but of mistakes and is simply a bad translation. Here, too, we have the comment on Thünen, which likewise touches on Ricardo's theory of rent. Marx already then, in 1868, emphatically rejected "Ricardo's mistakes," which he finally refuted in Volume III of *Capital*, published in 1894, but which to this very day are repeated by the revisionists—from our ultrabourgeois and even "Black-Hundred" Mr. Bulgakov to the "almost-orthodox" Maslov.

Interesting also is the comment on Büchner, with the judgment on vulgar materialism and the "superficial nonsense" copied from Lange (the usual source of "professorial" bourgeois philosophy!). (P. 48.)

Let us pass to Marx's revolutionary policy. A certain petty-bourgeois conception of Marxism is surprisingly current among Social-Democrats in Russia according to which a revolutionary period, with its specific forms of struggle and its special proletarian tasks, is almost an anomaly, while a "constitution" and an "extreme opposition" are the rule. In no other country in the world at

this moment is there such a profound revolutionary crisis as in Russia—and in no other country are there “Marxists” (belittling and vulgarizing Marxism) who take up such a sceptical and philistine attitude towards the revolution. From the fact that the content of the revolution is bourgeois the shallow conclusion is drawn in our country that the bourgeoisie is the *driving force* of the revolution, that the tasks of the proletariat in this revolution are of an auxiliary and not independent character and that proletarian leadership of the revolution is impossible!

How Marx, in his letters to Kugelmann, exposes this shallow interpretation of Marxism! Here is a letter dated April 6, 1866. At that time Marx had finished his major work. He had already given his final judgment on the German Revolution of 1848 fourteen years before this letter was written. He had himself, in 1850, renounced his socialistic illusions that a socialist revolution was impending in 1848. And in 1866, when only just beginning to observe the brewing of new political crises, he writes:

“Will our philistines (he is referring to the German bourgeois liberals) at last realize that without a revolution which removes the Hapsburgs and Hohenzollerns . . . there must finally come another Thirty Years’ War. . .!” (Pp. 13-14.)

Not a shadow of illusion here that the impending revolution (it took place from above and not from below as Marx had expected) would remove the bourgeoisie and capitalism, but a most clear and precise statement that it would remove only the Prussian and Austrian monarchies. And what faith in this bourgeois revolution! What revolutionary passion of a proletarian fighter who realizes the vast significance of a bourgeois revolution for the advance of the socialist movement!

Three years later, on the eve of the downfall of the Napoleonic Empire in France, drawing attention to "a very interesting" social movement, Marx says in a *positive outburst of enthusiasm* that "the Parisians are making a regular study of their recent revolutionary past, in order to prepare themselves for the business of the impending new revolution." And describing the struggle of classes revealed in this study of the past, Marx concludes (p. 56): "And so the whole historic witches' cauldron is bubbling. When shall *we* (in Germany) be so far!"

Such is the lesson that should be learned from Marx by the Russian intellectual Marxists, who are debilitated by scepticism, dulled by pedantry, have a penchant for penitent speeches, rapidly tire of revolution, and who yearn, as for a holiday, for the interment of the revolution and its replacement by constitutional prose. They should learn from the theoretician and leader of the proletarians faith in the revolution, the ability to call on the working class to uphold its immediate revolutionary aims to the last, and the firmness of spirit which admits of no faint-hearted whimpering after temporary setbacks of the revolution.

The pedants of Marxism think that this is all ethical twaddle, romanticism and lack of a sense of reality! No, gentlemen, this is the combination of revolutionary theory and revolutionary policy without which Marxism becomes Brentanoism, Struivism and Sombartism. The Marxian doctrine has bound the theory and practice of the class struggle into one inseparable whole. And whoever distorts a theory which soberly presents the objective situation into a justification of the existing order and goes to the length of striving to adapt himself as quickly as possible to every temporary decline in the revolution, to discard "revolutionary illusions" as quickly as possible and to turn to "realistic" tinkering, is no Marxist.

During the most peaceful, seemingly "idyllic," as Marx expressed it, and "wretchedly stagnant" (as the *Neue Zeit* put it) times, Marx was able to sense the approach of revolution and to rouse the proletariat to the consciousness of its advanced revolutionary tasks. Our Russian intellectuals, who, like philistines, vulgarize Marx, teach the proletariat in most revolutionary times a policy of passivity, of submissively "drifting with the stream," of timidly supporting the most unstable elements of the fashionable liberal party!

Marx's appreciation of the Commune crowns the letters to Kugelmann. And this appreciation is particularly valuable when compared with the methods of Russian Social-Democrats of the Right wing. Plekhanov, who after December 1905 faintheartedly exclaimed: "They should not have resorted to arms," had the modesty to compare himself to Marx. Marx, he implied, also put the brakes on the revolution in 1870.

Yes, Marx *also* put the brakes on the revolution. But see what a gulf yawns between Plekhanov and Marx in this comparison made by Plekhanov himself!

In November 1905, a month before the first revolutionary wave had reached its apex, Plekhanov, far from emphatically warning the proletariat, definitely said that it was necessary "*to learn to use arms and to arm.*" Yet, when the struggle flared up a month later, Plekhanov, without making the slightest attempt to analyze its significance, its rule in the general course of events and its connection with previous forms of struggle, hastened to play the part of a penitent intellectual and exclaimed: "They should not have resorted to arms."

*In September 1870, six months before the Commune,* Marx definitely warned the French workers. Insurrection would be a *desperate folly*, he said in the well-known Address of the International. He revealed *in advance* the

nationalistic illusions concerning the possibility of a movement in the spirit of 1792. He knew how to say, *not after the event*, but many months before: "Don't resort to arms."

And how did he behave when this *hopeless* cause, as he himself had declared it to be in September, began to take practical shape in March 1871? Did he use it (as Plekhanov did the December events) only to "take a dig" at his enemies, the Proudhonists and Blanquists who led the Commune? Did he begin to scold like a schoolmistress, and say: "I told you so, I warned you; this is what comes of your romanticism, your revolutionary ravings"? Did he preach to the Communards, as Plekhanov did to the December fighters, the sermon of the smug philistine: "You should not have resorted to arms"?

No. On April 12, 1871, Marx writes an *enthusiastic* letter to Kugelman—a letter which we would like to see hung in the home of every Russian Social-Democrat and of every literate Russian worker.

In September 1870 Marx called the insurrection a desperate folly; but in April 1871, when he saw the mass movement of the people, he observed it with the keen attention of a participant in great events that mark a step forward in the historic revolutionary movement.

This is an *attempt*, he says, to smash the bureaucratic military machine and not simply to transfer it from one hand to another. And he sings a veritable hosanna to the "*heroic*" Paris workers led by the Proudhonists and Blanquists. "What elasticity," he writes, "what historical initiative, what a capacity for sacrifice in these Parisians!" (P. 88.) ... "History has no like example of a like greatness."

The *historical initiative* of the masses is what Marx prizes above everything else. Oh, if only our Russian Social-Democrats would learn from Marx how to appre-

ciate the *historical initiative* of the Russian workers and peasants in October and December 1905!

The homage paid to the *historical initiative* of the masses by a profound thinker, who foresaw failure six months before—and the lifeless, soulless, pedantic: “They should not have resorted to arms”! Are these not as far apart as heaven and earth?

And like a *participant* in the mass struggle, to which he reacted with all his characteristic ardour and passion, Marx, living in exile in London, sets to work to criticize the *immediate steps* of the “foolishly brave” Parisians who were *ready to “storm heaven.”*

Oh, how our present “realist” wiseacres among the Marxists who are deriding revolutionary romanticism in Russia in 1906-07 would have sneered at Marx at the time! How people would have scoffed at a *materialist, an economist*, an enemy of utopias, who pays homage to an “attempt” to storm *heaven!* What tears, condescending smiles or commiseration these “men in mufflers”<sup>22</sup> would have bestowed upon him for his rebel tendencies, utopianism, etc., etc., and for his appreciation of a heaven-storming movement!

But Marx was not inspired with the wisdom of gudgeons<sup>23</sup> who are afraid to discuss the *technique* of the higher forms of revolutionary struggle. He discusses precisely the *technical* problems of the insurrection. Defence or attack?—he asks, as if the military operations were taking place just outside London. And he decides that it must certainly be attack: “*They should have marched at once on Versailles. . . .*”

This was written in April 1871, a few weeks before the great and bloody May. . . .

“They should have marched at once on Versailles”—should the insurgents who had begun the “desperate folly” (September 1870) of storming heaven.



"They should not have resorted to arms" in December 1905 in order to oppose by force the first attempts to withdraw the liberties that had been won. . . .

Yes, Plekhanov had good reason to compare himself to Marx!

"Second mistake," Marx says, continuing his *technical* criticism: "The Central Committee" (the *military command*—note this—the reference is to the Central Committee of the National Guard) "surrendered its power *too soon. . . .*"

Marx knew how to warn the *leaders* against a premature rising. But his attitude towards the *proletariat* which was storming heaven was that of a practical adviser, of a participant in the *struggle* of the masses, who were raising the *whole* movement to a *higher level* in spite of the false theories and mistakes of Blanqui and Proudhon.

"However that may be," he writes, "the present rising in Paris—even if it be crushed by the wolves, swine and vile curs of the old society—is the most glorious deed of our Party since the June insurrection."

And Marx, without concealing from the proletariat *a single* mistake of the Commune, dedicated to this *deed* a work which *to this very day* serves as the best guide in the fight for "heaven" and as a frightful bugbear to the liberal and radical "*swine.*"

Plekhanov dedicated to the December events a "work" which has almost become the bible of the Constitutional-Democrats.

Yes, Plekhanov had good reason to compare himself to Marx.

Kugelmann apparently replied to Marx expressing certain doubts, referring to the hopelessness of the matter and preferring realism to romanticism—at any rate, he compared the Commune, an *insurrection*, to the peaceful demonstration in Paris on June 13, 1849.

Marx immediately (April 17, 1871) reads Kugelmann a severe lecture.

"*World history*," he writes, "*would indeed be very easy to make, if the struggle were taken up only on condition of infallibly favourable chances.*"

In September 1870 Marx called the insurrection a desperate folly. But when the *masses* rose Marx wanted to march with them, to learn with them in the process of the struggle, and not to read them bureaucratic admonitions. He realizes that to attempt in advance to calculate the chances *with complete accuracy* would be quackery or hopeless pedantry. What he values *above everything else* is that the working class heroically and self-sacrificingly takes the initiative in *making* world history. Marx regarded world history from the standpoint of those who *make* it without being in a position to calculate the chances *infallibly* beforehand, and not from the standpoint of an intellectual philistine who moralizes: "It was easy to foresee ... they should not have resorted to ..."

Marx was also able to appreciate that there are moments in history when the desperate struggle of the *masses* even for a hopeless cause is *essential* for the further schooling of these masses and their training for the *next* struggle.

To our present-day quasi-Marxists, who love to take the name of Marx in vain, to borrow only his estimate of the past, and not his ability to make the future, this way of *putting the question* is quite incomprehensible and even alien in principle. Plekhanov did not even think of it when he set out after December 1905 "*to put the brakes on.*"

But it is precisely this question that Marx puts, without in the least forgetting that he himself in September 1870 regarded insurrection as a desperate folly.

"...The bourgeois *canaille* of Versailles," he writes, "...presented the Parisians with the alternative of either taking up the fight or succumbing without a struggle. The *demoralization of the working class* in the latter case would have been a *far greater* misfortune than the fall of any number of 'leaders.'"

And with this we shall conclude our brief review of the lessons in a policy worthy of the proletariat which Marx teaches in his letters to Kugelmann.

The working class of Russia has already proved once and will prove again more than once that it is capable of "storming heaven."

February 5, 1907

**PREFACE TO THE RUSSIAN TRANSLATION OF  
"LETTERS BY J. F. BECKER, J. DIETZGEN,  
F. ENGELS, K. MARX AND OTHERS  
TO F. A. SORGE AND OTHERS"**

The collection of letters by Marx, Engels, Dietzgen, Becker and other leaders of the international labour movement of the past century here presented to the Russian public is a needed addition to our advanced Marxist literature.

We shall not dwell in detail here on the importance of these letters for the history of Socialism and for a comprehensive treatment of the activities of Marx and Engels. This aspect of the matter requires no explanation. We shall only note that an understanding of the published letters necessitates an acquaintance with the principal works on the history of the International (see Jaekch, *The International*, Russian translation in the Znaniye edition), on the history of the German and American workers' movements (see Fr. Mehring, *History of German Social-Democracy*, and Morris Hillquit, *History of Socialism in America*), etc.

Neither do we intend here to attempt a general outline of the contents of this correspondence or an appreciation of the various historical periods to which it relates. Mehring has done this extremely well in his article, "Der Sorgesche Briefwechsel" (*Neue Zeit*, 25. Jahrg., Nr. 1 und 2),\* which will probably be appended by the pub-

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\* "The Sorge Correspondence," *Neue Zeit*, 25th year, Nos. 1 and 2.—*Tr.*

lisher to the present translation or will be issued as a separate Russian publication.

Of particular interest to Russian Socialists in the present revolutionary period are the lessons which the militant proletariat must draw from an acquaintance with the intimate sides of Marx's and Engels' activities over the course of nearly thirty years (1867-95). It is, therefore, not surprising that the first attempts made in our Social-Democratic literature to acquaint the readers with Marx's and Engels' letters to Sorge were also linked up with the "burning" issues of Social-Democratic tactics in the Russian revolution (Plekhanov's *Sovremennaya Zhizn* and the Menshevik *Otkliki*). And it is to an appreciation of those passages in the published correspondence which are specially important from the point of view of the present tasks of the workers' party in Russia that we intend to draw the attention of our readers.

Marx and Engels deal most frequently in their letters with current questions of the British, American and German labour movements. This is natural, because they were Germans who at that time lived in England and corresponded with their American comrade. On the French labour movement, and particularly the Paris Commune, Marx expressed himself much more frequently and in much greater detail in the letters he wrote to the German Social-Democrat, Kugelmann.\*

It is highly instructive to compare what Marx and Engels said of the British, American and German labour movements. The comparison acquires all the greater importance when we remember that Germany on the one hand, and England and America on the other, represent different stages of capitalist development and different

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\* See *Letters of K. Marx to Dr. Kugelmann*, translation edited by N. Lenin, with a foreword by the editor, St. Petersburg, 1907. (See pp. 200-10 of this book.—Ed.)

forms of domination of the bourgeoisie as a class over the entire political life of these countries. From the scientific standpoint, what we observe here is a sample of materialist dialectics, of the ability to bring out and stress the various points and various sides of the question in application to the specific peculiarities of different political and economic conditions. From the standpoint of the practical policy and tactics of the workers' party, what we see here is a sample of the way in which the creators of the *Communist Manifesto* defined the tasks of the fighting proletariat in accordance with the different stages of the national labour movement in different countries.

What Marx and Engels most of all criticize in British and American Socialism is its isolation from the labour movement. The burden of all their numerous comments on the Social-Democratic Federation in England and on the American Socialists is the accusation that they have reduced Marxism to a dogma, to a "rigid (starre) orthodoxy," that they consider it "a credo and not a *guide to action*," that they are incapable of adapting themselves to the labour movement marching side by side with them, which, although helpless theoretically, is a living and powerful mass movement. "Had we from 1864 to 1873 insisted on working together only with those who openly adopted our platform," Engels exclaims in his letter of January 27, 1887, "where should we be today?" And in an earlier letter (December 28, 1886), in reference to the influence of the ideas of Henry George on the American working class, he writes:

"A million or two of workingmen's votes next November for a bona fide workingmen's party is worth infinitely more at present than a hundred thousand votes for a doctrinally perfect platform."

These are very interesting passages. There are Social-Democrats in our country who hastened to utilize them

in defence of the idea of a "labour congress"<sup>24</sup> or something in the nature of Larin's "broad labour party." Why not in defence of a "Left bloc"? we would ask these precipitate "utilizers" of Engels. The letters from which the quotations are taken relate to a time when the American workers voted at the elections for Henry George. Mrs. Wischnewetzky—an American woman who married a Russian and who translated Engels' works—asked him, as may be seen from Engels' reply, to make a thorough criticism of Henry George. Engels writes (December 28, 1886) that *the time has not yet come* for that, for it is necessary that the workers' party begin to organize itself, even if on a not entirely pure program. Later on the workers would themselves come to understand what is amiss, "would learn from their own mistakes," but "anything that might delay or prevent that national consolidation of the workingmen's party—no matter what platform—I should consider a great mistake...."

Engels, of course, perfectly understood and frequently pointed out the utter absurdity and *reactionary character* of the ideas of Henry George from the *socialist* standpoint. In the Sorge correspondence there is a most interesting letter from Karl Marx dated June 20, 1881, in which he characterizes Henry George as an ideologist of the *radical bourgeoisie*. "Theoretically, the man [Henry George] is utterly backward (total arri re)," wrote Marx. Yet Engels was not afraid to join with this *socialist reactionary* in the elections, provided there were people who could warn the masses of "the consequences of their own mistakes" (Engels, in the letter dated November 29, 1886).

Regarding the Knights of Labour, an organization of American workers existing at that time, Engels wrote in the same letter: "The weakest (literally: rottenest, *faulste*) side of the K. of L. was their *political neutrality*.... The first great step of importance for every country newly

entering into the movement is always the organization of the workers as an independent political party, no matter how, so long as it is a distinct workers' party."

It is obvious that absolutely nothing in defence of a leap *from* Social-Democracy to a nonparty labour congress, etc., can be deduced from this. But whoever wants to escape Engels' accusation of degrading Marxism to a "dogma," "orthodoxy," "sectarianism," etc., must conclude from this that a joint election campaign with radical "social-reactionaries" is sometimes permissible.

But what is more interesting, of course, is to dwell not so much on these American-Russian parallels (we had to refer to them so as to answer our opponents), as on the *fundamental* features of the British and American labour movement. These features are: the absence of any at all big, nation-wide, *democratic* problems facing the proletariat; the complete subjection of the proletariat to bourgeois politics; the sectarian isolation of the groups, the mere handfuls of Socialists from the proletariat; not the slightest success of the Socialists among the working masses at the elections, etc. Whoever forgets these fundamental conditions and sets out to draw broad conclusions from "American-Russian parallels," displays extreme superficiality.

Engels lays so much stress on the economic organizations of the workers in such conditions because he is dealing with the most firmly established democratic systems, which confront the proletariat with purely socialist tasks.

Engels stresses the importance of an independent workers' party, even though with a bad program, because he is dealing with countries where hitherto there had not been even a hint of political independence of the workers, where, in politics, the workers most of all dragged, and still drag, after the bourgeoisie.



It would be making a mockery of Marx's historical method to attempt to apply conclusions drawn from such arguments to countries or historical situations where the proletariat had formed its party before the bourgeois liberals had formed theirs, where the tradition of voting for bourgeois politicians is absolutely unknown to the proletariat, and where the next immediate tasks are not socialist but bourgeois-democratic.

Our idea will become even clearer to the reader if we compare the opinions of Engels on the British and American movements with his opinions on the German movement.

Such opinions, and extremely interesting ones at that, also abound in the published correspondence. And what runs like a red thread through all these opinions is something quite different, namely, a warning against the "Right wing" of the workers' party, a merciless (sometimes—as with Marx in 1877-79—a furious) war upon *opportunism* in Social-Democracy.

Let us first corroborate this by quotations from the letters, and then proceed to an appraisal of this fact.

First of all, we must here note the opinions expressed by Marx on Höchberg and Co. Fr. Mehring, in his article "Der Sorgesche Briefwechsel," attempts to tone down Marx's attacks, as well as Engels' later attacks on the opportunists—and, in our opinion, rather overdoes it. As regards Höchberg and Co. in particular, Mehring insists on his view that Marx's judgment of Lassalle and the Lassalleans was incorrect. But, we repeat, what interests us here is not an historical judgment of whether Marx's attacks on particular Socialists were correct or exaggerated, but Marx's judgment *in principle* on definite currents in Socialism in general.

While complaining about the compromises of the German Social-Democrats with the Lassalleans and with Düh-

ring (letter of October 19, 1877), Marx also condemns the compromise "with the whole gang of half-mature students and superwise doctors" ("doctor" in German is a scientific degree corresponding to our "candidate" or "university graduate, class I"), "who want to give Socialism a 'higher idealistic' orientation, that is to say, to replace its materialistic basis (which demands serious objective study from anyone who tries to use it) by modern mythology with its goddesses of Justice, Freedom, Equality and Fraternity. Dr. Höchberg, who publishes the *Zukunft*, is a representative of this tendency and has 'bought himself in' to the party—with the 'noblest' intentions, I assume, but I do not give a damn for 'intentions.' Anything more miserable [than the program of his *Zukunft*] has seldom seen the light of day with more 'modest' 'presumption.'" (Letter No. 70.)

In another letter, written almost two years later (September 19, 1879), Marx rebuts the gossip that Engels and he were behind *J. Most*, and he gives Sorge a detailed account of his attitude towards the opportunists in the German Social-Democratic Party. The *Zukunft* was run by Höchberg, Schramm and Ed. Bernstein. Marx and Engels *refused* to have anything to do with such a publication, and when the question was raised of establishing a new party organ with the participation of this same Höchberg and with his financial assistance, Marx and Engels first demanded the acceptance of their nominee, Hirsch, as responsible editor to exercise control over this "mixture of doctors, students and professorial-socialists" and then directly addressed a circular letter to Bebel, Liebknecht and other leaders of the Social-Democratic Party, warning them that they would openly combat "such a vulgarization (*Verluderung*—an *even stronger* word in German) of theory and Party," unless the tendency of Höchberg, Schramm and Bernstein changed.

This was the period in the German Social-Democratic Party which Mehring described in his *History* as "A Year of Confusion" ("Ein Jahr der Verwirrung"). After the Anti-Socialist Law, the Party did not at once find the right path, first succumbing to the anarchism of Most and the opportunism of Höchberg and Co. "These people," Marx writes of the latter, "nonentities in theory and useless in practice, want to draw the teeth of Socialism (which they have corrected in accordance with the university recipes) and particularly of the Social-Democratic Party, to enlighten the workers, or, as they put it, to imbue them with 'elements of education' from their confused half-knowledge, and above all to make the Party respectable in the eyes of the petty bourgeoisie. They are just wretched counterrevolutionary windbags."

The result of Marx's "furious" attack was that the opportunists retreated and—effaced themselves. In a letter of November 19, 1879, Marx announces that Höchberg has been removed from the editorial committee and that all the influential leaders of the Party—Bebel, Liebknecht, Bracke, etc.—have *repudiated* his ideas. The Social-Democratic Party organ, the *Sozial-Demokrat*, began to appear under the editorship of Vollmar, who at that time belonged to the revolutionary wing of the Party. A year later (November 5, 1880), Marx relates that he and Engels constantly fought the "miserable" way in which the *Sozial-Demokrat* was conducted and often expressed their opinion *sharply* (wobei's oft scharf hergeht). Liebknecht visited Marx in 1880 and promised that there would be an "improvement" *in all respects*.

Peace was restored, and the war never came out into the open. Höchberg retired, and Bernstein became a revolutionary Social-Democrat—at least until the death of Engels in 1895.

On June 20, 1882, Engels writes to Sorge and speaks of this struggle as already a thing of the past: "In general, things in Germany are going splendidly. It is true that the literary gentlemen in the Party tried to cause a reactionary swing, but they failed ignominiously. The abuse to which the Social-Democratic workers are being everywhere subjected has made them everywhere more revolutionary than they were three years ago. . . . These gentlemen (the Party literary people) wanted at all costs to beg for the repeal of the Anti-Socialist Law by mildness and meekness, fawning and humility, because it had summarily deprived them of their literary earnings. As soon as the law is repealed . . . the split will apparently become an open one, and the Vierecks and Höchbergs will form a separate Right wing, where they can be treated with from time to time until they definitely come a cropper. We announced this immediately after the passage of the Anti-Socialist Law, when Höchberg and Schramm published in the *Jahrbuch* what was under the circumstances a most infamous judgment of the work of the Party and demanded more cultivated ("gebildetes" instead of gebildetes. Engels is alluding to the Berlin accent of the German literary people), refined and elegant behaviour of the Party."

This forecast of a Bernsteinian made in 1882 was strikingly confirmed in 1898 and subsequent years.

And since then, and particularly after Marx's death, Engels, it may be said without exaggeration, was untiring in his efforts to straighten out what the German opportunists had distorted.

The end of 1884. The "petty-bourgeois prejudices" of the German Social-Democratic Reichstag deputies, who voted for the steamship subsidy ("Dampfersubvention," see Mehring's *History*), are condemned. Engels informs Sorge that he has to correspond a great deal on this subject (letter of December 31, 1884).

1885. Giving his opinion of the whole business of the "Dampfersubvention," Engels writes (June 3) that "it almost came to a split." The "phillistinism" of the Social-Democratic deputies was "*colossal*." "A petty-bourgeois Socialist fraction is inevitable in a country like Germany," Engels says.

1887. Engels replies to Sorge who had written that the Party was disgracing itself by electing such deputies as Viereck (a Social-Democrat of the Höchberg type). There is nothing to be done—Engels excuses himself—the workers' party cannot find good deputies for the Reichstag. "The gentlemen of the Right wing know that they are being tolerated only because of the Anti-Socialist Law, and that they will be thrown out of the Party the very day the Party secures freedom of action again." And in general, it is preferable that "the Party be better than its parliamentary heroes, than the other way round" (March 3, 1887). Liebknecht is a conciliator—Engels complains—he always glosses over differences by phrases. But when it comes to a split, he will be with us at the decisive moment.

1889. Two International Social-Democratic Congresses in Paris. The opportunists (headed by the French possibilists) split away from the revolutionary Social-Democrats. Engels (he was then sixty-eight years old) flings himself into the fight like a young man. A number of letters (from January 12 to July 20, 1889) are devoted to the fight against the opportunists. Not only they, but also the Germans—Liebknecht, Bebel and others—are flogged for their conciliationism.

The possibilists have sold themselves to the government, writes Engels on January 12, 1889. And he accuses the members of the British Social-Democratic Federation of having allied themselves with the possibilists. "The writing and running about in connection with this damned

congress leave me no time for anything else." (May 11, 1889.) The possibilists are busy, but our people are asleep, Engels writes angrily. Now even Auer and Schippel are demanding that we attend the possibilist congress. But this "at last" opened Liebknecht's eyes. Engels, together with Bernstein, writes pamphlets (signed by Bernstein—Engels calls them "our pamphlets") against the opportunists.

"With the exception of the S.D.F., the possibilists have not a single Socialist organization on their side in the whole of Europe. (June 8, 1889.) They are, consequently, falling back on the non-Socialist trade unions" (let the advocates of a broad labour party, of a labour congress, etc., in our country take note!). "From America they will get one *Knight of Labour*." The adversary is the same as in the fight against the Bakunists: "only with this difference that the banner of the anarchists has been replaced by the banner of the possibilists. There is the same selling of principles to the bourgeoisie for concessions in retail, namely, for well-paid jobs for the leaders (on the town councils, labour exchanges, etc.)." Brousse (the leader of the possibilists) and Hyndman (the leader of the S.D.F. which had united with the possibilists) attack "authoritarian Marxism" and want to form the "nucleus of a new International."

"You can have no idea of the naïveté of the Germans. It has cost me tremendous effort to explain even to Bebel what it really all means." (June 8, 1889.) And when the two congresses met, when the revolutionary Social-Democrats outnumbered the possibilists (*united with the trade unionists*, the S.D.F., a section of the Austrians, etc.), Engels was jubilant (July 17, 1889). He was glad that the conciliatory plans and proposals of Liebknecht and others had failed (July 20, 1889). "It serves our sentimental conciliatory brethren right, that for all their amicableness,

they received a good kick in their tenderest spot. This will cure them for some time."

... Mehring was right when he said ("Der Sorgesche Briefwechsel") that Marx and Engels had not much of an idea of "good manners": "If they did not think long over every blow they dealt, neither did they whimper over every blow they received. 'If you think that your pin-pricks can pierce my old, well-tanned and thick hide, you are mistaken,' Engels once wrote." And the imperviousness they had themselves acquired they presumed in others as well, says Mehring of Marx and Engels.

1893. The flagellation of the "Fabians," which suggests itself—when passing judgment on the Bernsteinists (for was it not with the "Fabians" in England that Bernstein "reared" his opportunism?). "The Fabians are an ambitious group here in London who have understanding enough to realize the inevitability of the social revolution, but who could not possibly entrust this gigantic task to the rough proletariat alone and are therefore kind enough to set themselves at the head. Fear of the revolution is their fundamental principle. They are the 'educated' par excellence. Their socialism is municipal socialism; not the nation but the *municipality* is to become the owner of the means of production, at any rate for the time being. This socialism of theirs is then represented as an extreme but inevitable consequence of bourgeois Liberalism, and hence follow their tactics of not decisively opposing the Liberals as adversaries but of pushing them on towards Socialist conclusions and therefore of intriguing with them... of not putting up Socialist candidates against the Liberals but of fastening them on to the Liberals, forcing them upon them, or deceiving them into taking them. That in the course of this process they are either lied to and deceived themselves or else betray Socialism, they do not of course realize.

"With great industry they have produced amid all sorts of rubbish some good propagandist writings as well, in fact the best of the kind which the English have produced. But as soon as they get on to their specific tactics of hushing up the class struggle it all turns putrid. Hence too their fanatical hatred of Marx and all of us—because of the class struggle.

"These people have of course many bourgeois followers and therefore money..."

A CLASSICAL JUDGMENT  
OF INTELLECTUALIST OPPORTUNISM  
IN SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY

1894. The Peasant Question. "On the Continent," Engels writes on November 10, 1894, "success is developing the appetite for more success, and catching the peasant, in the literal sense of the word, is becoming the fashion. First the French in Nantes declare through Lafargue not only ... that it is not our business to hasten ... the ruin of the small peasant which capitalism is seeing to for us, but they also add that we must directly protect the small peasant against taxation, usurers and landlords. But we cannot cooperate in this, first because it is stupid and second because it is impossible. Next, however, Vollmar comes along in Frankfort and wants to bribe the *peasantry as a whole*, though the peasant he has to do with in Upper Bavaria is not the debt-laden poor peasant of the Rhineland but the middle and even the peasant who exploits his men and women farm servants and sells cattle and grain in masses. And that cannot be done without giving up the whole principle."

1894, December 4. "...The Bavarians, who have become very, very opportunistic and have almost turned into an ordinary people's party (that is to say, the majority of



leaders and many of those who have recently joined the Party), voted in the Bavarian Diet for the budget as a whole; and Vollmar in particular has started an agitation among the peasants with the object of winning the Upper Bavarian big peasants—people who own 25 to 80 acres of land (10 to 30 hectares) and who therefore cannot manage without wage-labourers—instead of winning their farm hands.”

We thus see that for more than ten years Marx and Engels systematically and unswervingly fought opportunism in the German Social-Democratic Party and attacked intellectualist philistinism and petty-bourgeoisdom in Socialism. This is an extremely important fact. The general public knows that German Social-Democracy is regarded as a model of Marxist proletarian policy and tactics, but it does not know what a constant war the founders of Marxism had to wage against the “Right wing” (Engels’ expression) of that party. And it is no accident that soon after Engels’ death this war turned from a concealed war into an open war. This was an inevitable result of the decades of historical development of German Social-Democracy.

And now we very clearly perceive the two lines of Engels’ (and Marx’s) recommendations, directions, corrections, threats and exhortations. They most insistently called upon the British and American Socialists to merge with the labour movement and to eradicate the narrow and hidebound sectarian spirit from their organizations. They most insistently taught the German Social-Democrats to beware of succumbing to philistinism, to “parliamentary idiotism” (Marx’s expression in the letter of September 19, 1879), to petty-bourgeois intellectualist opportunism.

Is it not characteristic that our Social-Democratic gossips have noisily proclaimed the recommendations of the

first kind and have kept their mouths shut, have remained silent over the recommendations of the second kind? Is not *such* one-sidedness in appraising Marx's and Engels' letters the best indication of a certain Russian Social-Democratic . . . "one-sidedness"?

At the present moment, when the international labour movement is displaying symptoms of profound ferment and wavering, when extremes of opportunism, "parliamentary idiotism" and philistine reformism, have evoked opposite extremes of revolutionary syndicalism, the general line of Marx's and Engels' "amendments" to British and American Socialism and German Socialism acquires exceptional importance.

In countries where there are *no* Social-Democratic workers' parties, *no* Social-Democratic members of parliament, *no* systematic and consistent Social-Democratic policy either at elections or in the press, etc.—in such countries, Marx and Engels taught, the Socialists must *at all costs* rid themselves of narrow sectarianism and *join* with the labour movement so as to *shake up* the proletariat *politically*, for in the last third of the nineteenth century the proletariat displayed *almost no* political independence either in England or America. In these countries—where historical bourgeois-democratic tasks were almost entirely absent—the political arena was *wholly* filled by the triumphant and self-complacent bourgeoisie, which in the art of deceiving, corrupting and bribing the workers has no equal anywhere in the world.

To think that these recommendations of Marx and Engels to the British and American workers' movement can be simply and directly applied to Russian conditions is to use Marxism not in order to comprehend its *method*, not in order to *study* the concrete historical peculiarities of the labour movement in definite countries, but in order to settle petty factional, intellectualist accounts.

On the other hand, in a country where the bourgeois-democratic revolution was still incomplete, where "military despotism, embellished with parliamentary forms" (Marx's expression in his *Critique of the Gotha Program*) prevailed, and still prevails, where the proletariat had long ago been drawn into politics and was pursuing a Social-Democratic policy, what Marx and Engels feared most of all in such a country was parliamentary vulgarization and philistine compromising of the tasks and scope of the labour movement.

It is all the more our duty to emphasize and give prominence to *this* side of Marxism in the period of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia because in our country a large, "brilliant" and rich bourgeois-liberal press is vociferously trumpeting to the proletariat the "exemplary" loyalty, the parliamentary legalism, the modesty and moderation of the neighbouring German labour movement.

This mercenary lie of the bourgeois betrayers of the Russian revolution is not due to accident or to the personal depravity of certain past or future ministers in the Cadet camp. It is due to the profound economic interests of the Russian liberal landlords and liberal bourgeois. And in combating this lie, this "making the masses stupid" ("Massenverdummung"—Engels' expression in his letter of November 29, 1886), the letters of Marx and Engels should serve as an indispensable weapon for all Russian Socialists.

The mercenary lie of the liberal bourgeois holds up to the people the exemplary "modesty" of the German Social-Democrats. The leaders of these Social-Democrats, the founders of the theory of Marxism, tell us:

"The revolutionary language and action of the French has made the whining of the Vierecks and Co. (the opportunist Social-Democrats in the German Reichstag Social-

Democratic fraction) sound quite feeble" (the reference is to the formation of a labour party in the French Chamber and to the Decazeville strike, which split the French Radicals from the French proletariat), "and only Liebknecht and Bebel spoke in the last debate... and both of them spoke well. We can with this debate once more show ourselves in decent society, which was by no means the case with all of them. In general it is a good thing that the leadership of the Germans (of the international social movement), particularly after they sent so many philistines to the Reichstag (which, it is true, was unavoidable), has become rather disputable. *In Germany everything becomes philistine in peaceful times*; and therefore the sting of French competition is *absolutely necessary*..." (Letter of April 29, 1886.)

Such are the lessons which must be drawn most firmly of all by the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party which is ideologically dominated by the influence of German Social-Democracy.

These lessons are taught us not by any particular passage in the correspondence of the greatest men of the nineteenth century, but by the whole spirit and substance of their comradely and frank criticism of the international experience of the proletariat, a criticism which shunned diplomacy and petty considerations.

How far all the letters of Marx and Engels were indeed imbued with this spirit may also be seen from the following passages which it is true are, relatively speaking, of a particular nature, but which on the other hand are highly characteristic.

In 1889 a young, fresh movement of untrained and unskilled labourers (gasworkers, dockers, etc.) began in England, a movement marked by a new and revolutionary spirit. Engels was delighted with it. He refers exultingly to the part played by Tussy, Marx's daughter, who agitated

among these workers. "... The most repulsive thing here," he says, writing from London on December 7, 1889, "is the bourgeois 'respectability' which has grown deep into the bones of the workers. The division of society into a scale of innumerable degrees, each recognized without question, each with its own pride but also its native respect for its 'betters' and 'superiors,' is so old and firmly established that the bourgeois still find it pretty easy to get their bait accepted. I am not at all sure for instance, that John Burns is not secretly prouder of his popularity with Cardinal Manning, the Lord Mayor and the bourgeoisie in general than of his popularity with his own class. And Champion—an ex-Lieutenant—has intrigued for years with bourgeois and especially with conservative elements, preached Socialism at the parson's Church Congress, etc. Even Tom Mann, whom I regard as the finest of them all, is fond of mentioning that he will be lunching with the Lord Mayor. If one compares this with the French, one can see what a revolution is good for after all."

Comment is superfluous.

Another example. In 1891 there was danger of a European war. Engels corresponded on the subject with Bebel, and they agreed that in the event of Russia attacking Germany, the German Socialists must desperately fight the Russians and any allies of the Russians. "If Germany is crushed, then we shall be too, while in the most favourable case the struggle will be such a violent one that Germany will only be able to maintain herself by revolutionary means, so that very possibly we shall be forced to come into power and play the part of 1793." (Letter of October 24, 1891.)

Let this be noted by those opportunists who cried from the housetops that "Jacobin" prospects for the Russian workers' party in 1905 were un-Social-Democratic! Engels squarely suggests to Bebel the possibility of the Social-

Democrats having to participate in a provisional government.

Holding such views on the tasks of Social-Democratic workers' parties it is quite natural that Marx and Engels should have the most fervent faith in the Russian revolution and its great world significance. We see this ardent expectation of a revolution in Russia in this correspondence over a period of nearly twenty years.

Here is Marx's letter of September 27, 1877. He is quite enthusiastic over the Eastern crisis: "Russia has long been standing on the threshold of an upheaval, all the elements of it are prepared. . . . The gallant Turks have hastened the explosion by years with the thrashing they have inflicted. . . . The upheaval will begin *secundum artem* (according to the rules of the art) with some *playing at constitutionalism* and then there will be a fine row (*il y aura un beau tapage*). If Mother Nature is not particularly unfavourable towards us we shall still live to see the fun!" (Marx was then fifty-nine years old.)

Mother Nature did not—and could not very well—permit Marx to live "to see the fun." But he *foretold* the "playing at constitutionalism," and it is as though his words were written yesterday in relation to the First and Second Russian Dumas. And we know that the warning to the people against "playing at constitutionalism" was the "living soul" of the tactics of boycott so detested by the liberals and opportunists. . . .

Here is Marx's letter of November 5, 1880. He is delighted with the success of *Capital* in Russia, and takes the part of the Narodovoltsi against the newly-arisen group of Chernoperedeltsi. Marx correctly perceives the anarchistic elements in the latter's views. Not knowing and having then no opportunity of knowing the future evolution of the Chernoperedeltsi-Narodniki into Social-Democrats,

Marx attacks the Chernoperedeltsi with all his trenchant sarcasm:

"These gentlemen are against all political-revolutionary action. Russia is to make a somersault into the anarchist-communist-atheist millenium! Meanwhile, they are preparing for this leap with the most tedious doctrinairism, whose so-called principles are being hawked about the street ever since the late Bakunin."

We can gather from this how Marx would have appreciated the significance for Russia of 1905 and the following years of the "political-revolutionary action" of *Social-Democracy*.\*

Here is a letter by Engels dated April 6, 1887: "On the other hand, it seems as if a crisis is impending in Russia. The recent attentats rather upset the apple-cart..." A letter of April 9, 1887, says the same thing... "The army is full of discontented, conspiring officers." (Engels at that time was influenced by the revolutionary struggle of the Narodovoltzi; he set his hopes on the officers, and did not yet see the revolutionary Russian soldiers and sailors, who manifested themselves so magnificently eighteen years later...) "I do not think things will last another year; and once it breaks out ("losgeht") in Russia, then hurrah!"

A letter of April 23, 1887: "In Germany there is persecution after persecution (of Socialists). It looks as if Bismarck wants to have everything ready, so that the moment the revolution breaks out in Russia, which is now only a question of months, Germany could immediately follow her example" (losgeschlagen werden).

The months proved to be very, very long ones. Doubt-

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\* By the way, if my memory does not deceive me, Plekhanov or V. I. Zasulich told me in 1900-03 about the existence of a letter of Engels to Plekhanov on *Our Differences* and on the character of the impending revolution in Russia. It would be interesting to know precisely—is there such a letter, does it still exist, and is it not time to publish it?

less, philistines will be found who, knitting their brows and wrinkling their foreheads, will sternly condemn Engels' "revolutionism," or will indulgently laugh at the old utopias of the old revolutionary exile.

Yes, Marx and Engels erred much and often in determining the proximity of revolution, in their hopes in the victory of revolution (e.g., in 1848 in Germany), in their faith in the imminence of a German "republic" ("to die for the republic," wrote Engels of that period, recalling his sentiments as a participant in the military campaign for an imperial constitution in 1848-49). They erred in 1871 when they were engaged in "raising revolt in Southern France, for which" they (Becker writes "we," referring to himself and his nearest friends: letter No. 14 of July 21, 1871) "sacrificed and risked all that was humanly possible. . . ." The same letter says: "If we had had more means in March and April we would have roused the whole of Southern France and would have saved the Commune in Paris." (P. 29.) But *such* errors—the errors of the giants of revolutionary thought who tried to raise and did raise the proletariat of the whole world above the level of petty, commonplace and trifling tasks—are a thousand times more noble and magnificent and *historically more valuable and true* than the puerile wisdom of official liberalism, which sings, shouts, appeals and exhorts about the vanity of revolutionary vanities, the futility of the revolutionary struggle and the charms of counterrevolutionary "constitutional" fantasies. . . .

The Russian working class will win its freedom and give a fillip to Europe by its revolutionary action, full though it may be of errors—and let the philistines pride themselves on the infallibility of their revolutionary inaction.

April 6, 1907



# THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAPITALISM IN RUSSIA

THE PROCESS OF FORMATION OF A HOME MARKET  
FOR LARGE-SCALE INDUSTRY

*(Excerpt)*

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The present work was written in the period just preceding the Russian revolution, during the temporary lull that set in after the outbreak of the big strikes of 1895-96. The labour movement at that time had retired within itself, as it were, spreading and gaining depth and preparing for the beginning of the demonstration movement of 1901.

The analysis of the social and economic system, and, consequently, of the class structure of Russia given in this work on the basis of an economic investigation and critical examination of statistical data is now being corroborated by the open political action of all classes in the course of the revolution. The leading role of the proletariat has been fully revealed. It has also been revealed that the strength of the proletariat in the historical movement is immeasurably greater than the proportion it constitutes of the total population. The economic basis of both these phenomena is shown in the present work.

Further, the revolution is now increasingly revealing the dual status and dual role of the peasantry. On the one hand, the extensive remnants of the corvée system and all sorts of survivals of serfdom, together with the unpre-

cedented impoverishment and ruin of the poor peasants, fully explain the deep sources of the revolutionary peasant movement, the deep-lying roots of the revolutionary spirit of the peasantry as a mass. On the other hand, the course of the revolution, the character of the various political parties, and the numerous political ideological trends all reveal the inherently contradictory class structure of this mass, its petty-bourgeois nature, and the antagonism between the proprietor and proletarian tendencies within it. The wavering of the impoverished small proprietor between the counterrevolutionary bourgeoisie and the revolutionary proletariat is as inevitable as is the fact that in every capitalist society an insignificant minority of the small producers grow rich, "come up in the world," become bourgeois, while the overwhelming majority are either utterly ruined and become wageworkers or paupers, or else constantly live on the verge of a proletarian existence. The economic basis of both trends among the peasantry is shown in the present work.

On this economic basis, the revolution in Russia, of course, is inevitably a bourgeois revolution. This Marxist thesis is absolutely incontrovertible. It must never be lost sight of. It must always be applied to all economic and political questions of the Russian revolution.

But one must know how to apply it. A concrete analysis of the status and the interests of the various classes must serve to define the precise meaning of this truth as applied to this or that question. The contrary method of reasoning, not infrequently met with among the Social-Democrats of the Right wing, headed by Plekhanov, namely, the endeavour to find answers to concrete questions in the simple logical development of the general truth about the fundamental character of our revolution, is a vulgarization of Marxism and a sheer mockery of dialectical materialism. With reference to such people, who from the general

truth about the character of the revolution deduce, for example, that the "bourgeoisie" must play the leading role in this revolution, or that the Socialists must support the liberals, Marx would probably have repeated the words of Heine he once quoted: "I sowed dragons and reaped a harvest of fleas."

On this economic basis of the Russian revolution, two fundamental lines of development and issue are objectively possible for it:

Either the old landlord economy, which is linked with serfdom by a thousand threads, will be preserved and be slowly transformed into a purely capitalistic, "Junker" economy. The basis for the final transition from labour rent to capitalism will be an internal metamorphosis of feudal landlord economy. The whole agrarian system of the country will become capitalistic, while retaining the features of serfdom for a long time to come. Or the old landlord economy will be broken up by revolution, which will destroy all remnants of serfdom, big landlordism in the first place. The basis for the final transition from labour rent to capitalism will be the free development of small peasant economy, which will have been greatly stimulated by the expropriation of the landed estates for the benefit of the peasantry. The whole agrarian system will become capitalistic, for the more completely the traces of serfdom are abolished, the speedier will be the disintegration of the peasantry. In other words: either landlordism and the chief pillars of the old "superstructure" are in the main preserved intact—in which case the predominant role will be played by the monarchist liberal bourgeois and landlord, the prosperous peasants will rapidly go over to their side, and the peasant masses will be degraded, not only expropriated on an enormous scale, but, in addition, reduced to bondage by this or that scheme of compensation devised by the Cadets, and crushed and

stupefied by the rule of reaction—the executors of this sort of bourgeois revolution will be politicians of a type akin to the Octobrists.<sup>25</sup> Or landlordism and all the chief pillars of the old “superstructure” corresponding to it will be destroyed; the proletariat and the peasant masses will then play the predominant role, while the unstable or counterrevolutionary bourgeoisie will be neutralized; productive forces will develop most rapidly and freely on capitalist lines, while the masses of the workers and peasants will enjoy the best conditions generally conceivable under commodity production—and hence the most favourable conditions will be created for the further prosecution by the working class of its real and fundamental task of socialist reconstruction. Of course, an endless variety of combinations of the elements of one type or another of capitalist evolution are possible, and only hopeless pedants would attempt to solve the peculiar and complex problems that arise in this connection merely by quoting some opinion or other expressed by Marx concerning a different historical epoch.

The work here submitted to the reader is devoted to an analysis of the prerevolutionary economics of Russia. In a revolutionary epoch a country lives so rapidly and impetuously that in the heat of the political struggle it is impossible to determine the major results of economic evolution. Messrs. the Stolypins<sup>26</sup> on the one hand, and the liberals on the other (and not only the Cadets à la Struve, but all the Cadets in general) are working systematically, persistently and consistently to consummate the revolution in accordance with the first model. The coup d'état of June 3, 1907,<sup>27</sup> we have just witnessed marks a victory for the counterrevolution, which is striving to ensure the complete predominance of the landlords in the so-called Russian popular representative assembly. But how durable this “victory” will be is another question, and the struggle

for the second issue to the revolution is continuing. Not only the proletariat, but the broad masses of the peasantry as well are more or less resolutely, more or less consistently, more or less consciously striving for this issue. In spite of all the efforts of the counterrevolution to stifle the direct mass struggle by open violence, and in spite of all the efforts of the Cadets to stifle it by their despicable and hypocritical counterrevolutionary ideas, it breaks out, now here, now there, do what they will, and puts its impress upon the policy of the Narodnik "toiler" parties, although the upper crust of petty-bourgeois political leaders (particularly the "Popular Socialists" and the Trudoviki) are undoubtedly infected with the Cadet spirit of treachery, Molchalinism<sup>28</sup> and the smugness of moderate and respectable philistines or officials.

How this struggle will end, or what will be the final result of the first assault of the Russian revolution it is as yet impossible to say. The time has therefore not yet arrived (or, indeed, do the immediate party duties of a participant in the labour movement leave leisure) for a thorough revision of the present work.\* The second edition cannot go beyond a description of the *prerevolutionary* economics of Russia. The author was obliged to confine himself to a perusal and correction of the text and also to adding the *most essential* of the latest statistical material, such as the returns of the last horse census, the harvest statistics, the returns of the national census of the population of 1897, *new* factory statistics, etc.

The Author

July 1907

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\* Perhaps such a revision would require an extension of this work: in that case the first volume would have to be restricted to an analysis of the *prerevolutionary* economics of Russia, and the second volume devoted to a study of the outcome and results of the revolution.

## AGAINST BOYCOTT

NOTES OF A SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC PUBLICIST

*(Excerpts)*

### V

The boycott is one of the finest revolutionary traditions of the most eventful and heroic period of the Russian revolution. We said above that one of our tasks is carefully to preserve these traditions in general, to cultivate them and to purge them of liberal (and opportunist) parasites. We must stop a moment to analyze this task in order correctly to define what it implies and to eliminate misinterpretations and misunderstandings that might easily arise.

Marxism differs from all other socialist theories in the remarkable way it combines complete scientific sobriety in the analysis of the objective state of affairs and the objective course of revolution with the most definite recognition of the importance of the revolutionary energy, the revolutionary creative genius and the revolutionary initiative of the masses—and also, of course, of individuals, groups, organizations and parties that are able to discover and exercise contact with various classes. A high appreciation of revolutionary periods in the development of humanity is something that follows logically from the sum-total of Marx's views on history. It is in such periods that the numerous contradictions that slowly accumulate in periods of so-called peaceful development become resolved. It is

in such periods that the direct role of the various classes in the determination of the forms of social life manifests itself with the greatest force, and that the foundations are laid for the political "superstructure," which then for a long time continues to persist on the basis of the new relations of production. And unlike the bourgeois liberal theoreticians, Marx did not regard these periods as deviations from the "normal" path, not as manifestations of "social disease," not as the deplorable results of excesses and mistakes, but as the most vital, the most important, essential and decisive moments in the history of human societies. In the activities of Marx and Engels themselves, the period of their participation in the mass revolutionary struggle of 1848-49 stands out as the central point. It was from this point that they proceeded when determining the destiny of the workers' movement and democracy in different countries. It was to this point that they always returned to determine the intrinsic nature of the various classes and their tendencies in the most vivid and purest form. It was from the standpoint of the revolutionary period of that time that they always judged the later and smaller political formations and organizations, political tasks and political conflicts. It is not for nothing that the ideological leaders of liberalism, like Sombart, cordially hate this feature of Marx's activities and writings and ascribe it to the "bitterness of an exile." It is so like the vermin of police-bourgeois university science to ascribe what is the most inseparable component of Marx's and Engels' revolutionary outlook to personal bitterness, to the personal discomforts of life in exile!

In one of his letters, I think it was to Kugelmann, Marx in passing makes a most characteristic remark, one that is particularly interesting from the standpoint of the question we are discussing. He says that the reaction in Germany had almost succeeded in stamping out the mem-

ory and traditions of the revolutionary epoch of 1848 from the minds of the people. Here we have the aims of reaction and the aims of the party of the proletariat in relation to the revolutionary traditions of a given country strikingly contrasted. The aim of reaction is to stamp out these traditions, to represent the revolution as "elemental madness"—Struve's translation of the German "das tolle Jahr" ("the mad year"—the term applied by the German police-bourgeois historians, and even more widely by German university-professorial historiography to the year 1848). It is the aim of reaction to get the people to forget the forms of struggle, the forms of organization and the ideas and slogans that were engendered by the revolutionary period in such profusion and variety. Just as those obtuse eulogists of English philistinism, the Webbs, try to represent Chartism, the revolutionary period of the English labour movement, as pure childishness, as "sowing wild oats," as a piece of naïveté unworthy of serious attention, as an accidental and abnormal deviation, so the German bourgeois historians treat the year 1848 in Germany. Such also is the attitude of the reactionaries to the Great French Revolution, which to this day reveals the vitality and strength of its influence on humanity by the fact that it still inspires the most savage hatred. And in the same way our heroes of counterrevolution, particularly former "democrats" like Struve, Milyukov, Kizeveter and "tutti quanti," vie with one another in vilely slandering the revolutionary traditions of the Russian revolution. Barely two years have elapsed since the direct mass struggle of the proletariat won the particle of freedom over which the liberal lackeys of the old regime are so rapturous, yet in our publicist literature a vast trend has already arisen which calls itself *liberal* (!!), which is fostered in the Cadet press and which is wholly devoted to depicting our revolution, revolutionary methods of



struggle, revolutionary slogans and revolutionary traditions as something base, primitive, naive, elemental, mad, etc. . . . even criminal . . . from Milyukov to Kamyschansky il n'y a qu'un pas! On the other hand the successes of reaction in first driving the people from the Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies into Dubasov-Stolypin<sup>29</sup> Dumas, and in now driving it into the Octobrist Duma, seem to the heroes of Russian liberalism to be "the process of growth of the *constitutional* consciousness in Russia."

It is undoubtedly the duty of Russian Social-Democrats to study our revolution most carefully and thoroughly, to acquaint the masses with its forms of struggle, forms of organization, etc., to strengthen the revolutionary traditions among the people, to instil in the masses the conviction that important and lasting improvements can be achieved solely and exclusively through the revolutionary struggle, and to systematically expose the utter baseness of those smug liberals who pollute the social atmosphere with the miasma of "constitutional" servility, treachery and Molchalinism. In the history of the struggle for liberty a single day of the October strike or of the December uprising is a hundred times more significant than months of servile Cadet speeches in the Duma on the subject of a nonresponsible monarch and a constitutional monarchy. We must see to it—for if we do not no one else will—that the people should know those vigorous, meaningful, highly significant and portentous days far more thoroughly and circumstantially than those months of "constitutional" suffocation and Balalaikin-Molchalin<sup>30</sup> progress, which, with the benevolent acquiescence of Stolypin and his retinue of gendarme censors, our liberal-party and nonparty "democratic" (ugh! ugh!) press lauds so zealously.

There is no doubt that in many cases sympathy for the boycott is created precisely by these praiseworthy ef-

forts of revolutionaries to foster the tradition of the finest revolutionary period of the past, to enliven the desolate swamp of the drab and commonplace present by a spark of bold, open and resolute struggle. But it is just because we prize this concern for revolutionary traditions that we must vigorously protest against the view that the application of one of the slogans of a particular historical period can help to restore the essential conditions of that period. It is one thing to preserve the traditions of the revolution, to know how to use them for constant propaganda and agitation and for acquainting the masses with the conditions of a direct and aggressive struggle against the old society; but it is another thing to reiterate one slogan torn from the sum-total of conditions which gave rise to it and guaranteed its success and to apply it to fundamentally different conditions.

Marx himself, who valued revolutionary traditions so highly, and unmercifully castigated a renegade or philistine attitude towards them, at the same time demanded that revolutionaries should be able to *think*, should be able to *analyze* the conditions for the application of old methods of struggle, and not simply to repeat certain slogans. The "national" traditions of 1792 in France will perhaps forever remain a *model* of certain revolutionary methods of struggle; but this did not prevent Marx in 1870, in the famous Address of the International, from warning the French proletariat against the mistake of transferring those traditions to the conditions of a different period.

The same is true in Russia. We must study the conditions for the application of the boycott; we must instil in the masses the idea that the boycott is an entirely legitimate and sometimes essential method at moments when the revolution is on the rise (no matter what the pedants who take the name of Marx in vain say). But whether

revolution is really on the rise—which is the fundamental condition for proclaiming a boycott—is a question which one must be able to raise independently and to decide on the basis of a serious analysis of the facts. It is our duty to prepare the way for such a rise, as far as it lies within our power, and not to renounce the boycott at a proper moment; but to regard the boycott slogan as being generally applicable to every bad or very bad representative institution would be an absolute mistake.

Take the argument that was used in defence and support of the boycott in the “days of freedom,” and you will immediately realize the impossibility of simply transferring these arguments to present-day conditions.

When advocating the boycott in 1905 and the beginning of 1906 we argued that participation in the elections would tend to dampen ardour, to surrender the position to the enemy, to lead the revolutionary people astray, to facilitate an agreement between tsarism and the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie, and so on. What was the fundamental premise underlying these arguments, a premise not always expressed, but always assumed as something self-evident *at that time*? This premise was the rich revolutionary energy of the masses, which sought and found *direct* outlets apart from any “constitutional” channels. This premise was that the revolution was maintaining a continuous *offensive* against reaction, an offensive which it would be criminal to weaken by occupying and defending a position that was deliberately proffered by the enemy in order to weaken the general onslaught. Try to repeat these arguments *apart from* the conditions of this fundamental premise and you will immediately discern the disharmony of your “music,” the falseness of your basic note.

It would be equally hopeless to attempt to justify the boycott by drawing a distinction between the Second and

the Third Dumas. To regard the difference between the Cadets (who in the Second Duma definitely betrayed the people to the Black Hundreds) and the Octobrists as a serious and fundamental difference, to attach any real significance to the notorious "constitution" that was torn up by the coup d'état of June 3, is something that in general corresponds much more to the spirit of vulgar democracy than to the spirit of revolutionary Social-Democracy. We have always said, maintained and reiterated that the "constitution" of the First and Second Dumas was only a phantom, that the Cadets' talk was only a manoeuvre to conceal their Octobrist nature, and that the Duma was a totally unsuitable instrument for satisfying the demands of the proletariat and the peasantry. For us, June 3, 1907, is a natural and inevitable result of the defeat of December 1905. We were never "captivated" by the charms of the "Duma" constitution, and so we cannot be particularly disappointed by the transition from reaction embellished and lacquered over by Rodichev's phrasemongering to naked, open and crude reaction. Perhaps the latter is an even more effective means of sobering the boorish liberal simpletons, or the sections of the population they have led astray...

Compare the Menshevik Stockholm resolution with the Bolshevik London resolution on the State Duma. You will find that the first is florid, prolix, full of high-flown phrases about the significance of the Duma and swollen with a consciousness of the grandeur of work in the Duma. The second is simple, concise, sober and modest. The first resolution is infused with a spirit of philistine rejoicing over the marriage of Social-Democracy and constitutionalism ("the new power that has arisen from the womb of the people," and so on and so forth in this same false, stereotyped spirit). The second resolution can be paraphrased approximately as follows: since the accursed

counterrevolution has driven us into this accursed pigsty, let us work even there for the benefit of the revolution, without whining, but also without boasting.

By defending the Duma from boycott when we were still in the period of direct revolutionary struggle, the Mensheviks, as it were, gave their pledge to the people that the Duma would be something in the nature of a weapon of revolution. And they have most solemnly come a cropper over this pledge. But if we Bolsheviks gave any pledge at all, it was by asserting that the Duma was the offspring of counterrevolution and that no real good could be expected from it. Our view has been splendidly confirmed so far, and it can be safely asserted that it will be further confirmed by future events. Unless the October-December strategy is "corrected" and repeated on the basis of the new data, there will never be freedom in Russia.

Therefore, when I am told that the Third Duma cannot be utilized as the Second Duma was, that the masses cannot be made to understand that it is necessary to take part in it, I want to answer: if by "utilize" is meant Menshevik bombast, such as it being a weapon of the revolution, etc., then it certainly cannot. But then even the first two Dumas proved in fact to be only steps to the Octobrist Duma, yet we utilized them for that simple and modest\* purpose (propaganda and agitation, criticism and

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\* See article in *Proletary* (Geneva), 1905, "The Boycott of the Bulygin Duma" (V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Fourth Russian Edition, Vol. 9, pp. 156-64.—*Ed.*), where it was pointed out that we do not renounce the use of the Duma generally, but that we are now solving another problem confronting us, viz., the problem of fighting for a direct revolutionary way. See also the article in *Proletary* (Russian), 1906, No. 1, "On the Boycott" (V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Fourth Russian Edition, Vol. 11, pp. 118-25.—*Ed.*), where the *modesty* of the benefits to be derived from work in the Duma is emphasized.

explaining to the masses what is taking place) for which we shall always be able to utilize even the worst representative institutions. A speech in the Duma will not call forth any "revolution," and propaganda *in connection with the Duma* is not distinguished by any particular merits; but the advantage that Social-Democracy can derive from the one and the other is not less, and sometimes even greater, than that derived from a printed speech or a speech delivered at some other gathering.

And in just as simple a manner we must explain to the masses our participation in the Octobrist Duma. Owing to the defeat of December 1905 and the failure of the attempts of 1906-07 to "repair" this defeat, reaction inevitably drove us and *will continue to drive* us constantly into worse and worse quasi-constitutional institutions. We shall uphold our convictions and advocate our views always and everywhere, and always insist that no good can be expected as long as the old regime remains, as long as it is not eradicated. Let us prepare the conditions for a new rise of the revolution, and until it takes place, and in order that it may take place, let us work more persistently and refrain from advancing slogans which have meaning only when the revolution is on the rise.

It would be equally wrong to regard the boycott as a *line of tactics* which sets the proletariat and part of the revolutionary bourgeois democracy in opposition to liberalism and reaction. The boycott is not a line of tactics, but a special means of struggle suitable under special conditions. To confuse Bolshevism with "boycottism" would be as mistaken as to confuse it with "boyeivism." The difference between the Bolshevik and Menshevik *lines of tactics* has already been fully revealed and has taken shape in the fundamentally different resolutions adopted in the spring of 1905 at the Bolshevik Third Congress in London and the Menshevik Conference in Geneva.

There was no talk then either of boycott or of "boyevism," nor could there be. As everyone knows, our *line of tactics* differed very definitely from the Menshevik line both in the elections to the Second Duma, when we were not boycottists, and in the Second Duma itself. The *lines of tactics* diverge whatever the means and methods of struggle, and in every field of the struggle, without any special methods of struggle peculiar to either line being created. And if a boycott of the Third Duma were to be justified on the grounds of, or be called forth by, the collapse of *revolutionary* expectations in connection with *the First or the Second Duma*, by the collapse of a "lawful," "strong," "durable," and "genuine" constitution, it would be Menshevism of the worst kind.

## VII

To sum up. The boycott slogan arose in a specific historical period. In 1905 and the beginning of 1906 the objective state of affairs confronted the combatant social forces with the problem of choosing the immediate path: the path of direct revolution or a change to a constitutional monarchy. The meaning of the agitation for a boycott was mainly to combat constitutional illusions. The condition for the success of the boycott was a wide, general, rapid and powerful rise of the revolution.

In all these respects the state of affairs now, in the autumn of 1907, does not make for such a slogan and does not justify it.

While continuing our day-to-day work of preparing for the elections, and while not refusing beforehand to participate even in the most reactionary representative institutions, we must concentrate all our propaganda and agitation upon explaining to the people the connection between the December defeat and all the subsequent de-

cline of liberty and abuse of the constitution. We must instil in the masses the firm conviction that unless there is a direct mass struggle such abuse will inevitably continue and grow worse.

Without renouncing the use of the boycott slogan at times of rising revolution, when the need for such a slogan may seriously arise, we must at the present moment direct all our efforts towards transforming by our direct and immediate influence every rise in the working-class movement into a general, wide, revolutionary and offensive movement against reaction as a whole, against its foundations.

June 26, 1907



## MARXISM AND REVISIONISM

There is a well-known saying that if geometrical axioms affected human interests attempts would certainly be made to refute them. Theories of the natural sciences which conflict with the old prejudices of theology provoked, and still provoke, the most rabid opposition. No wonder, therefore, that the Marxian doctrine, which directly serves to enlighten and organize the advanced class in modern society, indicates the tasks of this class and proves the inevitable (by virtue of economic development) replacement of the present system by a new order—no wonder that this doctrine had to fight at every step in its course.

There is no need to speak of bourgeois science and philosophy, which are officially taught by official professors in order to befuddle the rising generation of the possessing classes and to “coach” it against internal and foreign enemies. This science will not even hear of Marxism, declaring that it has been refuted and annihilated. Young scientists who are building their careers by refuting Socialism and decrepit elders who are preserving the traditions of all the various outworn “systems” attack Marx with equal zest. The progress of Marxism and the fact that its ideas are spreading and taking firm hold among the working class inevitably tend to increase the frequency and intensity of these bourgeois attacks on Marxism, which only becomes stronger, more hardened and more vigorous every time it is “annihilated” by official science.

But even among doctrines which are connected with the struggle of the working class and which are current mainly among the proletariat Marxism by no means consolidated its position immediately. In the first half century of its existence (from the eighteen forties on) Marxism was engaged in combating theories fundamentally hostile to it. In the first half of the forties Marx and Engels settled accounts with the radical Young Hegelians, who took the stand of philosophical idealism. At the end of the forties the struggle invaded the domain of economic doctrine, in opposition to Proudhonism. The fifties saw the completion of this struggle: the criticism of the parties and doctrines which manifested themselves in the stormy year of 1848. In the sixties the struggle was transferred from the domain of general theory to a domain closer to the direct working-class movement: the ejection of Bakunism from the International. In the early seventies the stage in Germany was occupied for a short while by the Proudhonist Mühlberger, and in the latter seventies by the positivist Dühring. But the influence of both on the proletariat was already absolutely insignificant. Marxism was already gaining an unquestionable victory over all other ideologies in the working-class movement.

By the nineties this victory was in the main completed. Even in the Latin countries, where the traditions of Proudhonism held their ground longest of all, the workers' parties actually based their programs and tactics on a Marxist foundation. The revived international organization of the working-class movement—in the shape of periodical international congresses—from the outset, and almost without a struggle, adopted the Marxist standpoint in all essentials. But after Marxism had ousted all the more or less integral doctrines hostile to it, the tendencies expressed in those doctrines began to seek other channels. The forms and motives of the struggle changed, but the

struggle continued. And the second half century of the existence of Marxism began (in the nineties) with the struggle of a trend hostile to Marxism within Marxism.

Bernstein, a onetime orthodox Marxist, gave his name to this trend by making the most noise and advancing the most integral expression of the amendments to Marx, the revision of Marx, revisionism. Even in Russia, where, owing to the economic backwardness of the country and the preponderance of a peasant population oppressed by the relics of serfdom, non-Marxian Socialism has naturally held its ground longest of all, it is plainly passing into revisionism before our very eyes. Both in the agrarian question (the program of the municipalization of all land) and in general questions of program and tactics, our social-Narodniks are more and more substituting "amendments" to Marx for the moribund and obsolescent remnants of the old system, which in its own way was integral and fundamentally hostile to Marxism.

Pre-Marxian Socialism has been smashed. It is continuing the struggle not on its own independent ground but on the general ground of Marxism—as revisionism. Let us, then, examine the ideological content of revisionism.

In the domain of philosophy revisionism followed in the wake of bourgeois professorial "science." The professors went "back to Kant"—and revisionism followed the neo-Kantians; the professors repeated the banalities that priests have uttered a thousand times against philosophical materialism—and the revisionists, smiling condescendingly, mumbled (word for word after the latest *Handbuch*) that materialism had been "refuted" long ago. The professors treated Hegel as a "dead dog," and while they themselves preached idealism, only an idealism a thousand times more petty and banal than Hegel's, they contemptuously shrugged their shoulders at dialectics—and

the revisionists floundered after them into the swamp of philosophical vulgarization of science, replacing "artful" (and revolutionary) dialectics by "simple" (and tranquil) "evolution." The professors earned their official salaries by adjusting both their idealist and "critical" systems to the dominant medieval "philosophy" (i.e., to theology)—and the revisionists drew close to them and endeavoured to make religion a "private affair," not in relation to the modern state, but in relation to the party of the advanced class.

What was the real class significance of such "amendments" to Marx need not be said—that is self-evident. We shall simply note that the only Marxist in the international Social-Democratic movement who criticized the incredible banalities uttered by the revisionists from the standpoint of consistent dialectical materialism was Plekhanov. This must be stressed all the more emphatically since thoroughly mistaken attempts are being made in our days to smuggle in the old and reactionary philosophical rubbish under the guise of criticism of Plekhanov's tactical opportunism.\*

Passing to political economy, it must be noted first of all that the "amendments" of the revisionists in this domain were much more comprehensive and circumstantial; attempts were made to influence the public by adducing "new data on economic development." It was said that concentration and the ousting of small-scale production by large-scale production do not occur in agriculture at all while they proceed very slowly in commerce and

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\* See *Studies in the Philosophy of Marxism* by Bogdanov, Bazarov and others. This is not the place to discuss this book, and I must at present confine myself to stating that in the very near future I shall show in a series of articles or in a separate pamphlet that *everything* I have said in the text about the neo-Kantian revisionists essentially applies also to these "new" neo-Humist and neo-Berkeleyan revisionists.<sup>31</sup>

industry. It was said that crises had now become rarer and of less force, and that the cartels and trusts would probably enable capital to do away with crises altogether. It was said that the "theory of collapse" to which capitalism is heading was unsound, owing to the tendency of class antagonisms to become milder and less acute. It was said, finally, that it would not be amiss to correct Marx's theory of value in accordance with Böhm-Bawerk.

The fight against the revisionists on these questions resulted in as fruitful a revival of the theoretical thought of international Socialism as followed from Engels' controversy with Dühring twenty years earlier. The arguments of the revisionists were analyzed with the help of facts and figures. It was proved that the revisionists were systematically presenting modern small-scale production in a favourable light. The technical and commercial superiority of large-scale *production* over small-scale production not only in industry, but also in agriculture, is proved by irrefutable facts. But commodity production is far less developed in agriculture, and modern statisticians and economists are, as a rule, not very skilful in picking out the special branches (sometimes even operations) in agriculture which indicate that agriculture is being progressively drawn into the *exchange* of world economy. Small-scale production maintains itself on the ruins of natural economy by a steady deterioration in nourishment, by chronic starvation, by the lengthening of the working day, by the deterioration in the quality of cattle and in the care given to cattle, in a word, by the very methods whereby handicraft production maintained itself against capitalist manufacture. Every advance in science and technology inevitably and relentlessly undermines the foundations of small-scale production in capitalist society, and it is the task of socialist political economy to investigate this process in all its often complicated and

intricate forms, and to demonstrate to the small producer the impossibility of his holding his own under capitalism, the hopelessness of peasant farming under capitalism, and the necessity of the peasant adopting the standpoint of the proletarian. On this question the revisionists sinned from the scientific standpoint by superficially generalizing facts selected one-sidedly and without reference to the system of capitalism as a whole; from the political standpoint they sinned by the fact that they inevitably, whether they wanted to or not, invited or urged the peasant to adopt the standpoint of the master (i.e., the standpoint of the bourgeoisie), instead of urging him to adopt the standpoint of the revolutionary proletarian.

The position of revisionism was even worse as far as the theory of crises and the theory of collapse were concerned. Only for the shortest space of time could people, and then only the most shortsighted, think of remodelling the foundations of the Marxian doctrine under the influence of a few years of industrial boom and prosperity. Facts very soon made it clear to the revisionists that crises were not a thing of the past: prosperity was followed by a crisis. The forms, the sequence, the picture of the particular crises changed, but crises remained an inevitable component of the capitalist system. While uniting production, the cartels and trusts at the same time, and in a way that was obvious to all, aggravated the anarchy of production, the insecurity of existence of the proletariat and the oppression of capital, thus intensifying class antagonisms to an unprecedented degree. That capitalism is moving towards collapse—both in the sense of individual political and economic crises and of the complete collapse of the entire capitalist system—has been made very clear, and on a very large scale, precisely by the latest giant trusts. The recent financial crisis in America and the

frightful increase of unemployment all over Europe, to say nothing of the impending industrial crisis to which many symptoms are pointing—all this has brought it about that the recent “theories” of the revisionists are being forgotten by everybody, even, it seems, by many of the revisionists themselves. But the lessons which this instability of the intellectuals had given the working class must not be forgotten.

As to the theory of value, it need only be said that apart from hints and sighs, exceedingly vague, for Böhmbawerk, the revisionists have here contributed absolutely nothing, and have therefore left no traces whatever on the development of scientific thought.

In the domain of politics, revisionism did really try to revise the foundation of Marxism, namely, the doctrine of the class struggle. Political freedom, democracy and universal suffrage remove the ground for the class struggle—we were told—and render untrue the old proposition of the *Communist Manifesto* that the workers have no country. For, they said, since the “will of the majority” prevails under democracy, one must neither regard the state as an organ of class rule, nor reject alliances with the progressive, social-reformist bourgeoisie against the reactionaries.

It cannot be disputed that these objections of the revisionists constituted a fairly harmonious system of views, namely, the old and well-known liberal bourgeois views. The liberals have always said that bourgeois parliamentarism destroys classes and class divisions, since the right to vote and the right to participate in state affairs are shared by all citizens without distinction. The whole history of Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century, and the whole history of the Russian revolution in the beginning of the twentieth, clearly shows how absurd such views are. Economic distinctions are not mitigated

but aggravated and intensified under the freedom of "democratic" capitalism. Parliamentarism does not remove, but lays bare the innate character even of the most democratic bourgeois republics as organs of class oppression. By helping to enlighten and to organize immeasurably wider masses of the population than those which previously took an active part in political events, parliamentarism does not make for the elimination of crises and political revolutions, but for the maximum intensification of civil war during such revolutions. The events in Paris in the spring of 1871 and the events in Russia in the winter of 1905 showed as clear as clear could be how inevitably this intensification comes about. The French bourgeoisie without a moment's hesitation made a deal with the enemy of the whole nation, with the foreign army, which had ruined its fatherland, in order to crush the proletarian movement. Whoever does not understand the inevitable inner dialectics of parliamentarism and bourgeois democracy—which leads to an even sharper decision of the dispute by mass violence than formerly—will never be able on this basis of parliamentarism to conduct propaganda and agitation that are consistent in principle and really prepare the working-class masses for victorious participation in such "disputes." The experience of alliances, agreements and blocs with the social-reformist liberals in the West and with the liberal reformists (Constitutional-Democrats) in the Russian revolution convincingly showed that these agreements only blunt the consciousness of the masses, that they do not enhance but weaken the actual significance of their struggle by linking the fighters with the elements who are less capable of fighting and who are most vacillating and treacherous. French Millerandism—the biggest experiment in applying revisionist political tactics on a wide, a really national scale—has provided a practical appraisal



of revisionism that will never be forgotten by the proletariat all over the world.

A natural complement to the economic and political tendencies of revisionism was its attitude to the final aim of the socialist movement. "The movement is everything, the final aim is nothing"—this catch phrase of Bernstein's expresses the substance of revisionism better than many long arguments. To determine its conduct from case to case, to adapt itself to the events of the day and to the chops and changes of petty politics, to forget the basic interests of the proletariat, the main features of the capitalist system as a whole and of capitalist evolution as a whole; to sacrifice these basic interests for the real or assumed advantages of the moment—such is the policy of revisionism. And it patently follows from the very nature of this policy that it may assume an infinite variety of forms, and that every more or less "new" question, every more or less unexpected and unforeseen turn of events, even though it may change the basic line of development only to an insignificant degree and only for the shortest period of time, will always inevitably give rise to one or another variety of revisionism.

The inevitability of revisionism is determined by its class roots in modern society. Revisionism is an international phenomenon. No Socialist who is in the least informed and thinks at all can have the slightest doubt that the relation between the orthodox and the Bernsteinians in Germany, the Guesdites and the Jaurèsites (and now particularly the Broussites) in France, the Social-Democratic Federation and the Independent Labour Party in Great Britain, the Brouckères and Vanderveldes in Belgium, the Integralists and the Reformists in Italy, and the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks in Russia is everywhere essentially similar, notwithstanding the vast difference in the national conditions and historical factors

in the present state of all these countries. In reality, the "division" within the present international socialist movement is now proceeding along *one* line in all the various countries of the world, which testifies to a tremendous advance compared with thirty or forty years ago, when heterogeneous trends within a united international socialist movement were combating one another within the various countries. And the "revisionism from the Left" which has begun to take shape in the Latin countries, such as "revolutionary syndicalism," is also adapting itself to Marxism while "amending" it; Labriola in Italy and Lagardelle in France frequently appeal from Marx wrongly understood to Marx rightly understood.

We cannot stop here to analyze the ideological substance of *this* revisionism, which has not yet by far developed to the extent that opportunist revisionism has, has not yet become international, has not yet stood the test of a single big practical battle with a socialist party even in one country. We shall therefore confine ourselves to the "revisionism from the Right" described above.

Wherein lies its inevitability in capitalist society? Why is it more profound than the differences on national peculiarities and degrees of capitalist development? Because in every capitalist country, side by side with the proletariat, there are always broad strata of the petty bourgeoisie, small masters. Capitalism arose and is constantly arising out of small production. A number of new "middle strata" is inevitably created by capitalism (appendages to the factory, homework, and small workshops scattered all over the country in view of the requirements of big industries, such as the bicycle and automobile industries, etc.). These new small producers are just as inevitably being cast into the ranks of the proletariat. It is quite natural that the petty-bourgeois world conception should again and again crop up in the ranks of the broad work-

ers' parties. It is quite natural that this should be so, and it always will be so right up to the peripety of the proletarian revolution, for it would be a grave mistake to think that the "complete" proletarianization of the majority of the population is essential before such a revolution can be achieved. What we now frequently experience only in the domain of ideology—disputes over theoretical amendments to Marx—what now crops up in practice only over individual partial issues of the working-class movement as tactical differences with the revisionists and splits on these grounds, will all unfailingly have to be experienced by the working class on an incomparably larger scale when the proletarian revolution intensifies all issues and concentrates all differences on points of the most immediate importance in determining the conduct of the masses, and makes it necessary in the heat of the fight to distinguish enemies from friends and to cast out bad allies, so as to be able to deal decisive blows at the enemy.

The ideological struggle waged by revolutionary Marxism against revisionism at the end of the nineteenth century is but the prelude to the great revolutionary battles of the proletariat, which is marching forward to the complete victory of its cause despite all the waverings and weaknesses of the petty bourgeoisie.

April 1908

# MATERIALISM AND EMPIRIO-CRITICISM

CRITICAL COMMENTS ON A REACTIONARY PHILOSOPHY

(Excerpt)

CHAPTER VI

## EMPIRIO-CRITICISM AND HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

### 4. PARTIES IN PHILOSOPHY AND PHILOSOPHICAL BLOCKHEADS

It remains for us to examine the relation between Machism and religion. But this broadens into the question of whether there are parties generally in philosophy, and what is meant by nonpartisanship in philosophy.

Throughout the preceding exposition, in connection with every problem of epistemology touched upon and in connection with every philosophical question raised by the new physics, we traced the struggle between *materialism* and *idealism*. Behind the mass of new terminological devices, behind the litter of erudite scholasticism, we invariably discerned *two* principal alignments, two fundamental trends in the solution of philosophical problems. Whether nature, matter, the physical, the external world be taken as primary, and mind, spirit, sensation (experience—as the *widespread* terminology of our time has it), the psychical, etc., be regarded as secondary—that is the root question which *in fact* continues to divide the philosophers into *two great camps*. The sources of thousands

upon thousands of mistakes and of the confusion reigning in this sphere is the fact that beneath the envelope of terms, definitions, scholastic devices and verbal artifices, these two fundamental trends are *overlooked*. (Bogdanov, for instance, refuses to acknowledge his idealism, because, you see, instead of the "metaphysical" concepts "nature" and "mind," he has taken the "experiential" physical and psychical. A word has been changed!)

The genius of Marx and Engels consisted in the very fact that in the course of a long period, *nearly half a century*, they developed materialism, that they further advanced one fundamental trend in philosophy, that they did not confine themselves to reiterating epistemological problems that had already been solved, but consistently applied—and showed *how* to apply—*this same* materialism in the sphere of the social sciences, mercilessly brushing aside as litter and rubbish the pretentious rigmarole, the innumerable attempts to "discover" a "new" line in philosophy, to invent a "new" trend and so forth. The verbal nature of such attempts, the scholastic play with new philosophical "isms," the clogging of the issue by pretentious devices, the inability to comprehend and clearly present the struggle between the two fundamental epistemological trends—this is what Marx and Engels persistently pursued and fought against throughout their entire activity.

We said, "nearly half a century." And, indeed, as far back as 1843, when Marx was only becoming Marx, i.e., the founder of scientific Socialism, the founder of *modern materialism*, which is immeasurably richer in content and incomparably more consistent than all preceding forms of materialism, even at that time Marx pointed out with amazing clarity the basic trends in philosophy. Karl Grün quotes a letter from Marx to Feuerbach dated October 20, 1843, in which Marx invites Feuerbach to write an

article for the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* against Schelling. This Schelling, writes Marx, is a shallow braggart with his claims to having embraced and transcended all previous philosophical trends. "To the French romanticists and mystics Schelling says: I am the union of philosophy and theology; to the French materialists; I am the union of the flesh and the idea; to the French sceptics: I am the destroyer of dogmatism."\* That the "sceptics," be they called Humeans or Kantians (or, in the twentieth century, Machians), cry out against the "dogmatism" of both materialism and idealism, Marx at that time already realized; and, without letting himself be diverted by any one of a thousand wretched little philosophical systems, he was able, through Feuerbach, to take the direct materialist road as against idealism. Thirty years later, in the afterword to the second edition of the first volume of *Capital*, Marx just as clearly and definitely contrasted *his materialism* to Hegel's *idealism*, the most consistent and developed idealism of all; he contemptuously brushed Comtian "positivism" aside and dubbed as wretched epigoni the contemporary philosophers who imagined that they had destroyed Hegel when in reality they had reverted to a repetition of the pre-Hegelian errors of Kant and Hume. In the letter to Kugelmann of June 27, 1870, Marx refers just as contemptuously to "Büchner, Lange, Dühring, Fechner, etc.," because they understood nothing of Hegel's dialectics and treated him with scorn.\*\* And

\* Karl Grün, *Ludwig Feuerbach in seinem Briefwechsel und Nachlass, sowie in seiner philosophischen Charakterentwicklung* (*Ludwig Feuerbach, His Correspondence, Posthumous Works and Philosophical Development.—Ed.*), I. Bd., Leipzig, 1874. S. 361.

\*\* Of the positivist Beesly, Marx, in his letter of December 13, 1870, speaks as follows: "Professor Beesly is a Comtist and is as such obliged to support all sorts of crotchets." Compare this with the opinion given of the positivists of the Huxley type by Engels in 1892.

finally, take the various philosophical utterances by Marx in *Capital* and other works, and you will find an *invariable* basic motif, viz., insistence upon *materialism* and contemptuous derision of all obscurity, of all confusion and all deviations towards *idealism*. All Marx's philosophical utterances revolve within these two fundamental opposites, and, in the eyes of professorial philosophy, their defect lies in this "narrowness" and "one-sidedness." As a matter of fact, this refusal to recognize the hybrid projects for reconciling materialism and idealism constitutes the great merit of Marx, who moved *forward* along a sharply-defined philosophical road.

Entirely in the spirit of Marx, and in close collaboration with him, Engels in all his philosophical works briefly and clearly contrasts the materialist and idealist line in regard to *all* questions, without, either in 1878, or 1888, or 1892, taking seriously the endless attempts to "transcend" the "one-sidedness" of materialism and idealism, to proclaim a *new* trend—"positivism," "realism," or some other professorial charlatanism. Engels based his *whole* fight against Dühring on the demand for consistent adherence to materialism, accusing the materialist Dühring of verbally confusing the issue, of phrasemongering, of methods of reasoning which involved a compromise with idealism and adoption of the position of idealism. Either materialism consistent to the end, or the falsehood and confusion of philosophical idealism—such is the formulation of the question given in *every paragraph* of *Anti-Dühring*; and only people whose minds had already been corrupted by reactionary professorial philosophy could fail to notice it. And right down to 1894, when the last preface was written to *Anti-Dühring*, revised and enlarged by the author for the last time, Engels continued to follow the latest developments both in philosophy and science, and continued with all his former resoluteness

to hold to his lucid and firm position, brushing away the litter of new systems, big and little.

That Engels followed the new developments in philosophy is evident from *Ludwig Feuerbach*. In the 1888 preface, mention is even made of such a phenomenon as the rebirth of classical German philosophy in England and Scandinavia, whereas Engels (both in the preface and in the text of the book) has nothing but the most extreme contempt for the prevailing neo-Kantianism and Humism. It is quite obvious that Engels, observing the repetition by *fashionable* German and English philosophy of the old pre-Hegelian errors of Kantianism and Humism, was prepared to expect some good even *from the turn to Hegel* (in England and Scandinavia), hoping that the great idealist and dialectician would help to disclose petty idealist and metaphysical errors.

Without undertaking an examination of the vast number of shades of neo-Kantianism in Germany and of Humism in England, Engels *from the very outset* refutes their fundamental deviation from materialism. Engels declares that the *entire tendency* of these two schools is "*scientifically a step backward.*" And what is his opinion of the undoubtedly "positivist," according to the current terminology, the undoubtedly "realist" tendencies of these neo-Kantians and Humeans, among whose number, for instance, he could not help knowing Huxley? That "positivism" and that "realism" which attracted, and which continue to attract, an infinite number of muddleheads, Engels declared to be *at best a philistine method of smuggling in materialism* while criticizing and abjuring it publicly! One has to reflect only very little on *such* an appraisal of Thomas Huxley—a very great scientist and an incomparably more realistic realist and positive positivist than Mach, Avenarius and Co.—in order to understand how contemptuously Engels would have greeted the pres-



ent infatuation of a group of Marxists with "recent positivism," the "latest realism," etc.

Marx and Engels were partisans in philosophy from start to finish; they were able to detect the deviations from materialism and concessions to idealism and fideism in each and every "new" tendency. They therefore appraised Huxley *exclusively* from the standpoint of his materialist consistency. They therefore rebuked Feuerbach for not pursuing materialism to the end, for renouncing materialism because of the errors of individual materialists, for combating religion in order to renovate it or invent a new religion, for being unable, in sociology, to rid himself of idealist phraseology and become a materialist.

And whatever particular mistakes he committed in his exposition of dialectical materialism, J. Dietzgen fully appreciated and took over this great and most precious tradition of his teachers. Dietzgen sinned much by his clumsy deviations from materialism, but he never attempted to dissociate himself from it in principle, he never attempted to hoist a "new" standard, and always at the decisive moment he firmly and categorically declared: I am a materialist; our philosophy is a materialist philosophy. "Of all parties," our Joseph Dietzgen justly said, "the middle party is the most repulsive. . . . Just as parties in politics are more and more becoming divided into two camps . . . so science too is being divided into two general classes (Generalklassen): metaphysicians on the one hand, and physicists, or materialists, on the other.\* The intermediate elements and conciliatory quacks, with their various appellations—spiritualists, sensualists, realists, etc.,

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\* Here again we have a clumsy and inexact expression: instead of "metaphysicians," he should have said: "idealists." Elsewhere Dietzgen himself contrasts the metaphysicians and the dialecticians.

etc.,—fall now into one, now into the other current on their way. We aim at definiteness and clarity. The reactionaries who sound a retreat (*Retraitebläser*) call themselves idealists,\* and materialists should be the name for all who are striving to liberate the human mind from the metaphysical spell. . . . If we compare the two parties respectively to solid and liquid, between them there is a mush.\*\*

True! The “realists,” etc., including the “positivists,” the Machians, etc., are all a wretched mush; they are a contemptible *middle party* in philosophy, who confuse the materialist and idealist trends on every question. The attempt to escape these two basic trends in philosophy is nothing but “conciliatory quackery.”

J. Dietzgen had not the slightest doubt that the “scientific priestcraft” of idealist philosophy is simply the antechamber to open priestcraft. “Scientific priestcraft” he wrote, “is seriously endeavouring to assist religious priestcraft” (op. cit., p. 51). “In particular, the sphere of epistemology, the misunderstanding of the human mind, is such a louse-hole” (*Lausgrube*) in which both kinds of priests “lay their eggs.” “Graduated flunkeys,” who with their talk of “ideal blessings” stultify the people by their sham (*geschraubter*) “idealism” (p. 53)—that is J. Dietzgen’s opinion of the professors of philosophy. “Just as the antipodes of the good God is the devil, so the professorial priest (*Kathederpaffen*) has his opposite pole in the materialist.” The materialist theory of knowledge is “a universal weapon against religious belief” (p. 55), and not only against the “notorious, formal and common religion

\* Note that Dietzgen has corrected himself and now explains *more exactly* which is the party of the enemies of materialism.

\*\* See the article, “Social-Democratic Philosophy,” written in 1876. *Kleinere philosophische Schriften* (*Smaller Philosophical Essays.—Ed.*), 1903, S. 135.

of the priests, but also against the most refined, elevated professorial religion of muddled (benebelter) idealists" (p. 58).

Dietzgen was ready to prefer "religious honesty" to the "half-heartedness" of freethinking professors (p. 60), for "there at least there is a system," there we find complete people, people who do not separate theory from practice. For the Herr Professors "philosophy is not a science, but a means of defence against Social-Democracy..." (p. 107). "All who call themselves philosophers, professors, and university lecturers are, despite their apparent freethinking, more or less immersed in superstition and mysticism... and in relation to Social-Democracy constitute a single... reactionary mass" (p. 108). "Now, in order to follow the true path, without being led astray by all the religious and philosophical gibberish (Welsch), it is necessary to study the falsest of all false paths (der Holzweg der Holzwege), philosophy" (p. 103).

Let us now examine Mach, Avenarius and their school from the standpoint of parties in philosophy. Oh, these gentlemen *boast* of their *nonpartisanship*, and if they have an antipodes, it is the *materialist*... and *only* the materialist. A red thread that runs through *all* the writings of *all* the Machians is the stupid claim to have "risen above" materialism and idealism, to have transcended this "obsolete" antithesis; but *in fact* the whole fraternity are *continually* sliding into idealism and are conducting a steady and incessant struggle against materialism. The subtle epistemological crotchets of a man like Avenarius are but professorial inventions, an attempt to form a small philosophical sect "of his own"; but, *as a matter of fact*, in the general circumstances of the struggle of ideas and trends in modern society, the *objective* part played by these epistemological artifices is in every case the same, namely, to clear the way for idealism and fideism, and

to serve them faithfully. In fact, it cannot be an accident that the small school of empirio-criticists is acclaimed by the English spiritualists, like Ward, by the French neo-criticists, who praise Mach for his attack on materialism, and by the German immanentists! Dietzgen's expression, "graduated flunkeys of fideism," hits the nail on the head in the case of Mach, Avenarius and their whole school.\*

It is the misfortune of the Russian Machians who undertook to "reconcile" Machism and Marxism, that they trusted the reactionary professors of philosophy and as a result slipped down an inclined plane. The methods of operation employed in the various attempts to develop and supplement Marx were not very ingenious. They read Ostwald, believe Ostwald, paraphrase Ostwald and call it Marxism. They read Mach, believe Mach, paraphrase Mach and call it Marxism. They read Poincaré, believe Poincaré, paraphrase Poincaré and call it Marxism! *Not a single one* of these professors, who are capable of making very valu-

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\* Here is another example of how the widespread currents of reactionary bourgeois philosophy make use of Machism in practice. Perhaps the "latest fashion" in the latest American philosophy is "pragmatism" (from the Greek word "pragma"—action; that is, a philosophy of action). The philosophical journals perhaps speak more of pragmatism than of anything else. Pragmatism ridicules the metaphysics both of idealism and materialism, acclaims experience and only experience, recognizes practice as the only criterion, refers to the positivist movement in general, *especially turns for support to Ostwald, Mach, Pearson, Poincaré and Duhem* for the belief that science is not an "absolute copy of reality" and . . . successfully deduces from all this a God for practical purposes, and only for practical purposes, without any metaphysics, and without transcending the bounds of experience (cf. William James, *Pragmatism, A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking*, New York and London, 1907, pp. 57 and 106 especially). From the standpoint of materialism the difference between Machism and pragmatism is as insignificant and unimportant as the difference between empirio-criticism and empirio-monism. Compare, for example, Bogdanov's definition of truth with the pragmatist definition of truth, which is: "Truth for the pragmatist becomes a class-name for all sorts of definite working values in experience" (*ibid.*, p. 68).

able contributions in the special fields of chemistry, history, or physics, *can be trusted one iota* when it comes to philosophy. Why? For the same reason that *not a single* professor of political economy, who may be capable of very valuable contributions in the field of factual and specialized investigations, can be trusted *one iota* when it comes to the general theory of political economy. For in modern society the latter is as much a *partisan* science as is *epistemology*. Taken as a whole, the professors of economics are nothing but learned salesmen of the capitalist class, while the professors of philosophy are learned salesmen of the theologians.

The task of Marxists in both cases is to be able to master and adapt the achievements of these "salesmen" (for instance, you will not make the slightest progress in the investigation of new economic phenomena unless you have recourse to the works of these salesmen) and *to be able* to lop off their reactionary tendency, to pursue one's *own* line and to combat the *whole alignment* of forces and classes hostile to us. And this is just what our Machians were unable to do; they *slavishly* follow the lead of the reactionary professorial philosophy. "Perhaps we have gone astray, but we are seeking," wrote Lunacharsky in the name of the authors of the *Studies*. The trouble is that it is not *you* who are seeking, but you who are *being sought!* You do not go with your, i.e., Marxist (for you want to be Marxists) standpoint to every change in bourgeois philosophical fashion; the fashion comes to you, foists upon you its new surrogates got up in the idealist taste, one day à la Ostwald, the next day à la Mach, and the day after à la Poincaré. These silly "theoretical" devices ("energetics," "elements," "introjections," etc.) in which you so naively believe are confined to a narrow and tiny school, while the ideological and *social tendency* of these devices is immediately spotted by the Wards, the

neocriticists, the immanentists, the Lopatins and the pragmatists, and *it serves their purposes*. The infatuation for empirio-criticism and "physical" idealism passes as rapidly as the infatuation for neo-Kantianism and "physiological" idealism; but fideism takes its toll from every such infatuation and modifies its devices in a thousand ways for the benefit of philosophical idealism.

The attitude towards religion and the attitude towards natural science excellently illustrate the *actual* class use made of empirio-criticism by bourgeois reactionaries.

Take the first question. Do you think it is an accident that in a collective work directed *against* the philosophy of Marxism Lunacharsky went so far as to speak of the "deification of the higher human potentialities," of "religious atheism," etc.?\* If you do, it is only because the Russian Machians have not informed the public correctly regarding the *whole* Machian current in Europe and the attitude of this current to religion. Not only is this attitude in no way similar to the attitude of Marx, Engels, J. Dietzgen and even Feuerbach, but it is the *very opposite*, beginning with Petzoldt's statement to the effect that empirio-criticism "contradicts neither theism nor atheism" (*Einführung in die Philosophie der reinen Erfahrung*,\*\* Bd. I, S. 351), or Mach's declaration that "religious opinion is a private affair" (French translation, p. 434), and ending with the *explicit fideism*, the explicitly *archreactionary* views of Cornelius, who praises Mach and whom Mach praises, of Carus and of all the immanentists. The neutrality of a *philosopher* in this question is

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\* *Studies*, pp. 157, 159. In the *Zagranichnaya Gazeta* the same author speaks of "scientific Socialism in its religious significance" (No. 3, p. 5) and in *Obrazovaniye*, 1908, No. 1, p. 164, he explicitly says: "For a long time a new religion has been maturing within me. . . ."

\*\* *Introduction to the Philosophy of Pure Experience.—Tr.*

*in itself* servility to fideism, and Mach and Avenarius, because of the very premises of their epistemology, do not and cannot rise above neutrality.

Once you deny objective reality, given us in sensation, you have already lost every one of your weapons against fideism, for you have slipped into agnosticism or subjectivism—and that is all fideism wants. If the perceptual world is objective reality, then the door is closed to every other “reality” or quasi reality (remember that Bazarov believed the “realism” of the immanentists, who declare God to be a “real concept”). If the world is matter in motion, matter can and must be infinitely studied in the infinitely complex and detailed manifestations and ramifications of *this* motion, the motion of *this* matter; but beyond it, beyond the “physical,” external world, with which everyone is familiar, there can be nothing. And the hostility to materialism and the showers of abuse heaped on the materialists are all in the order of things in civilized and democratic Europe. All this is going on to this day. All this is being *concealed* from the public by the Russian Machians, who have *not once* attempted even simply to compare the attacks made on materialism by Mach, Avenarius, Petzoldt and Co., with the statements made *in favour* of materialism by Feuerbach, Marx, Engels and J. Dietzgen.

But this “concealment” of the attitude of Mach and Avenarius to fideism will not avail. The facts speak for themselves. No efforts can release these reactionary professors from the pillory in which they have been placed by the kisses of Ward, the neocriticists, Schuppe, Schubert-Soldern, Leclair, the pragmatists, etc. And the influence of the persons mentioned, as philosophers and professors, the popularity of their ideas among the “cultured,” i.e., the bourgeois, public and the specific literature they have created are ten times wider and richer

than the particular little school of Mach and Avenarius. The little school serves those it should serve, and it is exploited as it deserves to be exploited.

The shameful things to which Lunacharsky has stooped are not exceptional; they are the product of empirio-criticism, both Russian and German. They cannot be defended on the grounds of the "good intentions" of the author, or the "special meaning" of his words; if it were the direct and common, i.e., the directly fideistic meaning, we should not stop to discuss matters with the author, for most likely not a single Marxist could be found in whose eyes such statements would *not* have placed Anatole Lunacharsky *exactly* in the same category as Peter Struve. If this is not the case (and it is not the case *yet*), it is exclusively because we perceive the "special" meaning and are *fighting while there is still ground* for a fight on comradely lines. This is just the disgrace of Lunacharsky's statements—that he *could* connect them with his "good" intentions. This is just the evil of his "theory"—that it permits the use of *such* methods or of *such* conclusions in the pursuit of good intentions. This is just the trouble—that *at best* "good" intentions are the subjective affair of Tom, Dick or Harry, while the *social significance* of such statements is undeniable and indisputable, and no reservation or explanation can weaken their effect.

One must be blind not to see the ideological affinity between Lunacharsky's "deification of the higher human potentialities" and Bogdanov's "general substitution" of the psychical for all physical nature. This is one and the same thought; in the one case it is expressed principally from the esthetic standpoint, and in the other from the epistemological standpoint. "Substitution," approaching the subject *tacitly* and from a different angle, *already deifies* the "higher human potentialities," by divorcing the



“psychical” from man and by substituting an immensely extended, abstract, divinely-lifeless “psychical in general” for *all physical nature*. And what of Yushkevich’s “Logos” introduced into the “irrational stream of experience”?

A single claw ensnared, and the bird is lost. And our Machians have all become ensnared in idealism, that is, in a diluted and subtle fideism; they became ensnared from the moment they took “sensation” not as the image of the external world but as a special “element.” It is nobody’s sensation, nobody’s mind, nobody’s spirit, nobody’s will—this is what one inevitably comes to if one does not recognize the materialist theory that the human mind *reflects* an objectively real external world.

Latter half of 1908

## THE ATTITUDE OF THE WORKERS' PARTY TOWARDS RELIGION

Deputy Surkov's speech in the State Duma during the debate on the Synod estimates, and the discussion, which we print elsewhere in this issue, that arose within our Duma fraction when it considered the draft of this speech, have raised a question which is of extreme importance and urgency at this particular moment. An interest in all questions connected with religion is undoubtedly being evinced today by wide circles of "society" and has penetrated to the ranks of the intellectuals who stand close to the working-class movement, and also to certain circles of the workers. It is the absolute duty of Social-Democrats to make a public statement of their attitude towards religion.

Social-Democracy bases its whole world outlook on scientific Socialism, i.e., Marxism. The philosophical basis of Marxism, as Marx and Engels repeatedly declared, is dialectical materialism, which has fully taken over the historical traditions of eighteenth-century materialism in France and of Feuerbach (first half of the nineteenth century) in Germany—a materialism which is absolutely atheistic and resolutely hostile to all religion. Let us recall that the whole of Engels' *Anti-Dühring*, which Marx read in manuscript, is an indictment of the materialist and atheist Dühring for not being a consistent materialist and for leaving loopholes for religion and religious philosophy. Let us recall that in his essay on Ludwig Feuerbach, Engels reproaches Feuerbach for combating religion not

in order to destroy it, but in order to renovate it, to create a new, "exalted" religion, and so forth. Religion is the opium of the people—this dictum of Marx's is the cornerstone of the whole Marxist outlook on religion. Marxism has always regarded all modern religions and churches and all religious organizations as instruments of bourgeois reaction that serve to defend exploitation and to drug the working class.

Yet at the same time Engels frequently condemned the efforts of people who desired to be "more Left" or "more revolutionary" than the Social-Democrats to introduce an explicit avowal of atheism, in the sense of declaring war on religion, into the program of the workers' party. Commenting in 1874 on the famous manifesto of the Blanquist fugitive Communards who were living in exile in London, Engels called their vociferous proclamation of war on religion foolishness, and stated that such a declaration of war was the best way to revive interest in religion and to prevent it from really dying out. Engels blamed the Blanquists for failing to understand that only the class struggle of the working-class masses could in fact, by comprehensively drawing large numbers of the proletariat into conscious and revolutionary social *practice*, free the oppressed masses from the yoke of religion; whereas to proclaim war on religion a political task of the workers' party was just anarchistic phrasemongering. And in 1877, too, in his *Anti-Dühring*, while ruthlessly attacking every slightest concession made by Dühring the philosopher to idealism and religion, Engels no less resolutely condemns Dühring's pseudorevolutionary idea that religion should be prohibited in socialist society. To declare such a war on religion, Engels says, is to "out-Bismarck Bismarck," i.e., to repeat the folly of Bismarck's struggle against the clericals (the notorious "Struggle for Culture," *Kulturkampf*, i.e., the struggle Bismarck waged in the 1870's

against the German Catholic party, the "Centre" party, by means of a police persecution of Catholicism). By this struggle Bismarck only *stimulated* the militant clericalism of the Catholics and only injured the work of real culture, because he gave prominence to religious divisions rather than political divisions and diverted the attention of certain sections of the working class and the democracy from the urgent tasks of the class and revolutionary struggle to a most superficial and mendacious bourgeois anticlericalism. Accusing the would-be ultrarevolutionary Dühring of wanting to repeat Bismarck's folly in another form, Engels insisted that the workers' party should have the ability to work patiently at the task of organizing and educating the proletariat, which would lead to the dying out of religion, and not venture into a political war on religion. This view has thoroughly permeated German Social-Democracy, which, for example, advocated freedom for the Jesuits, their admission into Germany, and the complete abandonment of police methods of combating any particular religion. "Religion is a private matter"; this celebrated point in the Erfurt Program (1891) endorsed these political tactics of Social-Democracy.

These tactics have now managed to become a mere matter of routine; they have already managed to give rise to a new distortion of Marxism in the opposite direction, in the direction of opportunism. This point in the Erfurt Program has come to be interpreted as meaning that we Social-Democrats, that our Party *considers* religion to be a private matter, that religion is a private matter for us as Social-Democrats, for us as a Party. Without entering into a direct controversy with this opportunist view, Engels in the nineties deemed it necessary to oppose it resolutely in a positive, and not a polemical form. To wit: Engels did this in the form of a statement, which he deliberately underlined, that Social-Democrats regard religion as a

private matter *in relation to the state*, but not in relation to themselves, not in relation to Marxism, and not in relation to the workers' party.

Such is the external history of the utterances of Marx and Engels on the question of religion. To people with a slatterdash attitude towards Marxism, to people who cannot or will not think, this history is a skein of meaningless Marxist contradictions and waverings, a hodgepodge of "consistent" atheism and "sops" to religion, "unprincipled" wavering between a r-r-revolutionary war on God and a cowardly desire to "ingratiate" oneself with religious workers, a fear of scaring them away, etc., etc. The literature of the anarchist phrasemongers is full of attacks on Marxism in this vein.

But anybody who is able to treat Marxism at all seriously, to ponder over its philosophical principles and the experience of international Social-Democracy, will readily see that the Marxist tactics in regard to religion are thoroughly consistent and were carefully thought out by Marx and Engels, and that what dilettantes or ignoramuses regard as wavering is but a direct and inevitable deduction from dialectical materialism. It would be a profound mistake to think that the apparent "moderation" of the Marxist attitude towards religion is due to supposed "tactical" considerations, by the desire "not to scare away" anybody, and so forth. On the contrary, in this question too the political line of Marxism is inseparably bound up with its philosophical principles.

Marxism is materialism. As such, it is as relentlessly hostile to religion as was the materialism of the eighteenth-century Encyclopedists or the materialism of Feuerbach. This is beyond doubt. But the dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels goes further than the Encyclopedists and Feuerbach by applying the materialist philosophy to the domain of history, to the domain of the social sciences.

We must combat religion—that is a rudiment of *all* materialism, and consequently of Marxism. But Marxism is not a materialism which stops at rudiments. Marxism goes further. It says: We must *know how* to combat religion, and in order to do so we must explain the source of faith and religion among the masses *materialistically*. The fight against religion must not be confined to abstract ideological preaching, must not be reduced to such preaching. The fight must be linked up with the concrete practical work of the class movement, which aims at eliminating the social roots of religion. Why does religion retain its hold over the backward sections of the urban proletariat, over the broad sections of the semiproletariat, and over the peasant mass? Because of the ignorance of the people, replies the bourgeois progressivist, the radical and the bourgeois materialist. And so, down with religion and long live atheism!—the dissemination of atheist views is our chief task! The Marxist says that this is not true, that it is a superficial view, narrow bourgeois culturism. This view does not explain the roots of religion profoundly enough; it explains them not materialistically but idealistically. In modern capitalist countries these roots are mainly *social*. The deepest root of religion today is the socially oppressed condition of the working masses and their apparently complete helplessness in face of the blind forces of capitalism, which every day and every hour inflicts upon ordinary working people the most horrible suffering and the most savage torment, a thousand times more severe than those inflicted by extraordinary events, such as wars, earthquakes, etc. “Fear created the gods.” Fear of the blind force of capital—blind because it cannot be foreseen by the masses of the people—a force which at every step in life threatens to inflict, and does inflict, on the proletariat and small owner “sudden,” “unexpected,” “accidental” destruction, ruin, pauperism, prosti-

tution and death from starvation—such is *the root* of modern religion which the materialist must bear in mind first and foremost if he does not want to remain an infant-school materialist. No educational book can eradicate religion from the minds of the masses, who are crushed by the grinding toil of capitalism and who are at the mercy of the blind destructive forces of capitalism, until the masses themselves learn to fight this *root* of religion, *the rule of capital* in all its forms, in a united, organized, planned and conscious way.

Does this mean that educational books against religion are harmful or unnecessary? No, nothing of the kind. It means that Social-Democracy's atheistic propaganda must be *subordinated* to its basic task—the development of the class struggle of the exploited *masses* against the exploiters.

This proposition may not be understood (or at least not immediately understood) by one who has not pondered over the principles of dialectical materialism, i.e., the philosophy of Marx and Engels. How is that?—he will say: is ideological propaganda, the preaching of definite ideas, the struggle against the enemy of culture and progress for thousands of years (i.e., religion) to be subordinated to the class struggle, i.e., a struggle for definite practical aims in the economic and political field?

This is one of those current objections to Marxism which testify to a complete misunderstanding of Marxian dialectics. The contradiction which perplexes those who object in this way is a real and living contradiction, i.e., a dialectical contradiction, and not a verbal or fictitious contradiction. To draw a hard and fast line between the theoretical propaganda of atheism, i.e., the destruction of religious beliefs among certain sections of the proletariat, and the success, progress and conditions of the class struggle of these sections, is to reason undialectically, to

transform a shifting and relative boundary into an absolute boundary; it is forcibly to disconnect what is indissolubly connected in actual life. Let us take an example. The proletariat in a given district and in a given branch of industry is divided, let us assume, into an advanced section of fairly class-conscious Social-Democrats, who are, of course, atheists, and rather backward workers who are still connected with the countryside and the peasantry and who believe in God, go to church, or are even under the direct influence of the local priest, who, let us suppose, has organized a Christian labour union. Let us assume furthermore that the economic struggle in this locality has resulted in a strike. It is the duty of a Marxist to place the success of the strike movement above everything else, to vigorously resist the division of the workers in this struggle into atheists and Christians, to vigorously oppose any such division. Atheist propaganda under such circumstances may be both unnecessary and harmful—not from the philistine fear of scaring away the backward sections, of losing a seat in the elections, and so on, but from consideration for the real progress of the class struggle, which in the conditions of modern capitalist society is a hundred times better calculated to convert Christian workers to Social-Democracy and to atheism than bald atheistic preaching. He who preached atheism at such a moment and in such circumstances would only be playing *into the hands* of the priest and the priests, who desire nothing better than that the division of the workers according to their participation in the strike movement should be replaced by their division according to their belief in God. An anarchist who preached war against God at all costs would in practice be helping the priests and the bourgeoisie (as the anarchists always help the bourgeoisie *in practice*). A Marxist must be a materialist, i.e., an enemy of religion; but he must be a dialectical materialist, i.e., one



who puts the fight against religion not abstractly, not on the basis of abstract, purely theoretical, unvarying preaching, but concretely, on the basis of the class struggle which is going on *in practice* and is educating the masses more and better than anything else. A Marxist must be able to take cognizance of the concrete situation as a whole, must always be able to determine the boundary between anarchism and opportunism (this boundary is relative, shifting and changeable, but it exists), and must not succumb either to the abstract, verbal, and in fact empty "revolutionism" of the anarchist, or to the philistinism and opportunism of the petty-bourgeois or liberal intellectual, who fears to fight religion, forgets that this is his duty, reconciles himself to the belief in God, and is guided not by the interests of the class struggle, but by the petty and mean consideration of offending nobody, repelling nobody and scaring nobody—by the sage rule: "live and let live," etc., etc.

It is from this standpoint that all particular questions concerning the attitude of Social-Democrats to religion must be determined. For example, the question often arises whether a priest can be a member of the Social-Democratic Party, and the question is usually answered in an unqualified affirmative, the experience of European Social-Democratic parties being cited in support. But this experience was the result not only of the application of the Marxist doctrine to the workers' movement but also of special historical conditions in Western Europe which are absent in Russia (we will say more about these conditions later), so that an unqualified affirmative answer in this case is incorrect. We must not declare once and for all that priests cannot be members of the Social-Democratic Party; but neither must we once and for all affirm the contrary rule. If a priest comes to us to take part in our common political work and conscientiously performs

party duties, and does not come out against the program of the party, he may be allowed to join the ranks of the Social-Democrats; for in such a case the contradiction between the spirit and principles of our program and the religious convictions of the priest would be something that concerned him alone, his own private contradiction; and a political organization cannot examine its members to see if there is no contradiction between their views and the party program. But, of course, such a case might be a rare exception even in Western Europe, while in Russia it is altogether improbable. And if, for example, a priest joined the Social-Democratic Party and made it his chief and almost sole work actively to propagate religious views in the party, it would unquestionably have to expel him from its ranks. We must not only admit workers who preserve the belief in God into the Social-Democratic Party, but must deliberately set out to recruit them; we are absolutely against giving the slightest offence to their religious convictions; but we recruit them in order to educate them in the spirit of our program, and not in order to permit an active struggle against our program. We allow freedom of opinion *within* the Party, but to certain limits, determined by freedom of grouping; we are not obliged to march shoulder to shoulder with active preachers of views that are repudiated by the majority of the Party.

Another example: should members of the Social-Democratic Party be censured equally under all circumstances for declaring "Socialism is my religion," and for advocating views corresponding to this declaration? No! The deviation from Marxism (and consequently from Socialism) is here indisputable, but the significance of the deviation, its relative importance, so to speak, may vary with circumstances. It is one thing when an agitator or a person addressing the workers speaks in this way in order

to make himself better understood, as an introduction to his subject, in order to present his views more vividly in terms to which the backward masses are most accustomed. It is another thing when a writer begins to preach "God-building,"<sup>32</sup> or God-building Socialism (in the spirit, for example, of our Lunacharsky and Co.). While in the first case censure would be mere carping or even an inappropriate restriction on the freedom of the agitator, on the freedom of the use of "pedagogical" methods, in the second case party censure is necessary and essential. For some the statement "Socialism is a religion" is a form of transition from religion to Socialism; for others it is a form of transition *from* Socialism to religion.

Let us now pass to the conditions which in the West gave rise to the opportunist interpretation of the thesis "religion is a private matter." Of course, here we have the influence of those general factors which gave rise to opportunism in general as a sacrifice of the fundamental interests of the workers' movement for momentary advantages. The party of the proletariat demands that *the state* should declare religion a private matter, but does not regard the fight against the opium of the people, the fight against religious superstition, etc., as a "private matter." The opportunists distort the question to mean that the *Social-Democratic Party regards* religion as a private matter!

But in addition to the usual opportunist distortion (which was not explained at all in the discussion in our Duma fraction when it considered the speech on religion), there are special historical conditions which have given rise to the modern, and if one may so express it, excessive indifference of European Social-Democrats to the question of religion. These conditions are of a twofold nature. Firstly, the task of combating religion is the historical task of the revolutionary bourgeoisie, and in the West

this task was to a large extent performed (or tackled) by bourgeois democracy in the epoch of *its* revolutions, or its assaults upon feudalism and medievalism. Both in France and in Germany bourgeois war on religion is a tradition, and it began long before Socialism (the Encyclopedists, Feuerbach). In Russia, because of the conditions of our bourgeois-democratic revolution, this task too falls almost entirely on the shoulders of the working class. Petty-bourgeois (Narodnik) democracy in our country has not done too much in this respect (as the newly-appeared Black-Hundred Cadets, or Cadet Black Hundreds, of *Vekhi*<sup>33</sup> think), but rather *too little* in comparison with what has been done in Europe.

On the other hand, the tradition of bourgeois war on religion has given rise in Europe to a specifically bourgeois *distortion* of this war by anarchism, which, as the Marxists have long explained time and again, takes its stand on the bourgeois world outlook in spite of all the "fury" of its attacks on the bourgeoisie. The anarchists and Blanquists in the Latin countries, Most (who, incidentally, was a pupil of Dühring) and his ilk in Germany, and the anarchists in Austria in the eighties carried revolutionary phrasemongering in the struggle against religion to a nec plus ultra. It is not surprising that the European Social-Democrats now *go to the other extreme* as against the anarchists. This is quite understandable and to a certain extent legitimate, but it would be wrong for us Russian Social-Democrats to forget the special historical conditions of the West.

Secondly, in the West, *after* the national bourgeois revolutions were over, *after* the introduction of more or less complete freedom of conscience, the problem of the democratic struggle against religion had been already so forced into the historical background by the struggle of bourgeois democracy against Socialism that the bourgeois

governments *deliberately* tried to divert the attention of the masses from Socialism by organizing a quasi-liberal "drive" against clericalism. Such was the character of the Kulturkampf in Germany and of the fight of the bourgeois republicans against clericalism in France. Bourgeois anticlericalism, as a means of diverting the attention of the masses of the workers from Socialism—this is what preceded the spread of the modern spirit of "indifference" to the fight against religion among the Social-Democrats in the West. And this again is quite understandable and legitimate, because Social-Democrats had to counteract bourgeois and Bismarckian anticlericalism by *subordinating* the struggle against religion to the struggle for Socialism.

In Russia conditions are entirely different. The leader of our bourgeois-democratic revolution is the proletariat. Its party must be the ideological leader in the fight against all mediævalism, including the old official religion and every attempt to renovate it or provide it with a new or different base, etc. Therefore, while Engels comparatively mildly corrected the opportunism of the German Social-Democrats in substituting for the demand of the workers' party that the *state* should declare religion a private matter the *declaration* that religion is a private matter for Social-Democrats and the Social-Democratic Party—it is clear that he would have rebuked the Russian opportunists a *hundred times* more severely for adopting this German distortion.

By declaring from the Duma platform that religion is the opium of the people, our fraction acted quite correctly, and thus created a precedent which should serve as a basis for all utterances by Russian Social-Democrats on the question of religion. Should they have gone further and developed the atheistic arguments in greater detail? We think not. This might have incurred the danger of the

fight against religion being exaggerated by the political party of the proletariat; it might have resulted in obliterating the difference between the bourgeois and the socialist fight against religion. The first duty of the Social-Democratic fraction in the Black-Hundred Duma has been discharged with honour.

The second duty—and perhaps the most important for Social-Democrats—namely, to explain the class role of the church and the clergy in supporting the Black-Hundred government and the bourgeoisie in its fight against the working class, has also been discharged with honour. Of course, very much more might be said on this subject, and the Social-Democrats in their future utterances will know how to amplify Comrade Surkov's speech; but still his speech was excellent, and its dissemination by all party organizations is the direct duty of our party.

The third duty was to explain in full detail the *correct* meaning of the proposition so often distorted by the German opportunists that "religion is a private matter." This, unfortunately, Comrade Surkov did not do. It is all the more a pity because in the earlier activity of the fraction a mistake was already committed on this question by Comrade Byelousov, which was noted at the time by the *Proletary*. The discussion in the fraction shows that the dispute about atheism has overshadowed in its eyes the question of the proper interpretation of the celebrated demand that religion should be regarded as a private matter. We shall not blame Comrade Surkov alone for this error of the entire fraction. More, we shall frankly admit that the whole Party was at fault here for not having sufficiently elucidated this question, for not having sufficiently prepared the minds of Social-Democrats for an understanding of Engels' remark levelled against the German opportunists. The discussion in the fraction proves that it was in fact due to a confused understanding

of the question and not to a desire to ignore the teachings of Marx, and we are sure that this error will be corrected in future utterances of the fraction.

We repeat that on the whole Comrade Surkov's speech was excellent and should be disseminated by all the organizations. In its discussion of this speech the fraction has proved that it is fulfilling its Social-Democratic duty conscientiously. It is to be desired that reports on discussions within the fraction should appear more often in the Party press so as to bring the fraction and the Party closer together, to acquaint the Party with the difficult work being done within the fraction, and to establish ideological unity in the work of the Party and the fraction.

May 1909

## DIFFERENCES IN THE EUROPEAN LABOUR MOVEMENT

### I

The principal tactical differences in the labour movement of Europe and America today resolve into a struggle against two big trends that are departing from Marxism, which has virtually become the dominant theory in this movement. These two trends are revisionism (opportunism, reformism) and anarchism (anarcho-syndicalism, anarcho-socialism). Both these departures from the Marxist theory that is dominant in the labour movement, and from Marxist tactics, have been observable in various forms and in various shades in all civilized countries throughout the more than half-century history of the mass labour movement.

This fact alone shows that these departures cannot be attributed to accident, or to the mistakes of individuals or groups, or even to the influence of national characteristics and traditions, and so forth. There must be radical causes lying in the economic system and in the nature of the development of all capitalist countries which constantly give rise to these departures. A small book published last year by a Dutch Marxist, Anton Pannekoek, *The Tactical Differences in the Labour Movement (Die taktischen Differenzen in der Arbeiterbewegung*, Hamburg, Erdmann Dubber, 1909), represents an interesting attempt at a scientific investigation of these causes. In the course of our exposition we shall acquaint the reader with



Pannekoek's conclusions, which it cannot be denied are quite correct.

One of the most profound causes that periodically give rise to differences over tactics is the very growth of the labour movement itself. If this movement is not measured by the criterion of some fantastic ideal, but is regarded as the practical movement of ordinary people, it will be clear that the enlistment of ever larger numbers of new "recruits," the enrolment of new strata of the toiling masses, must inevitably be accompanied by waverings in the sphere of theory and tactics, by repetitions of old mistakes, by temporary reversion to antiquated views and antiquated methods, and so forth. The labour movement of every country periodically spends a varying amount of energy, attention and time on the "training" of recruits.

Furthermore, the pace of development of capitalism varies in different countries and in different spheres of the national economy. Marxism is most easily, rapidly, completely and durably assimilated by the working class and its ideologists where large-scale industry is most developed. Economic relations which are backward, or which lag in their development, constantly lead to the appearance of supporters of the labour movement who master only certain aspects of Marxism, only certain parts of the new world outlook, or individual slogans and demands, and are unable to make a resolute break with all the traditions of the bourgeois world outlook in general and of the bourgeois-democratic world outlook in particular.

Again, a constant source of differences is the dialectical nature of social development, which proceeds in contradictions and through contradictions. Capitalism is progressive because it destroys the old modes of production and develops the productive forces, yet at the same

time, at a certain stage of development, it retards the growth of productive forces. It develops, organizes, and disciplines the workers—and it crushes, oppresses, leads to degeneration, poverty and so on. Capitalism creates its own gravedigger, it itself creates the elements of a new system, yet at the same time, without a “leap,” these individual elements change nothing in the general state of affairs and do not affect the rule of capital. Marxism, the theory of dialectical materialism, is able to embrace these contradictions of real life, of the real history of capitalism and the labour movement. But needless to say, the masses learn from real life and not from books, and therefore certain individuals or groups constantly exaggerate, elevate to a one-sided theory, to a one-sided system of tactics, now one and now another feature of capitalist development, now one and now another “lesson” from this development.

Bourgeois ideologists, liberals and democrats, not understanding Marxism, and not understanding the modern labour movement, are constantly leaping from one helpless extreme to another. At one time they explain the whole matter by asserting that evil-minded persons are “inciting” class against class—at another they console themselves with the assertion that the workers’ party is “a peaceful party of reform.” Both anarcho-syndicalism and reformism—which seize upon *one* aspect of the labour movement, which elevate one-sidedness to a theory, and which declare such tendencies or features of this movement as constitute a specific peculiarity of a given period, of given conditions of working-class activity, to be mutually exclusive—must be regarded as a direct product of this bourgeois world outlook and its influence. But real life, real history, *includes* these different tendencies, just as life and development in nature include both slow evolution and swift leaps, breaks in continuity.

The revisionists regard all reflections on "leaps" and on the fundamental antithesis between the labour movement and the whole of the old society as mere phrasemongering. They regard reforms as a partial realization of Socialism. The anarcho-syndicalist rejects "petty work," especially the utilization of the parliamentary platform. As a matter of fact, these latter tactics amount to waiting for the "great days" and to an inability to muster the forces which create great events. Both hinder the most important and most essential thing, namely, the concentration of the workers into big, powerful and properly functioning organizations capable of functioning properly under *all* circumstances, organizations permeated with the spirit of the class struggle, clearly realizing their aims and trained in the true Marxist world outlook.

We shall here permit ourselves a slight digression to note in parenthesis, so as to avoid possible misunderstanding, that Pannekoek illustrates his analysis *exclusively* with examples from West-European history, especially the history of Germany and France, and *entirely* leaves Russia out of account. If it may appear at times that he is hinting at Russia, it is only because the basic tendencies which give rise to definite departures from Marxist tactics are also to be observed in our country, despite the vast difference between Russia and the West in culture, customs, history and economy.

Lastly, an extremely important cause that gives rise to differences among the participants in the labour movement lies in the changes in tactics of the ruling classes in general, and of the bourgeoisie in particular. If the tactics of the bourgeoisie were always the same, or at least similar, the working class would rapidly learn to reply to them by tactics that were also always the same or similar. But as a matter of fact, the bourgeoisie in all

countries inevitably evolves two systems of rule, two methods of fighting for its interests and of retaining its rule, and these methods at times alternate and at times are interwoven one with another in various combinations. They are, firstly, the method of force, the method which rejects all concessions to the labour movement, the method of supporting all the old and obsolete institutions, the method of irreconcilably rejecting reforms. Such is the nature of the conservative policy, which in Western Europe is becoming less and less a policy of the land-owning classes and more and more one of the varieties of bourgeois policy in general. The second method is the method of "liberalism," which takes steps towards the development of political rights, towards reforms, concessions and so on.

The bourgeoisie passes from one method to the other not in accordance with the malicious design of individuals, and not fortuitously, but owing to the fundamental contradictions of its own position. Normal capitalist society cannot develop successfully without a firmly established representative system and without the enjoyment of certain political rights by the population, which is bound to be distinguished by its relatively high "cultural" demands. This demand for a certain minimum of culture is created by the conditions of the capitalist mode of production itself, with its high technique, complexity, flexibility, mobility, rapidity of development of world competition, etc. The oscillations in the tactics of the bourgeoisie, the passage from the system of force to the system of ostensible concessions, are, consequently, peculiar to the history of all European countries during the last half-century, while, at the same time, various countries chiefly develop the application of one method or the other at definite periods. For instance, England in the sixties and seventies was a classical country of "liberal" bourgeois

policy, Germany in the seventies and eighties adhered to the method of force, and so on.

When this method prevailed in Germany, a one-sided echo of this system, one of the systems of bourgeois government, was the growth in the labour movement of anarcho-syndicalism, or anarchism, as it was then called (the "Young" at the beginning of the nineties, Johann Most at the beginning of the eighties). When in 1890 the change towards "concessions" took place, this change, as is always the case, proved to be even more dangerous to the labour movement, and gave rise to the equally one-sided echo of bourgeois "reformism": opportunism in the labour movement. "The positive and real aim of the liberal policy of the bourgeoisie," Pannekoek says, "is to mislead the workers, to split their ranks, to transform their policy into an impotent adjunct of an impotent, always impotent and ephemeral, sham reformism."

Not infrequently, the bourgeoisie for a certain time achieves its object by a "liberal" policy, which, as Pannekoek justly remarks, is a "more crafty" policy. A section of the workers, of their representatives, at times allow themselves to be deceived by sham concessions. The revisionists declare the doctrine of the class struggle to be "antiquated," or begin to conduct a policy which in fact amounts to a renunciation of the class struggle. The zig-zags of bourgeois tactics intensify revisionism within the labour movement and not infrequently exacerbate the differences within the labour movement to the point of a direct split.

All causes of the kind indicated give rise to differences over questions of tactics within the labour movement, within the proletarian ranks. But there is not and cannot be a Chinese wall between the proletariat and the strata of the petty bourgeoisie contiguous to it, including the peasantry. It is clear that the passing of certain in-

dividuals, groups and strata of the petty bourgeoisie into the ranks of the proletariat is bound, in its turn, to give rise to vacillations in the tactics of the latter.

The experience of the labour movement of various countries helps us to understand from the example of concrete practical questions the nature of Marxist tactics; it helps the younger countries to distinguish more clearly the true class significance of the departures from Marxism and to combat these departures more successfully.

December 1910

## CERTAIN FEATURES OF THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF MARXISM

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

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

mental relations between the various classes of Russian society, has not changed during, say, the last six years.

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

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

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

The similarity between the two periods consisted in the fact that the evolution of Russia in both periods re-



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

The difference between the two periods consisted in the fact that during the first of these periods the foreground of the historical arena was occupied by the question of exactly what form the result of the rapid and uneven changes afore-mentioned would take. The content of these changes was bound to be bourgeois owing to the capitalist character of the evolution of Russia; but there is a bourgeoisie and a bourgeoisie. The middle and big bourgeoisie, which professed a more or less moderate liberalism, was, owing to its very class position, afraid of abrupt changes and strove for the retention of large remnants of the old institutions both in the agrarian system and in the political "superstructure." The rural petty bourgeoisie, which is interwoven with the peasantry that lives by "the labour of its own hands," was bound to strive for bourgeois reforms *of a different kind*, reforms that would leave far less room for medieval survivals. The wage labourers, to the extent that they consciously realized what was going on around them, were bound to work out for themselves a definite attitude towards this clash of two distinct tendencies, both of which remained within the framework of the bourgeois system, but which determined entirely different forms for it, entirely different rates of its development, different degrees of its progressive influences.

In this way, the period of the past three years, not fortuitously but necessarily, brought to the forefront in Marxism those problems which are usually referred to

as problems of tactics. Nothing is more erroneous than the opinion that the disputes and differences that arose over these questions were disputes among "intellectuals," that they were "a struggle for influence over the immature proletariat," that they were an expression of the "adaptation of the intelligentsia to the proletariat," as the *Vekhi*-ists of various kinds think. On the contrary, it was precisely because this class had reached maturity that it could not remain indifferent to the clash of the two different tendencies in the entire bourgeois development of Russia, and the ideologists of this class could not avoid providing theoretical formulations corresponding (directly or indirectly, in direct or reverse reflection) to these different tendencies.

In the second three-year period the clash between the different tendencies of bourgeois development in Russia was *not* on the order of the day, because *both* these tendencies were being crushed by the "diehards," forced back, driven inwards and, for the time being, smothered. The medieval diehards not only occupied the foreground but also inspired the broadest sections of bourgeois society with *Vekhi*-ist sentiments, with a spirit of despondency and recantation. It was not the collision between two methods of reforming the old order that appeared on the surface, but a loss of faith in reforms of all kinds, a spirit of "meekness" and "repentance," an infatuation for antisocial doctrines, a fad of mysticism, and so on.

And this astonishingly abrupt change was not fortuitous, nor was it the result of "external" pressure alone. The preceding period had so profoundly stirred up strata of the population who for generations and centuries had stood aloof from and were strangers to political questions, that "a revaluation of all values," a new study of fundamental problems, a new interest in theory, in elementals, in a study beginning with the rudiments, arose naturally

and inevitably. The millions, suddenly awakened from their long sleep, and suddenly confronted with extremely important problems, could not remain on this level long, could not carry on without a respite, without a return to elementary questions, without a new training which would help them to "digest" lessons of unparalleled richness and make it possible for incomparably wider masses again to march forward, but now far more firmly, more consciously, more assuredly and more persistently.

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

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

most abstract and general philosophical foundations of Marxism. The influence of bourgeois philosophy in its multifarious idealist shades found expression in the Machian epidemic that broke out among the Marxists. The repetition of "slogans" learnt by rote but not understood and not thought out led to the widespread prevalence of empty phrasemongering, which in practice amounted to absolutely un-Marxist, petty-bourgeois currents, such as frank or shamefaced "Otzovism,"<sup>34</sup> or the recognition of Otzovism as a "legitimate shade" of Marxism.

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

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

The preceding three years had awakened to a conscious participation in social life wide sections that in many cases are for the first time beginning to acquaint themselves with Marxism in a real way. In this connection the bourgeois press is creating far more fallacious ideas than ever before, and is disseminating them more widely. Under these circumstances the disintegration in the ranks of the Marxists is particularly dangerous. Therefore, to understand the reasons for the inevitability of this disintegration at the present time and to close their ranks for the purpose of waging a consistent struggle against this disintegration is, in the most direct and precise meaning of the term, the task of the era for Marxists.

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## REFORMISM IN THE RUSSIAN SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT

The tremendous progress which capitalism has made in recent decades and the rapid growth of the working-class movement in all the civilized countries have brought about a big change in the attitude of the bourgeoisie to the proletariat. Instead of fighting openly, plainly and in principle against all the fundamental tenets of Socialism and in defence of the complete inviolability of private property and free competition, the bourgeoisie of Europe and America—as represented by its ideologists and political leaders—is more and more coming out in defence of so-called social reforms as opposed to the idea of social revolution. Not liberalism versus Socialism, but reformism versus socialist revolution—that is the formula of the modern, “advanced,” educated bourgeoisie. And the higher the development of capitalism in a given country, the more unadulterated the rule of the bourgeoisie, and the greater the political liberty, the wider is the field of application of the “most up-to-date” bourgeois slogan: reform *versus* revolution; partial patching up of the doomed regime, with the object of dividing and weakening the working class and of maintaining the rule of the bourgeoisie, *versus* the revolutionary overthrowal of that rule.

From the standpoint of the world-wide development of Socialism the mentioned change cannot but be regarded as a big step forward. At first Socialism fought for its existence, and it was confronted by a bourgeoisie confident of its strength and boldly and consistently advocating

liberalism as an integral system of economic and political views. Now Socialism has grown into a force and throughout the civilized world has already upheld its right to existence; it is now fighting *for power*; and the bourgeoisie, disintegrating as it is, and seeing the inevitability of its doom, is exerting every effort to defer the day of doom and to maintain its rule under the new conditions at the cost of partial and spurious concessions.

The intensification of the struggle of reformism against revolutionary Social-Democracy *within* the working-class movement is an absolutely inevitable result of the mentioned changes in the entire economic and political situation in all the civilized countries of the world. The growth of the working-class movement necessarily attracts to its ranks a certain number of petty-bourgeois elements, elements that are under the spell of bourgeois ideology, find it difficult to rid themselves of it and continually lapse back into it. The social revolution of the proletariat is inconceivable without this struggle, without a clear demarcation of principle between the Socialist "Mountain" and the Socialist "Gironde" *prior* to this revolution, and without a complete break between the opportunist, petty-bourgeois elements and the proletarian, revolutionary elements of the new historical force *during* this revolution.

In Russia the position is at bottom the same; only here matters are complicated, obscured and modified owing to the fact that we are lagging behind Europe (and even behind the advanced part of Asia), that we are still passing through the era of bourgeois revolutions. Because of this, Russian reformism is distinguished by a particular tenaciousness; it represents, as it were, a more pernicious malady, is much more harmful to the cause of the proletariat and of the revolution. In our country reformism emanates from two sources simultaneously. In the first place, Russia is much more a petty-bourgeois country

than the countries of Western Europe, and therefore more frequently produces people, groups and trends distinguished by that contradictory, unstable, vacillating attitude towards Socialism (now "ardent love," now vile betrayal) which is characteristic of the petty bourgeoisie in general. Secondly, the petty-bourgeois masses in our country are more prone to lose heart and to succumb to renegade sentiments at the failure of any *one* of the phases of our bourgeois revolution; they are more ready to renounce the aim of a complete democratic revolution which would rid Russia completely of all survivals of medievalism and serfdom.

We shall not dwell at length on the first source. We need only mention that there is hardly a country in the world in which "revulsions" from sympathy for Socialism to sympathy for counterrevolutionary liberalism occur with such rapidity as in the case of our Struves, Izgoyevs, Karaulovs, etc., etc. Yet these gentry are not exceptions, not isolated individuals, but representatives of widespread currents! Sentimentalists, of whom there are many outside the ranks of Social-Democracy, but also a goodly number within it, and who love to preach sermons against "immoderate" polemics, against "the passion for demarcation," etc., betray a complete lack of understanding of the historical conditions which, in Russia, give rise to the "immoderate" "passion" for vaulting from Socialism to liberalism.

Let us turn to the second source of reformism in Russia.

The bourgeois revolution in our country has not been completed. The autocracy is *trying* to find new ways of fulfilling the tasks bequeathed by it and imposed by the entire course of economic development; *but it is unable to fulfil them*. Neither the latest step in the transformation of the old tsarism into a renovated bourgeois monarchy,



nor the organization of the nobility and the upper crust of the bourgeoisie on a national scale (the Third Duma), nor yet the bourgeois agrarian policy being enforced by the Zemsky Nachalniki<sup>35</sup>—none of these “extreme” measures, none of these “last” efforts of tsarism in the *last* sphere remaining to it—the sphere of adaptation to bourgeois development—prove adequate. It just does not work! Not only is a Russia “renovated” by *such* means unable to catch up with the Japanese; it is perhaps even beginning to fall behind China. Owing to the fact that the bourgeois-democratic tasks have not been fulfilled, a revolutionary crisis remains inevitable. It is ripening again, we are heading toward it once more—along a new way, *not the same* as before, not at the same pace, and not in the old forms only—but that we are heading toward it is indisputable.

This being the situation, the tasks of the proletariat are fully and unmistakably obvious. As the only consistently revolutionary class of contemporary society, it must be the leader, the hegemon in the struggle of the whole people for a complete democratic revolution, in the struggle of *all* the toilers and exploited against the oppressors and exploiters. The proletariat is revolutionary only in so far as it is conscious of this idea of hegemony and acts up to it. The proletarian who has become conscious of this task is a slave who has risen against slavery. The proletarian who is not conscious of the idea that his class must be the hegemon, or who renounces this idea, is a slave who does not realize his slavish condition; at best he is a slave who fights to improve his condition as a slave, but *not* for the overthrow of slavery.

It is therefore obvious that the celebrated formula of one of the young leaders of our reformists, Mr. Levitsky of the *Nasha Zarya*, declaring that Russian Social-Democracy must be “*not* a hegemony, *but* a class party,”

is a formula of the most consistent reformism. More, it is a formula of rank renegacy. When one says—*not* a hegemony, *but* a class party—one assumes the attitude of the bourgeoisie, the attitude of the liberal, who says to the slave of our age, the wageworker: “Fight to improve your condition as a slave, but regard the thought of overthrowing slavery as a pernicious utopia!” Compare Bernstein’s celebrated formula—“The movement is everything, the final aim is nothing”—with Levitsky’s formula, and you will see that they are variations of the same idea. They both recognize *only* reforms and renounce revolution. Bernstein’s formula is broader, for it envisages a socialist revolution (=the final aim of Social-Democracy, as a party of bourgeois society). Levitsky’s formula is narrower: for while it renounces revolution in general, it is particularly meant to renounce what nettled the liberals most in 1905-07—namely, the fact that the proletariat *wrested* from the liberals the leadership of the masses of the people (especially the peasantry) in the struggle for a complete democratic revolution.

To preach to the workers that they need “*not* a hegemony, *but* a class party,” means to betray the cause of the proletariat to the liberals; it means preaching that the *Social-Democratic* labour policy should be superseded by a *liberal* labour policy.

Renunciation of the idea of hegemony, however, is the grossest variety of reformism in the Russian Social-Democratic movement, and therefore not all the Liquidators<sup>36</sup> make bold to express their ideas in such definite terms. Some of them (Mr. Martov, for instance) even try, in derision of the truth, to deny that there is a connection between renunciation of hegemony and liquidationism.

A more “subtle” attempt to “substantiate” the reformist views is the following argument: The bourgeois revolution in Russia is at an end; after 1905 there can be

no second bourgeois revolution, no second nation-wide struggle for a democratic revolution; Russia therefore is faced *not* with a revolutionary, but with a "constitutional" crisis, and all that remains for the working class is to take care to defend its rights and interests on the basis of that "constitutional crisis." This is the argument set forth by the Liquidator Y. Larin in the *Dyelo Zhizni* (and previously in the *Vozrozhdeniye*).

"October 1905 is not on the order of the day," wrote Mr. Larin. "If the Duma were abolished, it would be restored more rapidly than the constitution was restored in post-revolutionary Austria, which abolished it in 1851 only to recognize it again in 1860, nine years later, without any revolution" (note this!), "simply because it was in the interest of the most influential section of the ruling classes, which had reconstructed its economy on capitalist lines." "In the stage we are now in, a *nation-wide* revolutionary movement like that of 1905 is impossible."

All these arguments of Mr. Larin's are nothing but an enlarged rehash of what Mr. Dan said at the Conference of the R.S.D.L.P. in December 1908. Arguing against the resolution which stated that the "*fundamental* factors of economic and political life that gave rise to the revolution of 1905 *continue to operate*," that the new crisis which was developing was revolutionary and not "constitutional," the editor of the Liquidators' *Golos* exclaimed: "They" (i.e., the R.S.D.L.P.) "want to dash to where they were defeated once already."

"Dashing" toward revolution, working tirelessly, also in the changed situation, to propagate the idea of revolution and to prepare the forces of the working class for it—that is the chief crime of the R.S.D.L.P., that is what constitutes the *guilt* of the revolutionary proletariat in the eyes of the reformists. It's no use "dashing to where you were defeated once already"—that is the wisdom

of renegades and of persons who lose heart after any defeat.

But in countries older and more "experienced" than Russia the revolutionary proletariat showed its ability to "dash to where it was defeated once already" twice, three times and four times: in France it accomplished *four* revolutions in the period 1789 to 1871, rising to fight again and again after the most severe defeats and achieving a republic, in which it now faces its *last* enemy—the advanced bourgeoisie; a republic, which is the only form of government corresponding to the conditions required for the final struggle for the victory of Socialism.

Such is the difference between the Socialists and the liberals, i.e., adherents of the bourgeoisie. The Socialists teach that revolution is inevitable, and that the proletariat must take advantage of *all* the contradictions in the life of society, of every weakness of its enemies or of the intermediate strata, in order to prepare for a new revolutionary struggle, to repeat the revolution in a broader arena, with the population more developed. The bourgeoisie and the liberals teach that revolutions are unnecessary and even harmful to the workers, that they must not "dash" toward revolution, but, like good little boys, work modestly for reforms.

That is why, in order to divert the Russian worker *from* Socialism, the reformists—who are captives of bourgeois ideas—*constantly* refer *precisely* to the example of Austria (as well as Prussia) in the 1860's. Why are they so fond of referring precisely to these examples? Y. Larin let the cat out of the bag; because, after the "unsuccessful" revolution of 1848, the bourgeois transformation of these countries was consummated "*without any revolution.*"

That is the whole secret! This it is that gladdens their hearts. The bourgeois transformation, it seems, is pos-

sible *without* revolution!! And if that is the case, why should we Russians bother our heads about revolution? Why not leave it to the landlords and factory owners to effect the bourgeois transformation of Russia, too, "without any revolution"!?

It was because the proletariat in Austria and Prussia was weak that it was unable to prevent the agrarians and the bourgeoisie from effecting the transformation in a way that ran *counter* to the interests of the workers, in a way *most prejudicial* to the workers, preserving as it did the monarchy, the privileges of the nobility, their arbitrary rule in the countryside, and a host of other survivals of medievalism.

The Russian reformists—after our proletariat in 1905 displayed a strength unparalleled in any bourgeois revolution in the West—fall back upon examples of weakness of the working class in other countries, forty or fifty years ago, in order to justify *their own* apostasy, to "substantiate" *their own* renegade preachings!

The example of Austria and Prussia of the 1860's, to which our reformists are so fond of referring, is the best proof of the theoretical fallacy of their arguments and their desertion to the side of the bourgeoisie in practical politics.

Indeed, what does the fact that Austria restored the constitution which had been abolished after the defeat of the revolution of 1848, and that an "era of crisis" began in Prussia in the 1860's, prove? It proves, primarily, that the bourgeois transformation of these countries had not been consummated. To maintain that the system of government in Russia has *already* become bourgeois (as Larin does), and that it is now wrong to speak of the feudal character of governmental power in our country (cf. Larin again), and at the same time to refer to the example of Austria and Prussia, is to refute oneself! It would be

ridiculous, in general, to deny that the bourgeois transformation of Russia has not been completed: the very policy of the bourgeois Constitutional-Democratic and Octobrist parties proves this beyond the shadow of a doubt, and Larin himself (as we shall see further on) surrenders his position. It cannot be denied that the monarchy is taking one more step to adapt itself to bourgeois development—as we have said before, and as was pointed out in the Party's resolution (December 1908). But it is still more undeniable that *even* this adaptation, *even* bourgeois reaction, and the Third Duma, and the agrarian law of November 9, 1906 (and June 14, 1910) do *not* solve the problems of Russia's bourgeois transformation.

Further. Why did the "crises" in Austria and Prussia in the 1860's *turn out* to be "constitutional," and not revolutionary? Because there was a number of special circumstances which served to ease the difficult position of the monarchy (the "revolution from above" in Germany, her unification by the method of "iron and blood"); because the proletariat in those countries was at that time extremely weak and undeveloped, and the liberal bourgeoisie was distinguished by the same base cowardice and treachery as our Russian Cadets.

To show how German Social-Democrats who were eyewitnesses of the events of those years themselves appraise the situation, we shall cite some opinions expressed by Bebel in his memoirs (*Pages From My Life*), the first part of which was published last year. As regards 1862, the year of the "constitutional" crisis in Prussia, Bismarck, as has since become known, related that the king was in a state of utter despair and blubbered to him, Bismarck, that they were both going to die on the scaffold. Bismarck put the coward to shame and persuaded him not to shrink from giving battle.

"These events show," says Bebel, "what the liberals might have achieved had they taken advantage of the situation. But they were already afraid of the workers who backed them. Bismarck's words that if he was driven to extremes, he would set Acheron in motion" (i.e., stir up a popular movement of the lower classes, the masses), "struck fear into their hearts."

Half a century after the "constitutional" crisis which consummated the transformation of his country into a bourgeois-Junker monarchy "without any revolution," the leader of the German Social-Democrats speaks of the *revolutionary* possibilities of the situation at that time, which the liberals did not take advantage of owing to their fear of the workers. The Russian reformist leaders say to the Russian workers: Since the German bourgeoisie was so base as to cower before the cowering king, why shouldn't we *too* try to copy those splendid tactics of the German bourgeoisie? Bebel accuses the bourgeoisie of not having, owing to its exploiter's fear of the popular movement, "taken advantage" of the "constitutional" crisis to effect a revolution. Larin and Co. accuse the Russian workers of having striven for hegemony (i.e., to draw the masses into the revolution in spite of the liberals), and advise them to organize "*not* for revolution," *but* "for the purpose of defending their interests in the forthcoming constitutional reform of Russia." The rotten views of the rotten German liberals are presented by the Liquidators to the Russian workers as "Social-Democratic" views! How, after this, can one help calling such Social-Democrats Stolypin Social-Democrats?

In appraising the "constitutional" crisis of the 1860's in Prussia, Bebel does not confine himself to saying that the bourgeoisie was afraid to fight the monarchy because it was afraid of the workers. He also tells us what was going on among the workers at that time. "The appalling

state of public affairs," he says, "of which the workers were becoming ever more keenly aware, naturally affected their mood. Everywhere there was a clamour for change. But since there was no leadership fully conscious of the needs, having a clear vision of the goal, and enjoying confidence; and since there existed no strong organization that could rally the forces, the mood petered out (*verpuffte*). Never did a movement, so splendid in its essence (*in Kern vortreffliche*), turn out to be so futile in the end. All the meetings were packed, and the most vehement speakers were hailed as the heroes of the day. This was the prevailing mood particularly in the workers' Educational Society at Leipzig." A mass meeting in Leipzig on May 8, 1866, attended by 5,000 people, unanimously adopted a resolution proposed by Liebknecht and Bebel, which demanded the convocation, on the basis of universal and equal suffrage, direct elections and secret ballot, of a parliament relying on the universally armed people. The resolution also expressed "the hope that the German people will elect as deputies only persons who repudiate every hereditary central government power." The resolution proposed by Liebknecht and Bebel was thus unmistakably revolutionary and republican in character.

Thus we see that at the time of the "constitutional" crisis *the leader of the German Social-Democrats* advocated at mass meetings resolutions of a republican and revolutionary nature. Half a century later, recalling his youth and telling the new generation of the events of days long gone by, he stresses most of all his regret that at that time there was no leadership sufficiently class-conscious and understanding the revolutionary tasks (*i.e., that there was no revolutionary Social-Democratic Party understanding the task implied by hegemony*); that there was no strong organization, that the revolutionary



mood "petered out." Yet the leaders of the Russian reformists, with the profundity of Ivan the Fool, refer to the example of Austria and Prussia in the 1860's as proving that the thing can be done "without any revolution"! And these paltry philistines who have succumbed to the fumes of counterrevolution and are the ideological slaves of liberalism, still dare to dishonour the name of the R.S.D.L.P.!

To be sure, among the reformists who have broken with Socialism there are people who substitute for Larin's straightforward opportunism the diplomatic tactics of beating about the bush when dealing with most important and fundamental questions of the working-class movement. They confuse the issue, muddle ideological controversies, and defile them, as Mr. Martov, for instance, does when he asserts in the legally-published press (that is to say, where he is protected by Stolypin from a direct retort from members of the R.S.D.L.P.) that Larin and "the orthodox Bolsheviks in the resolutions of 1908" propose an *identical* "scheme." This is a downright distortion of the facts fully worthy of this author of scurrilous writings. This same Martov, pretending to argue against Larin, declared in print that he, "of course" does "not suspect Larin of reformist tendencies." Martov *does not suspect* Larin, who espouses *purely* reformist views, of being a reformist!! This is a specimen of the tricks to which the reformist diplomats resort.\* This same Martov, whom some simpletons regard as being more "left," and a more reliable revolutionary than Larin, summed up his "differences" with the latter in the following words:

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\* See the just remarks made by the pro-Party Menshevik Dnevnitsky on Larin's reformism and Martov's evasions in No. 3 of the *Discussionny Listok* (supplement to the Central Organ of our Party).

"To sum up: quite sufficient for the theoretical substantiation and political justification of what the Mensheviks who remain true to Marxism are now doing is the fact that the present regime is an inherently contradictory combination of absolutism and constitutionalism, and that the Russian working class has sufficiently matured to follow the example of the workers of the progressive countries of the West and seize this regime by the Achilles' heel of its contradictions."

No matter how hard Martov tried to evade the issue, at his very first attempt at a summary all his evasions collapsed of themselves. The words we have quoted represent a complete renunciation of Socialism and its replacement by liberalism. What Martov proclaims as "quite sufficient" is sufficient *only* for the liberals, *only* for the bourgeoisie. A proletarian who considers it "quite sufficient" to recognize the contradictory nature of the combination of absolutism and constitutionalism accepts the standpoint of *liberal labour* policy. He is *no* Socialist, he does *not* understand the tasks of his *class*, which demand that against absolutism in all its forms the masses of the people, the masses of toilers and exploited, must be roused, roused to intervene *independently* in the historical destiny of the country, despite the vacillations or counteraction of the bourgeoisie. But the independent historical action of the masses who have rid themselves of the hegemony of the bourgeoisie turns a "constitutional" crisis into a *revolution*. The bourgeoisie (particularly after 1905) fears revolution and loathes it; the proletariat, on the other hand, educates the masses of the people in the spirit of devotion to the idea of revolution, explains its tasks, and prepares the masses for ever new revolutionary battles. Whether the revolution materializes, and when and under what circumstances, does not depend on the will of one or another class; but revolutionary work among the masses is never wasted. Only this kind of work is to be regarded as activity which prepares the masses for the vic-

tory of Socialism. Messrs. Larin and Martov forget these elementary, ABC truths of Socialism.

Larin, who expresses the views of the group of Russian Liquidators who have completely broken with the R.S.D.L.P., does not hesitate in expounding his reformism to cross all the t's and dot all the i's. Here is what he writes in the *Dyelo Zhizni* (1911, No. 2)—and these words should be remembered by everyone who holds the principles of Social-Democracy dear:

“A state of perplexity and uncertainty, when people simply do not know what to expect of the coming day, what tasks to set themselves—that is what results from the mood of indefinite waiting, from vague hopes of either a repetition of the revolution or of ‘we shall see later on.’ The immediate task is, not to indulge in fruitless waiting by the sea in expectation of fair weather, but to permeate broad circles with the guiding idea that, in the new historical period of Russian life which has set in, the working class must organize not ‘for revolution,’ not ‘in expectation of revolution,’ but simply” (note the *simply* . . .) “for the determined and systematic defence of its special interests in all spheres of life; for the gathering and training of its forces in the course of this many-sided and complex activity; for the training and accumulation in this way of socialist consciousness in general; and in particular for acquiring the ability to orientate itself (to find its bearings)—and to stand up for itself—in the complicated relations among the social classes of Russia during the forthcoming constitutional reform of the country after the economically inevitable self-exhaustion of feudal reaction. . . .”

This is consummate, frank, smug reformism of the purest water. War against the idea of revolution, against the “hopes” of revolution (in the eyes of the reformist such “hopes” are *vague*, because he does not comprehend the depth of the contemporary economic and political contradictions); war against every activity whose purpose is to organize the forces and prepare the minds for revolution; war waged in the legally published press, pro-

tected by Stolypin from a direct retort from revolutionary Social-Democrats; war waged in the name of a group of legalists who have completely broken with the R.S.D.L.P.—this is the program and tactics of the Stolypin labour party which Messrs. Potresov, Levitsky, Larin and Co. are out to create. The real program and the real tactics of these people are expressed in the above quotation in precise terms—in contradistinction to their hypocritical official assurances that they are “*also* Social-Democrats,” that they “*also*” belong to the “irreconcilable International.” These assurances are but window dressing. Their deeds, their real social substance, are expressed in this program, which completely substitutes for Socialism a liberal labour policy.

Just note the ridiculous contradictions in which the reformists become involved. If, as Larin says, the bourgeois revolution in Russia has been completed, then the socialist revolution should be on the order of the day. That is self-evident; it is evident to anyone who professes to be a Socialist not for the sake of deceiving the workers by a popular appellation. *In that case* we must organize *precisely* “for revolution” (for socialist revolution), *precisely* “in expectation” of it, and *precisely* with the “hope” (not vague, but based upon exact and multiplying data of science—a “hope” amounting to *certainty*) of a Socialist revolution.

But that’s just the rub—for with the reformist the twaddle about the completed bourgeois revolution is (like the twaddle about the Achilles’ heel, etc., with Martov) but a verbal screen to cover up his *renunciation of all revolution*. He renounces the bourgeois-democratic revolution on the pretext that it has been completed, or that it is “quite sufficient” to recognize the contradiction between absolutism and constitutionalism; and he renounces the socialist revolution on the pretext that “for the time be-

ing" we must "simply" organize to take part in the "forthcoming constitutional renovation" of Russia!

But if you, esteemed Cadet parading in socialist feathers, recognize the inevitability of Russia's "forthcoming constitutional reform," you are refuting yourself, for you thereby admit that the bourgeois-democratic revolution *has not been completed* in our country. You betray your bourgeois nature again and again when you talk about an inevitable "*self-exhaustion* of feudal reaction," and when you sneer at the proletarian idea of *destroying* not only feudal *reaction*, but *all* survivals of feudalism, by means of a *popular* revolutionary movement.

Despite the liberal sermons of our heroes of the Stoly-pin labour party, the Russian proletariat will always and *invariably* imbue *all* its difficult, arduous, everyday, routine and inconspicuous work, to which the era of counter-revolution has condemned it, with the spirit of devotion to the democratic revolution and to the socialist revolution; it will organize and gather its forces for revolution; it will ruthlessly rebuff the traitors and renegades; and it will be guided, not by a "vague hope," but by the scientifically-founded certainty that the revolution will come again.

September 1911

## ON THE RIGHT OF NATIONS TO SELF-DETERMINATION

(Excerpt)

### 8. KARL MARX THE UTOPIAN AND PRACTICAL ROSA LUXEMBURG

While declaring the independence of Poland to be a "utopia" and repeating it ad nauseam, Rosa Luxemburg exclaims ironically: why not raise the demand for the independence of Ireland?

Evidently, "practical" Rosa Luxemburg is unaware of Karl Marx's attitude to the question of the independence of Ireland. It is worth while dwelling upon this, in order to show how a *concrete* demand for national independence was analyzed from a really Marxist and not an opportunist standpoint.

It was Marx's custom to "probe the teeth," as he expressed it, of his socialist acquaintances, testing their intelligence and the strength of their convictions. Having made the acquaintance of Lopatin, Marx wrote to Engels on July 5, 1870, expressing a highly flattering opinion of the young Russian Socialist but adding at the same time:

"... *Poland* is his weak point. On this point he speaks quite like an Englishman—say, an English Chartist of the old school—about Ireland."

Marx questions a Socialist belonging to an oppressing nation about his attitude to the oppressed nation and he at once reveals the defect *common* to the Socialists of the

dominant nations (the British and the Russian): failure to understand their socialist duties towards the downtrodden nations, their echoing of the prejudices acquired from the "Great Power" bourgeoisie.

Before passing on to Marx's positive declarations on Ireland, we must point out that in general the attitude of Marx and Engels to the national question was strictly critical, and that they recognized its historically relative importance. Thus, Engels wrote to Marx on May 23, 1851, that the study of history was leading him to pessimistic conclusions concerning Poland, that the importance of Poland was temporary—only until the agrarian revolution in Russia. The role of the Poles in history was one of "brave stupidity." "And one cannot point to a single instance in which Poland represented progress successfully, even if only in relation to Russia, or did anything at all of historic importance." Russia contains more elements of civilization, education, industry and of the bourgeoisie than the "Poles, whose whole nature is that of the idle cavalier." "What are Warsaw and Cracow compared to St. Petersburg, Moscow, Odessa!" Engels had no faith in the success of an insurrection of the Polish nobility.

But all these thoughts, so full of genius and penetration, by no means prevented Engels and Marx from treating the Polish movement with the most profound and ardent sympathy twelve years later, when Russia was still dormant and Poland was seething.

When drafting the Address of the International in 1864, Marx wrote to Engels (on November 4, 1864) that he had to combat Mazzini's nationalism, and went on to say: "In so far as international politics come into the Address, I speak of countries, not of nationalities, and denounce Russia, not the lesser nations." Marx had no doubt as to the subordinate position of the national question as compared with the "labour question." But his

theory is as far from ignoring the national question as heaven from earth.

1866 arrives, Marx writes to Engels about the "Proudhonist clique" in Paris which "declares nationalities to be an absurdity and attacks Bismarck and Garibaldi. As polemics against chauvinism their tactics are useful and explicable. But when the believers in Proudhon (my good friends here, Lafargue and Longuet also belong to them) think that all Europe can and should sit quietly and peacefully on its behind until the gentlemen in France abolish poverty and ignorance . . . they become ridiculous." (Letter of June 7, 1866.)

"Yesterday," Marx writes on June 20, 1866, "there was a discussion in the International Council on the present war. . . . The discussion wound up, as was to be expected, with 'the question of nationality' in general and the attitude we should take towards it. . . . The representatives of 'Young France' (*nonworkers*) came out with the announcement that all nationalities and even nations were antiquated prejudices. Proudhonized Stirnerism. . . . The whole world waits until the French are ripe for a social revolution. . . . The English laughed very much when I began my speech by saying that our friend Lafargue, etc., who had done away with nationalities, had spoken 'French' to us, i.e., a language which nine-tenths of the audience did not understand. I also suggested that by the negation of nationalities he appeared, quite unconsciously, to understand their absorption into the model French nation."

The conclusion that follows from all these critical remarks of Marx is clear: the working class should be the last to make a fetish of the national question, since the development of capitalism does not necessarily awaken *all* nations to independent life. But to brush aside the mass national movements once they have started and to



refuse to support what is progressive in them means, in effect, pandering to *nationalistic* prejudices, viz., recognizing "one's own" as the "model nation" (or, we will add, as the nation possessing the exclusive privilege of forming a state).\*

But let us return to the question of Ireland.

Marx's position on this question is most clearly expressed in the following extracts from his letters:

"I have done my best to bring about this demonstration of the British workers in favour of Fenianism. . . . I used to think the separation of Ireland from England impossible. I now think it inevitable, although after the separation there may come federation." This is what Marx wrote to Engels on November 2, 1867.

In his letter of November 30 of the same year he added:

"... what shall we advise the *English* workers? In my opinion they must make the repeal of the Union" (Ireland with England, i.e., the separation of Ireland from England) "in short, the affair of 1783, only democratized and adapted to the conditions of the time, into an article of their pronunziamento. This is the only legal and therefore only possible form of Irish emancipation which can be admitted in the program of an *English* party. Experience must show later whether a purely personal union can continue to subsist between the two countries. . . .

"... What the Irish need is:

- "1) Self-government and independence from England;
- "2) An agrarian revolution. . . ."

Marx attached great importance to the question of

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\* Cf. also Marx's letter to Engels of June 3, 1867: "... I have learned with real pleasure from the Paris letters to the *Times* about the pro-Polish exclamations of the Parisians as against Russia. . . . M. Proudhon and his little doctrinaire clique are not the French people."

Ireland and he delivered lectures of one-and-a-half hours' duration at the German Workers' Union on this subject (letter of December 17, 1867).

Engels notes in a letter of November 20, 1868, "the hatred for the Irish among the English workers," and almost a year later (October 24, 1869), returning to this subject he writes:

"Il n'y a qu'un pas" (it is only one step) "from Ireland to Russia. . . Irish history shows one how disastrous it is for a nation when it has subjugated another nation. All the abominations of the English have their origin in the Irish Pale. I have still to work through the Cromwellian period, but this much seems certain to me, that things would have taken another turn in England but for the necessity for military rule in Ireland and the creation of a new aristocracy there."

Let us note, in passing, Marx's letter to Engels of August 18, 1869:

"In Posen the Polish workers have brought a strike to a victorious end by the help of their colleagues in Berlin. This struggle against Monsieur le Capital—even in the subordinate form of the strike—is a more serious way of getting rid of national prejudices from that of the bourgeois gentlemen with their peace declamations."

The policy on the Irish question pursued by Marx in the International may be seen from the following:

On November 18, 1869, Marx writes to Engels that he spoke for an hour and a quarter in the Council of the International on the question of the attitude of the British Ministry to the Irish amnesty and proposed the following resolution:

"Resolved,

"that in his reply to the Irish demands for the release of the imprisoned Irish patriots Mr. Gladstone deliberately insults the Irish nation;

“that he clogs political amnesty with conditions alike degrading to the victims of misgovernment and the people they belong to;

“that having, in the teeth of his responsible position, publicly and enthusiastically cheered on the American slaveholders’ Rebellion, he now steps in to preach to the Irish people the doctrine of passive obedience;

“that his whole proceedings with reference to the Irish Amnesty question are the true and genuine offspring of that ‘*policy of conquest*,’ by the fiery denunciation of which Mr. Gladstone ousted his Tory rivals from office;

“that the *General Council* of the ‘*International Workingmen’s Association*’ express their admiration of the spirited, firm and high-souled manner in which the Irish people carry on their Amnesty movement;

“that these resolutions be communicated to all branches of, and workingmen’s bodies connected with, the ‘*International Workingmen’s Association*’ in Europe and America.”

On December 10, 1869, Marx writes that his paper on the Irish question to be read at the Council of the International will be framed on the following lines:

“... quite apart from all phrases about ‘international’ and ‘humane’ justice for Ireland—which are to be taken for granted in the *International Council*—it is in the direct and absolute interest of the English working class to get rid of their present connection with Ireland. And this is my most complete conviction, and for reasons which in part I cannot tell the English workers themselves. For a long time I believed that it would be possible to overthrow the Irish regime by English working-class ascendancy. I always expressed this point of view in *The New York Tribune*” (an American paper to which Marx contributed for a long time). “Deeper study has now convinced me of the opposite. The English working class will never

*accomplish anything* before it has got rid of Ireland... English reaction in England had its roots in the subjugation of Ireland." (Marx's italics.)

Marx's policy on the Irish question should now be quite clear to the readers.

Marx, the "utopian," was so "impractical" that he stood for the separation of Ireland, which has not been realized even half a century later.

What gave rise to Marx's policy, and was it not a mistake?

At first Marx thought that Ireland would be liberated not by the national movement of the oppressed nation, but by the working-class movement of the oppressing nation. Marx did not make an absolute of the national movement, knowing, as he did, that the victory of the working class alone can bring about the complete liberation of all nationalities. It is impossible to estimate beforehand all the possible correlations between the bourgeois liberation movements of the oppressed nations and the proletarian emancipation movement of the oppressing nation (the very problem which today makes the national question in Russia so difficult).

However, matters turned out so that the English working class fell under the influence of the Liberals for a fairly long time, became an appendage of the Liberals and by adopting a Liberal labour policy rendered itself effete. The bourgeois liberation movement in Ireland grew stronger and assumed revolutionary forms. Marx reconsidered his view and corrected it. "How disastrous it is for a nation when it has subjugated another nation." The English working class will never be free until Ireland is freed from the English yoke. Reaction in England is strengthened and fostered by the enslavement of Ireland (just as reaction in Russia is fostered by her enslavement of a number of nations!).

And Marx, in proposing in the International a resolution of sympathy with "the Irish nation," "the Irish people" (the clever *L. VI.* would probably have berated poor Marx for forgetting about the class struggle!), advocates the *separation* of Ireland from England, "although after the separation there may come federation."

What were the theoretical grounds for this conclusion of Marx's? In England the bourgeois revolution had been consummated long ago. But it had not yet been consummated in Ireland; it is being consummated only now, after the lapse of half a century, by the reforms of the English Liberals. If capitalism had been overthrown in England as quickly as Marx at first expected, there would have been no room for a bourgeois-democratic and general national movement in Ireland. But since it had arisen, Marx advised the English workers to support it, to give it a revolutionary impetus and lead it to completion in the interests of *their own* liberty.

The economic ties between Ireland and England in the 1860's were, of course, even closer than Russia's present ties with Poland, the Ukraine, etc. The "impracticability" and "impossibility" of the separation of Ireland (if only owing to geographical conditions and England's immense colonial power) were quite obvious. While, in principle, an enemy of federalism, Marx in this instance permits also federation,\* *so long as* the emancipation of Ireland

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\* By the way, it is not difficult to see why, from a Social-Democratic point of view, the right of "self-determination" means *neither* federation *nor* autonomy (although, speaking in the abstract, both come under the category of "self-determination"). The right to federation is, in general, an absurdity, since federation is a two-sided contract. It goes without saying that Marxists cannot place the defence of federalism in general in their program. As far as autonomy is concerned, Marxists defend not "the right to" autonomy but autonomy *itself*, as a general, universal principle of a democratic state with a mixed national composition, with sharp

is achieved in a revolutionary and not in a reformist way, through the movement of the mass of the people of Ireland supported by the working class of England. There can be no doubt that only such a solution of the historical problem would be in the best interests of the proletariat and most favourable for rapid social development.

Things turned out differently. Both the Irish people and the English proletariat proved to be weak. Only now, through the miserable deals between the English Liberals and the Irish bourgeoisie, is the Irish problem *being solved* (the example of Ulster shows with what difficulty) through the land reform (with compensation) and autonomy (not introduced so far). Well then? Does it follow that Marx and Engels were "utopians," that they advanced "impossible" national demands, that they allowed themselves to be influenced by the Irish petty-bourgeois nationalists (there is no doubt about the petty-bourgeois nature of the Fenian movement), etc.?

No. In the Irish question too, Marx and Engels pursued a consistently proletarian policy, which really educated the masses in the spirit of democracy and Socialism. Only such a policy could have saved both Ireland and England from half a century of delay in the introduction of the necessary reforms, and could have prevented these reforms from being mutilated by the Liberals to please the reactionaries.

The policy of Marx and Engels in the Irish question serves as a splendid example, which retains immense *practical* importance to the present time, of the attitude the proletariat of the oppressing nations should adopt to-

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differences in geographical and other conditions. Consequently, the recognition of the "right of nations to autonomy" is as absurd as the "right of nations to federation."

wards national movements. It serves as a warning against that "servile haste" with which the philistines of all countries, colours and languages hurry to declare "utopian" the idea of changing the frontiers of states that have been established by the violence and privileges of the landlords and bourgeoisie of one nation.

If the Irish and English proletariat had not accepted Marx's policy, and had not made the separation of Ireland their slogan, that would have been the worst sort of opportunism, neglect of their duties as democrats and Socialists, and yielding to *English* reaction and to the *English* bourgeoisie.

February-May 1914

## THE UNITED STATES OF EUROPE SLOGAN

In No. 40 of the *Sotsial-Demokrat* we reported that the conference of the foreign sections of our Party had decided to defer the question of the "United States of Europe" slogan pending a discussion in the press on the *economic* side of the question.

The debate on this question at our conference assumed a one-sidedly political character. Perhaps this was partly due to the fact that the Manifesto of the Central Committee directly formulated this slogan as a political one ("the immediate *political* slogan..." it says there), and not only did it put forward the slogan of a republican United States of Europe, but expressly emphasized the point that this slogan is senseless and false "without the revolutionary overthrow of the German, Austrian and Russian monarchies."

It would be absolutely wrong to object to such a presentation of the question *merely* from the standpoint of a political estimation of the particular slogan—as for instance, that it obscures or weakens, etc., the slogan of a socialist revolution. Political changes in a truly democratic direction and political revolutions all the more, can never, not under any circumstances, obscure or weaken the slogan of a socialist revolution. On the contrary, they always bring it nearer, widen the basis for it, draw new sections of the petty bourgeoisie and the semiproletarian masses into the socialist struggle. On the other hand, political revolutions are inevitable in the course of the



socialist revolution, which must not be regarded as a single act, but as an epoch of turbulent political and economic upheavals, of the most acute class struggle, civil war, revolutions, and counterrevolutions.

But while the slogan of a republican United States of Europe, placed in conjunction with the revolutionary overthrow of the three most reactionary monarchies in Europe, headed by the Russian, is quite invulnerable as a political slogan, there still remains the highly important question of its economic meaning and significance. From the standpoint of the economic conditions of imperialism—i.e., export of capital and the fact that the world has been divided up among the “advanced” and “civilized” colonial powers—a United States of Europe, under capitalism, is either impossible or reactionary.

Capital has become international and monopolistic. The world has been divided up among a handful of Great Powers, i.e., powers successful in the great plunder and oppression of nations. The four Great Powers of Europe: England, France, Russia and Germany, with a population ranging from 250,000,000 to 300,000,000 with an area of about 7,000,000 square kilometres, possess colonies with a population of *almost half a billion* (494,500,000), with an area of 64,600,000 square kilometres, i.e., almost half the surface of the globe (133,000,000 square kilometres, not including the Arctic region). Add to this the three Asiatic states, China, Turkey and Persia, which are now being torn to pieces by the marauders who are waging a war of “liberation,” namely, Japan, Russia, England and France. In those three Asiatic states, which may be called semicolonies (in reality they are now nine-tenths colonies), there are 360,000,000 inhabitants and their area is 14,500,000 square kilometres (almost one and one-half times the area of the whole of Europe).

Further, England, France and Germany have invested capital abroad to the amount of no less than 70,000 million rubles. The function of securing a "legitimate" profit from this tidy sum, a profit exceeding 3,000 million rubles annually, is performed by the national committees of millionaires, termed governments, which are equipped with armies and navies and which "place" the sons and brothers of "Mr. Billion" in the colonies and semicolonies in the capacity of viceroys, consuls, ambassadors, officials of all kinds, priests and other leeches.

This is how the plunder of about a billion of the earth's population by a handful of Great Powers is organized in the epoch of the highest development of capitalism. No other organization is possible under capitalism. Give up colonies, "spheres of influence," export of capital? To think that this is possible means sinking to the level of some mediocre parson who preaches to the rich every Sunday about the lofty principles of Christianity and advises them to give to the poor, well, if not several billions, at least several hundred rubles yearly.

A United States of Europe under capitalism is tantamount to an agreement to divide up the colonies. Under capitalism, however, no other basis, no other principle of division is possible except force. A billionaire cannot share the "national income" of a capitalist country with anyone except in proportion to the capital invested (with an extra bonus thrown in, so that the largest capital may receive more than its due). Capitalism is private property in the means of production, and anarchy in production. To preach a "just" division of income on such a basis is Proudhonism, is stupid philistinism. Division cannot take place except in "proportion to strength." And strength changes with the progress of economic development. After 1871 Germany grew strong three or four times faster than England and France; Japan, about ten times faster than

Russia. There is and there can be no other way of testing the real strength of a capitalist state than that of war. War does not contradict the principles of private property—on the contrary, it is a direct and inevitable outcome of these principles. Under capitalism the even economic growth of individual enterprises, or individual states, is impossible. Under capitalism, there are no other means of restoring the periodically disturbed equilibrium than crises in industry and wars in politics.

Of course, *temporary* agreements between capitalists and between the powers are possible. In this sense a United States of Europe is possible as an agreement between the *European* capitalists . . . but what for? Only for the purpose of jointly suppressing Socialism in Europe, of jointly protecting colonial booty *against* Japan and America, which feel badly treated by the present division of colonies, and which, for the last half century, have grown strong infinitely faster than backward, monarchist Europe, which is beginning to decay with age. Compared with the United States of America, Europe as a whole signifies economic stagnation. On the present economic basis, i.e., under capitalism, a United States of Europe would mean the organization of reaction to retard the more rapid development of America. The times when the cause of democracy and Socialism was associated with Europe alone have gone forever.

A United States of the World (not of Europe alone) is the state form of the union and freedom of nations which we associate with Socialism—until the complete victory of Communism brings about the total disappearance of the state, including the democratic state. As a separate slogan, however, the slogan of a United States of the World would hardly be a correct one, first, because it merges with Socialism; second, because it may be wrongly interpreted to mean that the victory of Socialism

in a single country is impossible, and it may also create misconceptions as to the relations of such a country to the others.

Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism. Hence, the victory of Socialism is possible first in several or even in one capitalist country, taken singly. The victorious proletariat of that country, having expropriated the capitalists and organized its own socialist production, would stand up *against* the rest of the world, the capitalist world, attracting to its cause the oppressed classes of other countries, raising revolts in those countries against the capitalists, and in the event of necessity coming out even with armed force against the exploiting classes and their states. The political form of society in which the proletariat is victorious by overthrowing the bourgeoisie, will be a democratic republic, which will more and more centralize the forces of the proletariat of the given nation, or nations, in the struggle against the states that have not yet gone over to Socialism. The abolition of classes is impossible without the dictatorship of the oppressed class, the proletariat. The free union of nations in Socialism is impossible without a more or less prolonged and stubborn struggle of the socialist republics against the backward states.

It is for these reasons and after repeated debates at the conference of the sections of the R.S.D.L.P. abroad, and after the conference, that the editors of the Central Organ have come to the conclusion that the United States of Europe slogan is incorrect.

August 1915

## ON DIALECTICS

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

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

In mathematics: + and —. Differential and integral.

In mechanics: action and reaction.

In physics: positive and negative electricity.

In chemistry: the combination and dissociation of atoms.

In social science: the class struggle.

The identity of opposites (their "unity," perhaps, would be more correct?—although the difference between the terms identity and unity is not particularly important here. In a certain sense both are correct) is the recogni-

tion (discovery) of the contradictory, *mutually exclusive*, opposite tendencies in *all* phenomena and processes of nature (*including* mind and society). The condition for the knowledge of all processes of the world in their "*self-movement*," in their spontaneous development, in their real life, is the knowledge of them as a unity of opposites. Development is the "struggle" of opposites. The two basic (or two possible? or two historically observable?) conceptions of development (evolution) are: development as decrease and increase, as repetition, *and* development as a unity of opposites (the division of a unity into mutually exclusive opposites and their reciprocal relation). In the first conception of motion, *self*-movement, its *driving* force, its source, its motive, remains in the shade (or this source is made *external*—God, subject, etc.). In the second conception it is to knowledge of the *source* of "*self*"-movement that attention is chiefly directed. The first conception is lifeless, pale and dry. The second is vital. The second *alone* furnishes the key to the "self-movement" of everything in existence; it alone furnishes the key to the "leaps," to the "break in continuity," to the "transformation into the opposite," to the destruction of the old and the emergence of the new.

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

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

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

Such must also be the method of exposition (or study) of dialectics in general (for with Marx the dialectics of bourgeois society is only a particular case of dialectics). To begin with the simplest, most ordinary, common, etc., with *any proposition*: the leaves of a tree are green; John is a man; Fido is a dog, etc. Here already we have *dialectics* (as Hegel's genius recognized): the *singular* is the *general* (cf. Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, translated by Schwegler, Bd. II, S. 40, 3. Buch, IV. Kapitel, 8 und 9: "denn natürlich kann man nicht der Meinung sein, dass es ein Haus [a house in general] gebe ausser den sichtbaren Häusern," "ὄν γὰρ ἂν θείγμεν εἶναι τινα οἰκίαν παρὰ τὰς τινᾶς οἰκίας").\*\* Consequently, the opposites (the singular as opposed to the general) are identical: the singular exists only in the connection that leads to the general. The general exists only in the singular and through the singular. Every singular is (in one way or another) a general. Every general is (a fragment, or a side, or the essence of) a singular. Every general only approximately comprises all the singular objects. Every singular enters into the

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\* Sum.—Ed.

\*\* For, evidently, one cannot hold the opinion that there can be a house apart from the visible houses.—Ed.

general incompletely, etc., etc. Every singular is connected by thousands of transitions with other *kinds* of singulars (things, phenomena, processes), etc. *Here already* we have the elements, the germs, the concepts of *necessity*, of objective connection in nature, etc. Here already we have the contingent and the necessary, the appearance and the essence; for when we say: John is a man, Fido is a dog, *this* is a leaf of a tree, etc., we *disregard* a number of attributes as CONTINGENT; we separate the essence from the appearance, and juxtapose the one to the other.

Thus in *any* given proposition we can (and must) disclose as in a "nucleus" ("cell") the germs of *all* the elements of dialectics, and thereby show that dialectics is a property of all human knowledge in general. And natural science shows us (and here again it must be demonstrated in *any* given simple instance) objective nature with the same qualities, the transformation of the singular into the general, of the contingent into the necessary, transitions, modulations, and the reciprocal connection of opposites. Dialectics *is* the theory of knowledge of (Hegel and) Marxism. This is the "side" of the matter (it is not "a side" but the *essence* of the matter) to which Plekhanov, not to speak of other Marxists, paid no attention.

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Knowledge is represented in the form of a series of circles both by Hegel (see his *Logic*) and by the modern "epistemologist" of natural science, the eclectic and foe of Hegelianism (which he did not understand!), Paul Volkmann (see his *Erkenntniss-theoretische Grundzüge*. S.)\*

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\* *Epistemological Foundations of Natural Science.*—Ed.



<p>“Circle” in philosophy: [is a chronology of <i>persons</i> essential? No!]</p> <p>Ancient: from Democritus to Plato and the dialectics of Heraclitus.</p> <p>Renaissance: Descartes versus Gassendi (Spinoza?)</p> <p>Modern: Holbach-Hegel (via Berkeley, Hume, Kant). Hegel-Feuerbach-Marx.</p>
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Dialectics as *living*, many-sided knowledge (with the number of sides eternally increasing) with an infinite number of shadings of every sort of approach and approximation to reality (with a philosophical system growing into a whole out of each shade)—here we have an immeasurably rich content as compared with “metaphysical” materialism, the fundamental *misfortune* of which is its inability to apply dialectics to the *Bildertheorie*,\* to the process and development of knowledge.

From the standpoint of crude, simple, metaphysical materialism, philosophical idealism is *only* nonsense. From the standpoint of *dialectical* materialism, on the other hand, philosophical idealism is a *one-sided*, exaggerated, *überschwengliches*\*\* (Dietzgen) development (inflation, distention) of one of the features, sides, facets of knowledge into an absolute, *divorced* from matter, from nature, apotheosized. Idealism is clerical obscurantism. True. But philosophical idealism is (“*more correctly*” and “*in addition*”) a *road* to clerical obscurantism *through* ONE OF THE SHADES of the infinitely complex *knowledge* (dialectical) of man.

Human knowledge is not (or does not follow) a straight line, but a curve, which endlessly approximates to a series

\* Theory of reflection.—*Ed.*

\*\* Extreme.—*Ed.*

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

1915 or 1916

# THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION AND THE RIGHT OF NATIONS TO SELF-DETERMINATION

*THESES*

*(Excerpt)*

## 5. MARXISM AND PROUDHONISM ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION

In contrast to the petty-bourgeois democrats, Marx regarded every democratic demand without exception not as an absolute, but as an historical expression of the struggle of the masses of the people, led by the bourgeoisie, against feudalism. There is not one of these demands which could not serve and has not served, under certain circumstances, as an instrument of the bourgeoisie for deceiving the workers. To single out in this respect one of the demands of political democracy, namely, self-determination of nations, and to oppose it to the rest is fundamentally wrong in theory. In practice, the proletariat can retain its independence only by subordinating its struggle for all the democratic demands, not excluding the demand for a republic, to its revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie.

On the other hand, in contrast to the Proudhonists who "denied" the national problem "in the name of social revolution," Marx, mindful most of all of the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat in the advanced countries, put in the foreground the fundamental principle of internationalism and Socialism, viz., that no nation can be free if it oppresses other nations. It was from the standpoint of the interests of the revolutionary movement of the German workers that Marx in 1848 demanded that victorious democracy in Germany should proclaim and grant freedom to the nations oppressed by the Germans. It was from the standpoint of the revolutionary struggle of the English workers that Marx in 1869 demanded the separation of Ireland from England, and added: "although after the separation there may come federation." Only by putting forward this demand was Marx really educating the English workers in the spirit of internationalism. Only in this way could he oppose the opportunists and bourgeois reformism—which even now, half a century later, has not accomplished Irish "reform"—with a revolutionary solution of the given historical task. Only in this way could Marx maintain against the apologists of capital who shout that the right of small nations to secession is utopian and impossible and that not only economic but also political concentration is progressive, that this concentration is progressive when it is *nonimperialist*, and that nations should be brought together not by force, but by a free union of the proletarians of all countries. Only in this way could Marx, in opposition to the merely verbal, and often hypocritical, recognition of equality and self-determination of nations, advocate revolutionary action of the masses *also* in the settlement of national questions. The imperialist war of 1914-16, and the Augean stables of hypocrisy of the opportunists and Kautskyites it has exposed, have strikingly confirmed the correctness of

Marx's policy, which should serve as a model for all advanced countries, because all of them are now oppressing other nations.\*

January-February 1916

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\* Reference is often made—e.g., recently by the German chauvinist Lensch in *Die Glocke*, Nos. 8 and 9—to the fact that Marx's objection to the national movement of certain peoples, e.g., the Czechs in 1848, refutes the necessity of recognizing self-determination of nations from the Marxist standpoint. But this is incorrect, for in 1848 there were historical and political grounds for drawing a distinction between "reactionary" and revolutionary-democratic nations. Marx was right when he condemned the former and defended the latter. The right to self-determination is one of the demands of democracy, which must naturally be subordinated to the general interests of democracy. In 1848 and the following years these general interests consisted primarily in combating tsarism.

## THE DISCUSSION OF SELF-DETERMINATION SUMMED UP

(Excerpts)

### 7. MARXISM OR PROUDHONISM?

Our Polish comrades, by way of an exception, parry our reference to Marx's attitude towards the separation of Ireland not indirectly, but directly. What is their objection? References to the position Marx held from 1848 to 1871, they say, are "not of the slightest value." The argument advanced in support of this unusually irate and positive assertion is that Marx "at one and the same time" expressed opposition to the strivings for independence of the "Czechs, South Slavs, etc."

The argument is so very irate just because it is so very unsound. According to the Polish Marxists, Marx was simply a muddlehead who "at one and the same time" said contradictory things! This is altogether untrue, and it is altogether un-Marxist. It is precisely that demand for "concrete" analysis upon which our Polish comrades insist, *but do not themselves apply*, which obliges us to investigate whether the different attitudes Marx adopted towards different concrete "national" movements did not spring from *one and the same* socialist outlook.

As is generally known, Marx was in favour of Polish independence in the interests of *European* democracy in its struggle against the power and influence—or, it might be said, against the omnipotence and predominating reac-

tionary influence—of tsarism. That this attitude was correct was most clearly and practically demonstrated in 1849, when the Russian serf army crushed the national liberation and revolutionary-democratic rebellion in Hungary. From that time until Marx's death, and even later, until 1890, when there was a danger that tsarism, allied with France, would wage a reactionary war against a *non-imperialist* and nationally independent Germany, Engels stood first and foremost for a struggle against tsarism. It was for this reason, and exclusively for this reason, that Marx and Engels were opposed to the national movement of the Czechs and South Slavs. A simple comparison with what Marx and Engels wrote in 1848 and 1849 will prove to anyone who is interested in Marxism not just in order to brush Marxism aside, that Marx and Engels at that time drew a clear and definite *distinction* between "whole reactionary nations" serving as "Russian outposts" in Europe, and "revolutionary nations," namely, the Germans, Poles and Magyars. This is a fact. And this fact was indicated *at the time with incontrovertible truth*: in 1848 revolutionary nations fought for liberty, the principal enemy of which was tsarism, whereas the Czechs, etc., really were reactionary nations, outposts of tsarism.

What is the lesson to be drawn from this concrete example, which must be analyzed *concretely* if one wishes to be true to Marxism? Only this: 1) that the interests of the liberation of a number of big and very big nations in Europe stand higher than the interests of the movement for liberation of small nations; 2) that a democratic demand must not be considered in isolation but on a European—today we should say a world—scale.

Nothing more. There is not a hint in this of repudiation of that elementary socialist principle which the Poles are forgetting but to which Marx was *always* faithful, namely,

that no nation can be free if it oppresses other nations. If the concrete situation which confronted Marx in the period when tsarist influence was predominant in international politics were to repeat itself, for instance, in such form that a number of nations were to start a socialist revolution (as a bourgeois-democratic revolution was started in Europe in 1848), while *other* nations served as the chief bulwarks of bourgeois reaction—then we too would have to be in favour of a revolutionary war against the latter, in favour of “crushing” them, in favour of destroying all their outposts, no matter what small-national movements arose there. Consequently, far from rejecting examples of Marx’s tactics—this would mean professing Marxism in words while breaking with it in practice—we must analyze them concretely and draw invaluable lessons from them for the future. The various demands of democracy, including self-determination, are not an absolute, but a *small part* of the general democratic (now: general socialist) *world* movement. In individual concrete cases, the part may contradict the whole; if so, it must be rejected. It is possible that the republican movement in one country may be merely an instrument of the clerical or financial-monarchical intrigues of other countries; if so, we must *not* support this particular, concrete movement. But it would be ridiculous on these grounds to delete the demand for a republic from the program of international Social-Democracy.

In what way has the concrete situation changed between 1848-71 and 1898-1916 (I take the most important landmarks of imperialism, as a period: from the Spanish-American imperialist war to the European imperialist war)? Tsarism has manifestly and indisputably ceased to be the chief mainstay of reaction, firstly, because it is supported by international finance capital, particularly French, secondly, because of 1905. At that time the system



of big national states—the democracies of Europe—was conferring democracy and Socialism on the world in spite of tsarism.\* Marx and Engels did not live to see the period of imperialism. At the present time a system of a handful of imperialist “Great” Powers (five or six in number) has come into being, each of which oppresses other nations; and this oppression is one of the sources of the artificial retardation of the collapse of capitalism, of the artificial support of opportunism and social-chauvinism in the imperialist nations which dominate the world. At that time West-European democracy, which was liberating the big nations, was opposed to tsarism, which was using certain small-national movements for reactionary ends. Now it is an *alliance* between tsarist imperialism and advanced capitalist, European imperialism, based on their general oppression of a number of nations, that confronts the socialist proletariat, which is split into chauvinists, “social-imperialists,” on the one hand, and revolutionaries on the other.

Such are the concrete changes that have taken place in the situation, and it is just these that the Polish Social-Democrats ignore, in spite of their promise to be concrete! Hence the concrete change in the *application* of the very same socialist principles: *at that time* the main thing was

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\* Ryazanov published in Grünberg's *Archives of the History of Socialism* (1916, I) a very interesting article by Engels on the Polish question written in 1866. Engels emphasizes that it is necessary for the proletariat to recognize the political independence and “self-determination” (“right to dispose of itself”) of the great, major nations of Europe and points to the absurdity of the “principle of nationalities” (particularly in its Bonapartist application), i.e., of placing any small nation on the same level as these big ones. “Russia,” says Engels, “possesses an enormous amount of stolen property” (i.e., oppressed nations) “which she will have to return on the day of reckoning.” Both Bonapartism and tsarism *utilize* the small-national movements for *their own* benefit, *against* European democracy.

to be "against tsarism" (and against certain small-national movements that were being utilized *by it* for antidemocratic ends), and for the big-national, revolutionary, peoples of the West; *now* the main thing is to be against the united, straightened-out front of the imperialist powers, of the imperialist bourgeoisie, of the social-imperialists, and *for* utilizing *all* national movements against imperialism for the purposes of the socialist revolution. The *purser* the proletarian struggle against the general imperialist front now becomes, the more vital, obviously, becomes the internationalist principle: "No nation can be free if it oppresses other nations."

*In the name* of a doctrinaire conception of the social revolution, the Proudhonists ignored the international role of Poland and brushed aside the national movements. Equally doctrinaire is the attitude of the Polish Social-Democrats, since they *break* the international front of struggle against the social-imperialists, and (objectively) help the latter by their vacillations on the question of annexations. For it is precisely the international front of the proletarian struggle that has changed in relation to the concrete position of the small nations: at that time (1848-71) the small nations were important as the potential allies either of "Western democracy" and the revolutionary nations, or of tsarism; now (1898-1914) the small nations have lost this importance; their importance now is that they are one of the nutritive media of the parasitism and, consequently, the social-imperialism of the "ruling nations." The important thing is not whether one-fiftieth or one-hundredth of the small nations are liberated before the socialist revolution, but the fact that in the epoch of imperialism, owing to objective causes, the proletariat has been split into two international camps, one of which has been corrupted by the crumbs that fall from the table of the bourgeoisie of the ruling nations—ob-

tained, among other things, from the double or triple exploitation of small nations—while the other cannot liberate itself without liberating the small nations, without educating the masses in an antichauvinist, i.e., antiannexationist, i.e., “self-determinationist” spirit.

This, the most important aspect of the question, is ignored by our Polish comrades, who do *not* view things from the central position in the epoch of imperialism, from the standpoint that the international proletariat is divided into two camps.

Here are other concrete examples of their Proudhonism: 1) their attitude to the Irish rebellion of 1916, of which we shall speak later; 2) the declaration in the theses (II, 3, at the end of §3) that the slogan of socialist revolution “must not be covered up by anything.” The idea that the slogan of socialist revolution can be “covered up” by *combining* it with a consistently revolutionary position on all questions, including the national question, is certainly a profoundly anti-Marxist idea.

The Polish Social-Democrats consider that our program is a “national-reformist” program. Compare the two practical proposals: 1) for autonomy (Polish theses, III, 4), and 2) for freedom of secession. It is in this, and in this alone, that our programs differ! And is it not evident that it is precisely the first proposal that is reformist and not the second? A reformist change is one which leaves the foundations of the power of the ruling class intact and which is merely a concession by the ruling class that leaves its power unimpaired. A revolutionary change undermines the foundations of power. A reformist national program does *not* abolish *all* privileges of the ruling nation; it does *not* establish complete equality; it does *not* abolish national oppression *in all its forms*. An “autonomous” nation does not enjoy equal rights with the “ruling” nation; our Polish comrades could not have failed

to notice this had they not obstinately avoided (like our old "Economists") an analysis of *political* concepts and categories. Until 1905 autonomous Norway, as a part of Sweden, enjoyed the widest autonomy, but it did not enjoy equality with Sweden. Only by its free secession was its equality manifested *in practice* and proved (and let us add in parentheses that it was precisely this free secession that created the basis for a more intimate and more democratic friendship, founded on equality of rights). As long as Norway was merely autonomous, the Swedish aristocracy had *one* additional privilege; and this privilege was not "mitigated" by secession (the essence of reformism lies in *mitigating* an evil and not in destroying it), but *entirely removed* (the principal criterion of the revolutionary character of a program).

Be it noted, incidentally, that autonomy, as a reform, differs in principle from freedom of secession, as a revolutionary measure. This goes without saying. But as everyone knows, in practice a reform is often merely a step towards revolution. It is precisely autonomy which enables a nation forcibly retained within the boundaries of a given state to constitute itself definitely as a nation, to gather, to ascertain and organize its forces, and to select the most opportune moment for a *declaration . . .* in the "Norwegian" spirit: We, the autonomous parliament of such and such a nation, or of such and such a territory, declare that the Emperor of all the Russias has ceased to be King of Poland, etc. To this it is usually "objected" that such questions are decided by wars and not by declarations. True: in the vast majority of cases they are decided by wars (just as the question of the form of government of big states is decided in the vast majority of cases only by wars and revolutions). However, it would do no harm to reflect whether *such* an "objection" to the political program of a revolutionary party is logical. Are

we opposed to wars and revolutions *on behalf of* what is just and beneficial for the proletariat, *on behalf of* democracy and Socialism?

“But we cannot be in favour of a war between great nations, in favour of the slaughter of twenty million people for the sake of the problematical liberation of a small nation with a population of perhaps ten or twenty millions!” No, of course we cannot! But not because we throw out of our program complete national equality, but because the democratic interests of *one* country must be subordinated to the democratic interests of *several and all* countries. Let us assume that between two great monarchies there is a little monarchy whose kinglet is “bound” by blood and other ties to the monarchs of both neighbouring countries. Let us further assume that the declaration of a republic in the little country and the expulsion of *its* monarch would in practice lead to a war between the two neighbouring big countries for the restoration of that or another monarch in the little country. There is no doubt that all international Social-Democracy, as well as the really internationalist section of Social-Democracy in the little country, *would be opposed to substituting a republic for the monarchy* in this case. The substitution of a republic for a monarchy is not an absolute, but one of the democratic demands, subordinate to the interests of democracy (and still more, of course, to the interests of the socialist proletariat) as a whole. In all probability a case like this would not give rise to the slightest disagreement among Social-Democrats in any country. But if any Social-Democrat were to propose on *these* grounds that the demand for a republic be deleted altogether from the program of international Social-Democracy, he would certainly be looked upon as insane. He would be told that after all one must not forget the elementary logical difference between the *particular* and the *general*.

This example brings us, from a somewhat different angle, to the question of the *internationalist* education of the working class. Can such education—about the necessity and urgent importance of which differences of opinion among the Zimmerwald Lefts<sup>37</sup> are inconceivable—be *concretely identical* in great, oppressing nations and in small, oppressed nations, in annexing nations and in annexed nations?

Obviously not. The way to the one goal—to complete equality, to the closest intimacy and the subsequent *amalgamation of all* nations—obviously proceeds here by different routes in each concrete case: in the same way, let us say, as the route to a point in the middle of a given page lies towards the left from one edge and towards the right from the opposite edge. If a Social-Democrat belonging to a great, oppressing, annexing nation, while advocating the amalgamation of nations in general, were to forget even for one moment that “his” Nicholas II, “his” Wilhelm, George, Poincaré, etc., *also stands for amalgamation* with small nations (by means of annexations)—Nicholas II being for “amalgamation” with Galicia, Wilhelm II for “amalgamation” with Belgium, etc.—such a Social-Democrat would be a ridiculous doctrinaire in theory and an abettor of imperialism in practice.

The weight of emphasis in the internationalist education of the workers in the oppressing countries must necessarily consist in advocating and urging them to demand freedom of secession for oppressed countries. Without this there can be *no* internationalism. It is our right and duty to treat every Social-Democrat of an oppressing nation who *fails* to conduct such propaganda as an imperialist and a scoundrel. This is an absolute demand, even if the *chance* of secession being possible and “feasible” before the introduction of Socialism be only one in a thousand.

It is our bounden duty to educate the workers to be "indifferent" to national distinctions. There is no doubt about that. But not to be indifferent in the spirit of the *annexationists*. A member of an oppressing nation must be "indifferent" to whether small nations belong to *his* state or to a *neighbouring* state or to themselves, according to where their sympathies lie: if he is not "indifferent" in this way he is *not* a Social-Democrat. To be an internationalist Social-Democrat one must *not* think only of one's own nation, but must place the interests of all nations, their general liberty and equality, *above one's own nation*. In "theory" everyone agrees with this, but in practice an annexationist indifference is displayed. Herein lies the root of the evil.

On the other hand, a Social-Democrat belonging to a small nation must emphasize in his agitation the *second* word of our general formula: "voluntary *union*" of nations. He may, without violating his duties as an internationalist, be in favour of *either* the political independence of his nation *or* its inclusion in a neighbouring state X, Y, Z, etc. But in all cases he must fight *against* small-nation narrow-mindedness, isolationism and aloofness, he must fight for the recognition of the whole and the general, for the subordination of the interests of the particular to the interests of the general.

People who have not gone thoroughly into the question think there is a "contradiction" in Social-Democrats of oppressing nations insisting on "freedom of *secession*," while Social-Democrats of oppressed nations insist on "freedom of *union*." However, a little reflection will show that there is not, and cannot be, any *other* road leading from the *given* situation to internationalism and the amalgamation of nations, any other road to this goal....

## 9. ENGELS' LETTER TO KAUTSKY

In his pamphlet *Socialism and Colonial Politics* (Berlin, 1907) Kautsky, who was then still a Marxist, published a letter written to him by Engels, dated September 12, 1882, which is extremely interesting in relation to the question under discussion. Here is the principal part of that letter:

"... In my opinion the colonies proper, i.e., the countries occupied by a European population, Canada, the Cape, Australia, will all become independent; on the other hand, the countries inhabited by a native population, which are simply subjugated, India, Algiers, the Dutch, Portuguese and Spanish possessions, must be taken over for the time being by the proletariat and led as rapidly as possible towards independence. How this process will develop is difficult to say. India will perhaps, indeed very probably, produce a revolution, and as the proletariat emancipating itself cannot conduct any colonial wars, this would have to be given full scope; it would not pass off without all sorts of destruction, of course, but that sort of thing is inseparable from all revolutions. The same might also take place elsewhere, e.g., in Algiers and Egypt, and would certainly be the best thing *for us*. We shall have enough to do at home. Once Europe is reorganized, and North America, that will furnish such colossal power and such an example that the semicivilized countries will follow in their wake of their own accord. Economic needs alone will be responsible for this. But as to what social and political phases these countries will then have to pass through before they likewise arrive at socialist organization, we today can only advance rather idle hypotheses. I think. One thing alone is certain: *the victorious proletariat can force no blessings of any kind upon any foreign nation without undermining its own victory by so doing.*



Which of course by no means excludes defensive wars of various kinds...."

Engels by no means supposes that "economics" will of itself and directly remove all difficulties. An economic revolution will be a stimulus to *all* peoples to *tend* towards Socialism: but at the same time revolutions—against the socialist state—and wars are possible. Politics will inevitably adapt itself to economics, but not immediately and smoothly, not simply, not directly. Engels mentions as "certain" only one, absolutely internationalist, principle, which he applies to *all* "foreign nations," i.e., not to colonial nations only, namely: to force blessings upon them would mean to undermine the victory of the proletariat.

The proletariat will not become holy and immune from errors and weaknesses merely by virtue of the fact that it has carried out the social revolution. But possible errors (and selfish interest—attempts to ride on the back of others) will inevitably cause it to appreciate this truth.

We Left Zimmerwaldists are all convinced of what Kautsky, for example, was also convinced of before his desertion in 1914 from Marxism to the defence of chauvinism, namely, that the socialist revolution is quite possible in the *very near* future—"any day," as Kautsky himself once put it. National antipathies will not disappear so quickly: the hatred—and perfectly legitimate hatred—of an oppressed nation for its oppressor will *continue* for a while; it will evaporate only *after* the victory of Socialism and *after* the final establishment of completely democratic relations between nations. If we desire to be faithful to Socialism we must educate the masses in internationalism now, which is impossible in oppressing nations without preaching freedom of secession for oppressed nations.

## IMPERIALISM AND THE SPLIT IN SOCIALISM

Is there any connection between imperialism and that monstrous and disgusting victory which opportunism (in the form of social-chauvinism) has gained over the labour movement in Europe?

This is the fundamental question of modern Socialism. And having in our Party literature fully established, first, the imperialist character of our epoch and of the present war, and, second, the inseparable historical connection between social-chauvinism and opportunism, as well as the intrinsic similarity of their political ideology, we can and must proceed to analyze this fundamental question.

We must begin with as precise and full a definition of imperialism as possible. Imperialism is a specific historical stage of capitalism. Its specific character is threefold: imperialism is (1) monopoly capitalism; (2) parasitic, or decaying capitalism; (3) moribund capitalism. The supplanting of free competition by monopoly is the fundamental economic feature, the *quintessence* of imperialism. Monopoly manifests itself in five principal forms: 1) cartels, syndicates and trusts—the concentration of production has reached a degree which gives rise to these monopolistic combinations of capitalists; 2) the monopolistic position of the big banks—three, four or five gigantic banks manipulate the whole economic life of America, France, Germany; 3) seizure of the sources of *raw material* by the trusts and the financial oligarchy (finance capital is monopolistic industrial capital merged with bank

capital); 4) the (economic) partition of the world by the international cartels *has begun*. Such international cartels, which command the *entire* world market and divide it "amicably" among themselves—until war *redivides* it—already number over *one hundred!* The export of capital, a highly characteristic phenomenon distinct from the export of commodities under nonmonopoly capitalism, is closely linked with the economic and territorial-political partition of the world; 5) the territorial partition of the world (colonies) is *completed*.

Imperialism, as the highest stage of capitalism in America and Europe, and later in Asia, fully developed in the period 1898-1914: the Spanish-American War (1898), the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902), the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05) and the economic crisis in Europe in 1900 are the chief historical landmarks in the new era of world history.

The fact that imperialism is parasitic or decaying capitalism is manifested first of all in the tendency to decay characteristic of *every* monopoly under the system of private ownership of the means of production. The difference between the democratic republican and the reactionary monarchist imperialist bourgeoisie is obliterated precisely because they are both rotting alive (which by no means precludes an extraordinarily rapid development of capitalism in individual branches of industry, in individual countries, and in individual periods). Secondly, the decay of capitalism is manifested in the creation of a huge stratum of *rentiers*, capitalists who live by "clipping coupons." In each of the four leading imperialist countries—England, U.S.A., France and Germany—capital in securities amounts to one hundred or one hundred fifty *billion* francs, from which each country derives an annual income of no less than five to eight billions. Thirdly, capital export is parasitism raised to the second power. Fourthly,

"finance capital tends towards domination, not towards freedom." Political reaction *all along the line* is a characteristic feature of imperialism. Corruption, bribery on a huge scale, and gigantic frauds of all kinds. Fifthly, the exploitation of oppressed nations that is inseparably connected with annexations, and especially the exploitation of colonies by a handful of "Great" Powers, transforms the "civilized" world more and more into a parasite on the body of hundreds of millions of uncivilized people. The Roman proletarian lived at the expense of society. Modern society lives at the expense of the modern proletarian. Marx specially stressed this profound observation of Sismondi. Imperialism somewhat changes the situation. A privileged upper stratum of the proletariat in the imperialist countries lives partly at the expense of hundreds of millions of members of uncivilized nations.

It is clear why imperialism is *moribund* capitalism, capitalism in *transition* to Socialism: monopoly, which grows *out of* capitalism, is *already* capitalism dying out, the beginning of its transition to Socialism. The tremendous *socialization* of labour by imperialism (what the apologists—the bourgeois economists—call "interlocking") means the same thing.

Advancing this definition of imperialism brings us into complete contradiction to K. Kautsky, who refuses to regard imperialism as a "phase of capitalism" and who defines imperialism as the *policy* "preferred" by finance capital, as a tendency on the part of "industrial" countries to annex "agrarian" countries.\* Kautsky's definition is

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\* "Imperialism is a product of highly developed industrial capitalism. It consists in the striving of every industrial capitalist nation to subjugate and annex ever larger *agrarian* territories, irrespective of the nations that inhabit them" (Kautsky in *Neue Zeit*, September 11, 1914).

thoroughly false from the theoretical standpoint. What distinguishes imperialism is the rule *not* of industrial capital but of finance capital, the striving to annex *not* agrarian countries particularly, but *every kind* of country. Kautsky *divorces* imperialist politics from imperialist economics, he divorces monopoly in politics from monopoly in economics in order to pave the way for his vulgar bourgeois reformism, such as "disarmament," "ultra-imperialism" and similar nonsense. The aim and object of this theoretical falsity is to obscure the *most profound* contradictions of imperialism and thus to justify the theory of "unity" with the apologists of imperialism, the frank social-chauvinists and opportunists.

We have dealt at sufficient length with Kautsky's rupture with Marxism on this point in the *Sotsial-Demokrat* and the *Kommunist*. Our Russian Kautskyites, the supporters of the Organization Committee, headed by Axelrod and Spectator, including even Martov, and to a large degree Trotsky, preferred tacitly to ignore the question of Kautskyism as a trend. They did not dare defend what Kautsky had written during the war and confined themselves either to simply praising Kautsky (Axelrod in his German pamphlet, which the Organization Committee has *promised* to publish in Russian) or to quoting private letters of Kautsky (Spectator), in which he asserts that he belongs to the opposition and jesuitically tries to nullify his chauvinist declarations.

It should be noted that Kautsky's "conception" of imperialism—which is tantamount to embellishing imperialism—is a retrogression not only compared with Hilferding's *Finance Capital* (no matter how assiduously Hilferding now defends Kautsky and "unity" with the social-chauvinists!) but also compared with the *social-liberal*, J. A. Hobson. This English economist, who in no way claims to be a Marxist, much more profoundly defines

imperialism and reveals its contradictions in his work of 1902.\* This is what this writer (in whose book nearly all Kautsky's pacifist and "conciliatory" banalities may be found) wrote on the highly important question of the parasitic nature of imperialism:

In Hobson's opinion, two sets of circumstances weakened the power of the old empires: 1) "economic parasitism," and 2) formation of armies from dependent peoples. The first-mentioned circumstance is "the habit of economic parasitism, by which the ruling state has used its provinces, colonies, and dependencies in order to enrich its ruling class and to bribe its lower classes into acquiescence." Concerning the second circumstance, Hobson writes:

"One of the strangest symptoms of the blindness of imperialism" (this song about the "blindness" of imperialists comes more appropriately from the social-liberal Hobson than from the "Marxist" Kautsky) "is the reckless indifference with which Great Britain, France, and other imperial nations are embarking on this perilous dependence. Great Britain has gone farthest. Most of the fighting by which we have won our Indian Empire has been done by natives; in India, as more recently in Egypt, great standing armies are placed under British commanders; almost all the fighting associated with our African dominions, except in the southern part, has been done for us by natives."

The prospect of the partition of China elicited from Hobson the following economic appraisal: "The greater part of Western Europe might then assume the appearance and character already exhibited by tracts of country in the South of England, in the Riviera, and in the tourist-ridden or residential parts of Italy and Switzerland,

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\* J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism*, London, 1902.

little clusters of wealthy aristocrats drawing dividends and pensions from the Far East, with a somewhat larger group of professional retainers and tradesmen and a large body of personal servants and workers in the transport trade and in the final stages of production of the more perishable goods: all the main arterial industries would have disappeared, the staple foods and manufactures flowing in as a tribute from Asia and Africa. . . . We have foreshadowed the possibility of even a larger alliance of Western States, a European federation of Great Powers which, so far from forwarding the cause of world civilization, might introduce the gigantic peril of a Western parasitism, a group of advanced industrial nations, whose upper classes drew vast tribute from Asia and Africa, with which they supported great tame masses of retainers, no longer engaged in the staple industries of agriculture and manufacture, but kept in the performance of personal or minor industrial services under the control of a new financial aristocracy. Let those who would scout such a theory" (he should have said: prospect) "as undeserving of consideration examine the economic and social condition of districts in Southern England today which are already reduced to this condition, and reflect upon the vast extension of such a system which might be rendered feasible by the subjection of China to the economic control of similar groups of financiers, investors, and political and business officials, draining the greatest potential reservoir of profit the world has ever known, in order to consume it in Europe. The situation is far too complex, the play of world forces far too incalculable, to render this or any other single interpretation of the future very probable: but the influences which govern the imperialism of Western Europe today are moving in this direction, and, unless counteracted or diverted, make towards some such consummation."

Hobson, the social-liberal, fails to see that this "counteraction" can be offered *only* by the revolutionary proletariat and *only* in the form of a social revolution. But then he is a social-liberal! Nevertheless, as early as 1902 he had an excellent insight into the meaning and significance of a "United States of Europe" (be it said for the benefit of Trotsky the Kautskyite!) and of all that is now being glossed over by the *hypocritical Kautskyites* of various countries, namely, that the *opportunists* (social-chauvinists) are working hand in glove with the imperialist bourgeoisie *precisely* towards creating an imperialist Europe on the backs of Asia and Africa, and that objectively the *opportunists* are a section of the petty bourgeoisie and of certain strata of the working class who have been *bribed* out of imperialist superprofits and converted into *watchdogs* of capitalism and *corrupters* of the labour movement.

We have repeatedly pointed, both in articles and in the resolutions of our Party, to this most profound connection, the economic connection, between the imperialist bourgeoisie and the opportunism which is now victorious (will it be for long?) in the labour movement. It is from this, incidentally, that we drew the conclusion that a split with the social-chauvinists was inevitable. Our Kautskyites preferred to evade the question! Martov, for instance, uttered in his lectures a sophistry which in the *Bulletin of the Foreign Secretariat of the Organization Committee* (No. 4, April 10, 1916) is expressed in the following way:

"...The cause of revolutionary Social-Democracy would be in a sad, even a hopeless plight if those groups of workers who in mental development approach most closely to the 'intelligentsia' and who are the most highly skilled fatally drifted away from it towards opportunism. ..."



By means of the silly word "fatally" and a certain sleight-of-hand, the *fact* that *certain* groups of workers *have already drifted away* to opportunism and to the imperialist bourgeoisie is *evaded!* And all that the sophists of the O.C. want is to *evade* this fact! They confine themselves to that "official optimism" which the Kautskyite Hilferding and many others flaunt at the present time: objective conditions guarantee the unity of the proletariat and the victory of the revolutionary trend! We, forsooth, are "optimists" with regard to the proletariat!

But as a matter of fact all these Kautskyites—Hilferding, the O.C.-ists, Martov and Co.—are *optimists* . . . with regard to *opportunism*. That is the whole point!

The proletariat is the child of capitalism—of world capitalism, and not only of European capitalism, and not only of imperialist capitalism. On a world scale, fifty years sooner or fifty years later—from the standpoint of the *world* scale the question is a minor one—the "proletariat" of course "will be" united, and revolutionary Social-Democracy will "inevitably" be victorious within it. But this is not the point, Messrs. the Kautskyites. The point is that at the present time, in the imperialist countries of Europe, *you are fawning* on the opportunists, who are *alien* to the proletariat as a class, who are the servants, the agents of the bourgeoisie and the vehicles of its influence, and unless the labour movement *rids* itself of them, it will remain a *bourgeois labour movement*. Your advocacy of "unity" with the opportunists, with the Legiens and Davids, the Plekhanovs, the Chkhenkelis and Potresovs, etc., is, objectively, a defence of the *enslavement* of the workers by the imperialist bourgeoisie with the aid of its best agents in the labour movement. The victory of revolutionary Social-Democracy on a world scale is absolutely inevitable, only it is moving and will

move, is proceeding and will proceed, *against* you, it will be a victory *over* you.

These two trends, one might even say *two* parties, in the present-day labour movement, which in 1914-16 so obviously parted ways all over the world, *were traced by Engels and Marx in England* throughout the course of many *decades*, roughly from 1858 to 1892.

Neither Marx nor Engels lived to see the imperialist epoch of world capitalism, which began not earlier than 1898-1900. But it has been a peculiar feature of England that even in the middle of the nineteenth century she already revealed at least *two* major distinguishing features of imperialism: 1) vast colonies, and 2) monopoly profit (due to her monopolistic position in the world market). In both respects England at that time was an exception among capitalist countries, and Marx and Engels, analyzing this exception, quite clearly and definitely indicated its *connection* with the (temporary) victory of opportunism in the English labour movement.

In a letter to Marx dated October 7, 1858, Engels wrote: "...The English proletariat is becoming more and more bourgeois, so that this most bourgeois of all nations is apparently aiming ultimately at the possession of a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat *as well* as a bourgeoisie. For a nation which exploits the whole world this is of course to a certain extent justifiable." In a letter to Sorge dated September 21, 1872, Engels informs him that Hales kicked up a big row in the Federal Council of the International and secured a vote of censure on Marx for saying that "the English labour leaders had sold themselves." Marx wrote to Sorge on August 4, 1874: "As to the urban workers here (in England), it is a pity that the whole pack of leaders did not get into parliament. This would be the surest way of getting rid of the whole lot." In a letter to Marx dated August 11, 1881,

Engels speaks about "those very worst English trade unions which allow themselves to be led by men sold to, or at least paid by the bourgeoisie." In a letter to Kautsky, dated September 12, 1882, Engels wrote: "You ask me what the English workers think about colonial policy. Well, exactly the same as they think about politics in general. There is no workers' party here, there are only Conservatives and Liberal-Radicals, and the workers gaily share the feast of England's monopoly of the world market and the colonies."

On December 7, 1889, Engels wrote to Sorge: "The most repulsive thing here (in England) is the bourgeois 'respectability' which has grown deep into the bones of the workers. . . . Even Tom Mann, whom I regard as the finest of them, is fond of mentioning that he will be lunching with the Lord Mayor. If one compares this with the French, one can see what a revolution is good for after all." In a letter dated April 19, 1890: "But *under* the surface the movement (of the working class in England) is going on, it is seizing ever wider sections of the workers and mostly just among the hitherto stagnant *lowest* (Engels' italics) masses, and the day is no longer far off when this mass will suddenly *find itself*, when the fact that it is this colossal self-impelled mass will dawn upon it. . . ." On March 4, 1891: "The failure of the collapsed Dockers' Union; the old conservative trade unions, *rich* and therefore cowardly, remain alone on the field. . . ." September 14, 1891: at the Newcastle Trade Union Congress the old unionists, opponents of the eight-hour day, were defeated and "the bourgeois papers recognize the defeat of the *bourgeois labour party*" (Engels' italics throughout). . . .

That these ideas, which were repeated by Engels over the course of decades, were also expressed by him publicly, in the press, is proven by his preface to the second

edition of *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, 1892. Here he speaks of an "aristocracy among the working class," of a "privileged minority of the workers," in contradistinction to the "great mass of working people." "A small, privileged, protected minority" of the working class alone was "permanently benefited" by the privileged position of England in 1848-68, whereas "the great bulk of them experienced at best but a temporary improvement." "With the breakdown of that (England's industrial) monopoly, the English working class will lose that privileged position. . . ." The members of the "New Unionism," the unions of the unskilled workers, "had this immense advantage, that their minds were virgin soil, entirely free from the inherited 'respectable' bourgeois prejudices which hampered the brains of the better situated 'old' Unionists. . . ." The so-called "workers' representatives" in England are people "who are forgiven their being members of the working class because they themselves would like to drown their quality of being workers in the ocean of their liberalism. . . ."

We have deliberately quoted the direct statements of Marx and Engels at rather great length in order that the reader may study them *as a whole*. And they should be studied, they are worth carefully pondering over. For they are the *pivot* of the tactics in the labour movement that are dictated by the objective conditions of the imperialist epoch.

Here, too, Kautsky has already attempted to "befog the issue" and to substitute for Marxism a sentimental spirit of conciliation with the opportunists. Arguing against the avowed and naive social-imperialists (like Lensch) who justify Germany's participation in the war as a means of destroying England's monopoly, Kautsky "*corrects*" this obvious falsehood by another equally obvious falsehood. Instead of a cynical falsehood he employs

a suave falsehood! The *industrial* monopoly of England, he says, has long ago been broken, has long ago been destroyed, and there is nothing left to destroy.

Why is this argument false?

Because, firstly, it overlooks England's colonial monopoly. Yet Engels, as we have seen, pointed to this very clearly as early as 1882, thirty four years ago! Although England's industrial monopoly may have been destroyed, her colonial monopoly not only remains, but has become extremely accentuated, for the whole world is already divided up! By means of this suave lie Kautsky smuggles in the bourgeois-pacifist and opportunist-philistine idea that "there is nothing to fight about." On the contrary, not only have the *capitalists* something to fight about now, but they *cannot help* fighting if they want to preserve capitalism, for without a forcible redivision of colonies the *new* imperialist countries cannot obtain the privileges enjoyed by the older (*and weaker*) imperialist powers.

Secondly, why does England's monopoly explain the (temporary) victory of opportunism in England? Because monopoly yields *superprofits*, i.e., a surplus of profits over and above the capitalist profits that are normal and customary all over the world. The capitalists *can* devote a part (and not a small one, at that!) of these superprofits to bribe their *own* workers, to create something like an alliance (remember the famous "alliances" of the English trade unions with their employers described by the Webbs) between the workers of the given nation and their capitalists *against* the other countries. England's industrial monopoly was already destroyed by the end of the nineteenth century. This is beyond dispute. But *how* did this destruction take place? Was it in such a way that *all* monopoly disappeared?

If this were so, Kautsky's "theory" of conciliation (with the opportunists) would to a certain extent be just-

fied. But as a matter of fact it is *not* so. Imperialism is monopoly capitalism. Every cartel, trust, syndicate, every giant bank is a monopoly. Superprofits have not disappeared; they still remain. The exploitation of *all* other countries by one privileged, financially wealthy country remains and has become more intense. A handful of wealthy countries—there are only four of them, if we mean independent, really gigantic, “modern” wealth: England, France, the United States and Germany—have developed monopoly to vast proportions, they obtain *superprofits* running into the hundreds of millions, if not billions, they “ride on the backs” of hundreds and hundreds of millions of people in other countries and fight among themselves for the division of the particularly rich, particularly fat and particularly easy spoils.

This in fact is the economic and political essence of imperialism, the profound contradictions of which Kautsky covers up instead of exposing.

The bourgeoisie of an imperialist “Great” Power *can economically* bribe the upper strata of “its” workers by devoting a hundred million francs a year or so to this purpose, for its *superprofits* most likely amount to about a billion. And how this little sop is divided among the labour ministers, “labour representatives” (remember Engels’ splendid analysis of this term), labour members of war industry committees, labour officials, workers belonging to the narrow craft unions, office employees, etc., etc., is a secondary question.

Between 1848 and 1868, and to a certain extent even later, England alone enjoyed a monopoly: *that is why* opportunism could prevail in England for decades. There were *no* other countries possessing either very rich colonies or an industrial monopoly.

The last third of the nineteenth century was marked by the transition to the new imperialist epoch. Monopoly

is enjoyed by the finance capital *not* of one, but of several, though very few, Great Powers. (In Japan and Russia the monopoly of military power, vast territories, or special facilities for robbing minority nationalities, China, etc., partly supplements, partly takes the place of the monopoly of modern up-to-date finance capital.) This difference explains why England's monopolistic position *could* remain *unchallenged* for decades. The monopoly of modern finance capital is being frantically challenged; the epoch of imperialist wars has begun. Formerly the working class of *one* country could be bribed and corrupted for decades. Now this is improbable, if not impossible. But on the other hand, *every* imperialist "Great" Power can and does bribe *smaller* (compared with 1848-68 in England) strata of the "labour aristocracy." Formerly a "*bourgeois labour party*," to use Engels' remarkably profound expression, could arise only in one country, because it alone enjoyed a monopoly, but on the other hand it could exist for a long time. Now a "*bourgeois labour party*" is *inevitable* and typical in *all* imperialist countries; but in view of the desperate struggle they are waging for the division of spoils, it is improbable that such a party can prevail for long in a number of countries. For the trusts, the financial oligarchy, high prices, etc., while *permitting* the bribery of a handful in the top layers, are increasingly oppressing, crushing, ruining and torturing the *mass* of the proletariat and the semi-proletariat.

On the one hand, there is the tendency of the bourgeoisie and the opportunists to convert a handful of very rich and privileged nations into "eternal" parasites on the body of the rest of mankind, to "rest on the laurels" of the exploitation of Negroes, Hindus, etc., keeping them in subjection with the aid of the excellent technique of extermination provided by modern militarism. On the

other hand, there is the tendency of the *masses*, who are more oppressed than ever and who bear the whole brunt of imperialist wars, to cast off this yoke and to overthrow the bourgeoisie. It is in the struggle between these two tendencies that the history of the labour movement will now inevitably develop. For the first tendency is not accidental, but "based" on economics. The bourgeoisie has already begotten, fostered and secured for itself "bourgeois labour parties" of social-chauvinists in *all* countries. The difference between a definitely formed party, like Bissolati's in Italy, for example, a party that is fully social-imperialist, and let us say, the semiformal near-party of the Potresovs, Gvozdevs, Bulkins, Chkheidzes, Skobelevs, and Co., is an immaterial difference. The important thing is that the economic desertion of a stratum of the labour aristocracy to the bourgeoisie has matured and become an accomplished fact; and this economic fact, this shifting of the relations between classes, will find political form, in one shape or another, without any particular "difficulty."

On the economic basis referred to, the political institutions of modern capitalism—press, parliament, trade unions, congresses, etc.—have created *political* privileges and sops for the respectable, meek, reformist and patriotic office employees and workers corresponding to the economic privileges and sops. Lucrative and soft jobs in the cabinet or on the war industry committee, in parliament and on diverse committees, on the editorial staffs of "respectable," legally published newspapers or on the management councils of no less respectable and "bourgeois law-abiding" trade unions—these are the baits by which the imperialist bourgeoisie attracts and rewards the representatives and adherents of the "bourgeois labour parties."

The mechanics of political democracy work in the same direction. Nothing in our times can be done without



elections; nothing can be done without the masses. And in this era of printing and parliamentarism it is *impossible* to gain the following of the masses without a widely-ramified, systematically-managed, well-equipped system of flattery, lies, fraud, juggling with fashionable and popular catchwords and promising reforms and blessings to the workers right and left—as long as they renounce the revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. I would call this system Lloyd-Georgism, after the name of one of the foremost and most dexterous representatives of this system in the classic land of the “bourgeois labour party,” the English Minister, Lloyd George. A first-class bourgeois manipulator, an astute politician, a popular orator who will deliver any speeches you like, even r-r-revolutionary ones, to a labour audience, and a man who is capable of obtaining fairly large-sized sops for obedient workers in the shape of social reforms (insurance, etc.), Lloyd George serves the bourgeoisie splendidly,\* and serves it precisely *among* the workers, brings its influence *precisely* to the proletariat, to the place where it is most needed and where it is most difficult to capture the masses morally.

And is there such a great difference between Lloyd George and the Scheidemanns, Legiens, Hendersons and Hyndmans, Plekhanovs, Renaudels and Co.? Of the latter, it may be objected, some will return to the revolutionary Socialism of Marx. This is possible, but it is an insignificant difference in degree, if the question is regarded from its political, i.e., its mass aspect. Certain individuals among

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\* I recently read in an English magazine an article by a Tory, a political opponent of Lloyd George, entitled “Lloyd George From the Standpoint of a Tory.” The war opened the eyes of this opponent and made him realize what an excellent servant of the bourgeoisie this Lloyd George is! The Tories have made peace with him.

the present social-chauvinist leaders may return to the proletariat. But the social-chauvinist or (what is the same thing) opportunist *trend* can neither disappear nor "return" to the revolutionary proletariat. Wherever Marxism is popular among the workers, this political trend, this "bourgeois labour party" will swear by the name of Marx. It cannot be prohibited from doing this, just as a trading firm cannot be prohibited from using any particular label, sign, or advertisement. It has always been the case in history that after the death of revolutionary leaders who were popular among the oppressed classes, their enemies have attempted to appropriate their names so as to deceive the oppressed classes.

The fact is that "bourgeois labour parties," as a political phenomenon, have already been formed in *all* the foremost capitalist countries, and that unless a determined and relentless struggle is waged all along the line against these parties—or groups, trends, etc., it is all the same—there can be no question of a struggle against imperialism, or of Marxism, or of a socialist labour movement. The Chkheidze fraction,<sup>38</sup> *Nashe Dyelo* and *Golos Truda*, in Russia, and the O.C.-ists abroad are nothing but varieties of one *such* party. There is not the slightest reason for thinking that these parties will disappear *before* the social revolution. On the contrary, the nearer the revolution approaches, the more strongly it flares up and the more sudden and violent the transitions and leaps in its progress, the greater will be the part played in the labour movement by the struggle of the revolutionary mass stream against the opportunist petty-bourgeois stream. Kautskyism is not an independent current, because it has no roots either in the masses or in the privileged stratum which has deserted to the bourgeoisie. But the danger of Kautskyism lies in the fact that, utilizing the ideology of the past, it endeavours to reconcile the proletariat to the

“bourgeois labour party,” to preserve the unity of the proletariat with that party and thereby enhance the prestige of the latter. The masses no longer follow the lead of the avowed social-chauvinists: Lloyd George has been hissed down at workers’ meetings in England; Hyndman has resigned from the party; the Renaudels and Scheidemanns, the Potresovs and Gvozdevs are protected by the police. The masked defence of the social-chauvinists by the Kautskyites is much more dangerous.

One of the most common sophistries of Kautskyism is its reference to the “masses.” We do not want, they say, to break away from the masses and mass organizations! But just think how Engels put the question. In the nineteenth century the “mass organizations” of the English trade unions were on the side of the bourgeois labour party. Marx and Engels did not reconcile themselves to it on this ground, but exposed it. They did not forget, firstly, that the trade union organizations directly embraced a *minority of the proletariat*. In England then, as in Germany now, not more than one-fifth of the proletariat was organized. It cannot be seriously thought that it is possible to organize the majority of the proletariat under capitalism. Secondly—and this is the main point—it is not so much a question of the size of an organization, as of the real, the objective meaning of its policy: does this policy represent the masses, does it serve the masses, i.e., does it aim at the liberation of the masses from capitalism, or does it represent the interests of the minority, of the minority’s reconciliation with capitalism? The latter was true of England in the nineteenth century, and it is true of Germany, etc., now.

Engels draws a distinction between the “bourgeois labour party” of the *old* trade unions—the privileged minority—and the “*lowest* mass,” the real majority, and he appeals to the latter who are *not* infected by “bour-

geois respectability." This is the essence of Marxist tactics!

We cannot—nor can anybody else—calculate what portion of the proletariat is following and will follow the social-chauvinists and opportunists. This will be revealed only by the struggle, it will be definitely decided only by the socialist revolution. But we know for certain that the "defenders of the fatherland" in the imperialist war *represent* only a minority. And it is therefore our duty, if we wish to remain Socialists, to go down *lower* and *deeper*, to the real masses. This is the whole meaning and the whole purport of the struggle against opportunism. By exposing the fact that the opportunists and social-chauvinists are in reality betraying and selling the interests of the masses, that they are defending the temporary privileges of a minority of the workers, that they are the vehicles of bourgeois ideas and influences, that they are really allies and agents of the bourgeoisie, we teach the masses to realize their true political interests, to fight for Socialism and for the revolution through all the long and painful vicissitudes of imperialist wars and imperialist armistices.

The only Marxist line in the world labour movement is to explain to the masses the inevitability and necessity of breaking with opportunism, to educate them for revolution by waging a relentless struggle against opportunism, to utilize the experiences of the war for the purpose of exposing all the vileness of national-liberal labour politics, and not of concealing it.

In the next article, we shall attempt to sum up the principal features that distinguish this line from Kautskyism.

October 1916

## THE WAR PROGRAM OF THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

(Excerpt)

In Holland, Scandinavia and Switzerland, voices are heard among the revolutionary Social-Democrats who are combating the social-chauvinist lies about "defence of the fatherland" in the present imperialist war, in favour of substituting for the old point in the Social-Democratic minimum program: "militia," or "the armed nation," a new one: "disarmament." The *Jugendinternationale* has inaugurated a discussion on this question and has published in No. 3 an editorial article in favour of disarmament. In R. Grimm's latest theses, we regret to note, there is also a concession to the "disarmament" idea. Discussions have been started in the periodicals *Neues Leben* and *Vorbote*.

Let us examine the position of the advocates of disarmament.

### I

The main argument is that the demand for disarmament is the clearest, most decisive, most consistent expression of the struggle against all militarism and against all war.

But this main argument is precisely the principal error of the advocates of disarmament. Socialists cannot, without ceasing to be Socialists, be opposed to all war.

In the first place, Socialists have never been, nor can they ever be, opposed to revolutionary wars. The bourgeoisie of the "Great" imperialist Powers has become thoroughly reactionary, and we regard the war which *this* bourgeoisie is now waging as a reactionary, slave-owners' and criminal war. But what about a war *against* this bourgeoisie? For example, a war waged by people who are oppressed by and dependent upon this bourgeoisie, by colonial peoples, for their liberation? In the theses of the *Internationale* group, in §5, we read: "In the era of this unbridled imperialism there can be no more national wars of any kind." This is obviously wrong.

The history of the twentieth century, this century of "unbridled imperialism," is replete with colonial wars. But what we Europeans, the imperialist oppressors of the majority of the peoples of the world, with our habitual, despicable European chauvinism, call "colonial wars" are often national wars, or national rebellions of those oppressed peoples. One of the main features of imperialism is that it accelerates the development of capitalism in the most backward countries, and thereby widens and intensifies the struggle against national oppression. This is a fact. It inevitably follows from this that imperialism must often give rise to national wars. *Junius*,<sup>39</sup> who in her pamphlet defends the above-quoted "theses," says that in the imperialist epoch every national war against one of the imperialist Great Powers leads to the intervention of another competing imperialist Great Power and thus, every national war is converted into an imperialist war. But this argument is also wrong. This *may* happen, but it does not always happen. Many colonial wars in the period between 1900 and 1914 did not follow this road. And it would be simply ridiculous if we declared, for instance, that after the present war, if it ends in the extreme exhaustion of all the belligerents, "there can be no" national,

progressive, revolutionary wars "whatever," waged, say, by China in alliance with India, Persia, Siam, etc., against the Great Powers.

To deny all possibility of national wars under imperialism is wrong in theory, obviously mistaken historically, and in practice is tantamount to European chauvinism: we who belong to nations that oppress hundreds of millions of people in Europe, Africa, Asia, etc., must tell the oppressed peoples that it is "impossible" for them to wage war against "our" nations!

Secondly, civil wars are also wars. Whoever recognizes the class struggle cannot fail to recognize civil wars, which in every class society are the natural, and under certain conditions, inevitable continuation, development and intensification of the class struggle. All the great revolutions prove this. To repudiate civil war, or to forget about it, would mean sinking into extreme opportunism and renouncing the socialist revolution.

Thirdly, the victory of Socialism in one country does not at one stroke eliminate all war in general. On the contrary, it presupposes such wars. The development of capitalism proceeds extremely unevenly in the various countries. It cannot be otherwise under the commodity production system. From this it follows irrefutably that Socialism cannot achieve victory simultaneously *in all* countries. It will achieve victory first in one or several countries, while the others will remain bourgeois or prebourgeois for some time. This must not only create friction, but a direct striving on the part of the bourgeoisie of other countries to crush the victorious proletariat of the socialist state. In such cases a war on our part would be a legitimate and just war. It would be a war for Socialism, for the liberation of other nations from the bourgeoisie. Engels was perfectly right when, in his letter to Kautsky, September 12, 1882, he openly admitted that it was

possible for *already victorious* Socialism to wage "defensive wars." What he had in mind was defence of the victorious proletariat against the bourgeoisie of other countries.

Only after we have overthrown, finally vanquished, and expropriated the bourgeoisie of the whole world, and not only of one country, will wars become impossible. And from a scientific point of view it would be utterly wrong and utterly unrevolutionary for us to evade or gloss over the most important thing, namely, that the most difficult task, the one demanding the greatest amount of fighting in the *transition* to Socialism, is to crush the resistance of the bourgeoisie. "Social" parsons and opportunists are always ready to dream about the future peaceful Socialism; but the very thing that distinguishes them from revolutionary Social-Democrats is that they refuse to think about and reflect on the fierce class struggle and class *wars* that are necessary for the achievement of this beautiful future.

We must not allow ourselves to be led astray by words. The term "defence of the fatherland," for instance, is hateful to many, because the avowed opportunists and the Kautskyites use it to cover up and gloss over the lies of the bourgeoisie in the *present* predatory war. This is a fact. It does not follow from this, however, that we must forget to ponder over the meaning of political slogans. Recognizing "defence of the fatherland" in the present war is nothing more nor less than recognizing it as a "just" war, a war in the interests of the proletariat—nothing more nor less, we repeat, because invasions may occur in any war. It would be simply foolish to repudiate "defence of the fatherland" *on the part of* the oppressed nations in their wars *against* the imperialist Great Powers, or on the part of a victorious proletariat in *its* war against some Gallifet of a bourgeois state.



Theoretically, it would be quite wrong to forget that every war is but the continuation of politics by other means; the present imperialist war is the continuation of the imperialist politics of two groups of Great Powers, and these politics were engendered and fostered by the sum-total of the relationships of the imperialist epoch. But this very epoch must also necessarily engender and foster the politics of struggle against national oppression and of the proletarian struggle against the bourgeoisie, and therefore, also the possibility and the inevitability, first, of revolutionary national rebellions and wars; second, of proletarian wars and rebellions *against* the bourgeoisie; and, third, of a combination of both kinds of revolutionary war, etc.

Autumn, 1916

## THE TASKS OF THE PROLETARIAT IN OUR REVOLUTION

(DRAFT OF A PLATFORM FOR THE PROLETARIAN PARTY)

(*Excerpt*)

WHAT SHOULD BE THE NAME OF OUR PARTY—  
ONE THAT WILL BE SCIENTIFICALLY CORRECT  
AND POLITICALLY HELP TO CLARIFY  
THE MIND OF THE PROLETARIAT?

19. I now come to the last point, the name of our Party. We must call ourselves a *Communist Party*—just as Marx and Engels called themselves.

We must repeat that we are Marxists and that we take as our basis the *Communist Manifesto*, which has been distorted and betrayed by the Social-Democrats on two main points: 1) the workers have no country: "defence of the fatherland" in an imperialist war is a betrayal of Socialism; and 2) the Marxist doctrine of the state has been distorted by the Second International.

The name "Social-Democracy" is *scientifically* incorrect, as Marx frequently pointed out, in particular, in the *Critique of the Gotha Program* in 1875, and as Engels reaffirmed in a more popular form in 1894. From capitalism mankind can pass directly only to Socialism, i.e., to the social ownership of the means of production and the distribution of products according to the amount of work performed by each individual. Our Party looks farther ahead: Socialism must inevitably pass gradually

into Communism, upon the banner of which is inscribed the motto, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs."

That is my first argument.

Here is the second: the second part of the name of our Party (*Social-Democrats*) is also scientifically incorrect. Democracy is one of the forms of the *state*, whereas we Marxists are opposed to *all and every kind* of state.

The leaders of the Second International (1889-1914), Messrs. Plekhanov, Kautsky and their like, have vulgarized and distorted Marxism.

The difference between Marxism and anarchism is that Marxism recognizes *the necessity of the state* for the purpose of the transition to Socialism; but (and here is where we differ from Kautsky and Co.) *not a state of the type* of the usual parliamentary bourgeois democratic republic, but a state like the Paris Commune of 1871 and the Soviets of Workers' Deputies of 1905 and 1917.

My third argument: *living reality*, the revolution, has *already actually* established in our country, although in a weak and embryonic form, precisely this new type of "state," which is not a state in the proper sense of the word.

This is *already* a matter of the practical action of the masses, and not merely of theories of the leaders.

The state in the proper sense of the term is the domination of the masses by detachments of armed men separated from the people.

Our new state, *now being born*, is also a state, for we too need detachments of armed men: we too need the *strictest* order, and must *ruthlessly* and forcibly crush all attempts at either a tsarist or a Guchkov-bourgeois counterrevolution.

But our new state, *now being born*, is *no longer* a state in the proper sense of the term, for in many parts of

Russia these detachments of armed men are *the masses themselves*, the entire people, and not certain privileged persons or other placed over the people, and separated from the people, and in practice irremovable.

We must look forward, and not backward to the usual bourgeois type of democracy, which consolidated the rule of the bourgeoisie with the aid of the old, *monarchist* organs of administration, the police, the army and the bureaucracy.

We must look forward to the new democracy which is being born, and which is already ceasing to be a democracy. For democracy means the rule of the people, whereas the armed people cannot rule over themselves.

The term democracy is not only scientifically incorrect when applied to a Communist Party; it has now, since March 1917, simply become a *blinker* put on the eyes of the revolutionary people and *preventing* them from boldly and freely, on their own initiative, building up the new: the Soviets of Workers', Peasants', and all other Deputies, as *the sole power* in the "state" and as the harbinger of the "withering away" of the state *in every form*.

My fourth argument: we must reckon with the actual situation in which Socialism finds itself internationally.

It is not what it was during the years 1871 to 1914, when Marx and Engels consciously reconciled themselves to the inaccurate, opportunist term "Social-Democracy." For *in those days*, after the defeat of the Paris Commune, history made slow organizational and educational work the task of the day. Nothing else was possible. The anarchists were then (as they are now) fundamentally wrong not only theoretically, but also economically and politically. The anarchists misjudged the character of the times, for they failed to understand the world situation: the

worker of England corrupted by imperialist profits, the Commune defeated in Paris, the recent (1871) triumph of the bourgeois national movement in Germany, the age-long sleep of semifeudal Russia.

Marx and Engels gauged the times accurately; they understood the international situation; they understood that the approach to the beginning of the social revolution must be *slow*.

We, in our turn, must also understand the peculiarities and the tasks of the new era. Let us not imitate those sorry Marxists of whom Marx said: "I have sown dragons and have reaped a harvest of fleas."

The objective needs of capitalism grown into imperialism brought about the imperialist war. The war has brought mankind to the *brink of a precipice*, to the brink of the destruction of civilization, of the brutalization and destruction of more millions, countless millions, of human beings.

There *is no* escape except through a proletarian revolution.

And at the very moment when such a revolution is beginning, when it is taking its first timorous, uncertain and groping steps, steps betraying too great a confidence in the bourgeoisie, at such a moment the majority (that is the truth, that is a fact) of the "Social-Democratic" leaders, of the "Social-Democratic" parliamentarians, of the "Social-Democratic" papers—and these are precisely the *organs* that influence the masses—have *deserted* Socialism, have *betrayed* Socialism and have gone over to the side of "their" national bourgeoisies.

The masses have been confused, led astray and deceived by *these* leaders.

And we are to aid and abet that deception by retaining the old and antiquated Party name, which is as decayed as the Second International!

Let it be granted that "many" workers *understand* Social-Democracy in an honest way; but it is time to learn how to distinguish the subjective from the objective.

Subjectively, such Social-Democratic workers are most loyal leaders of the proletarian masses.

Objectively, however, the world situation is such that the old name of our Party *makes it easier* to fool the masses and *impedes* the onward march; for at every step, in every paper, in every parliamentary group, the masses see *leaders*, i.e., the people whose voices carry farthest and whose actions are most conspicuous; yet they are all "also-Social-Democrats," they are all "for unity" with the betrayers of Socialism, with the social-chauvinists; and they are all presenting for payment the old bills issued by "Social-Democracy."...

And what are the arguments against? ... We shall be confused with the Anarchist-Communists, we are told. ...

Why are we not afraid of being confused with the Social-Nationalists, the Social-Liberals, or the Radical-Socialists, the foremost bourgeois party in the French Republic and the most adroit in the bourgeois deception of the masses? ... We are told: The masses have grown used to the name, the workers have come to "love" *their* Social-Democratic Party.

That is the only argument. But it is an argument that discards the science of Marxism, the tasks of the morrow in the revolution, the objective position of world socialism, the shameful collapse of the Second International, and the harm done to the practical cause by the packs of "also-Social-Democrats" who surround the proletarians.

It is an argument of routine, an argument of somnolence, an argument of inertia.

But we are out to rebuild the world. We are out to put an end to the imperialist world war into which hun-

dreds of millions of people have been drawn and in which the interests of billions and billions of capital are involved, a war which cannot end in a truly democratic peace without the greatest proletarian revolution in the history of mankind.

Yet we are afraid of our own selves. We are loth to cast off the "dear old" soiled shirt. . . .

But it is time to cast off the soiled shirt and to don clean linen.

Petrograd, April 10, 1917

## LETTERS ON TACTICS

### FIRST LETTER

#### AN ASSESSMENT OF THE PRESENT SITUATION

(*Excerpt*)

Marxism demands that we should make a most precise and objectively verifiable analysis of the relation of classes and of the concrete peculiarities of each historical situation. We Bolsheviks have always tried faithfully to fulfil this demand, which is absolutely imperative for a scientific foundation of policy.

"Our teaching is not a dogma, but a guide to action," Marx and Engels always said; and they rightly ridiculed the learning by rote and the mere reiteration of "formulas" that at best are capable of giving only an outline of *general* tasks, which are necessarily liable to be modified by the *concrete* economic and political conditions of each particular *phase* of the historical process.

What, then, are the precisely established objective *facts* by which the party of the revolutionary proletariat must be guided at present in defining the tasks and forms of its activity?

Both in my first *Letter from Afar* ("The First Stage of the First Revolution"), published in the *Pravda*, Nos. 14 and 15, March 21 and 22, 1917, and in my theses, I define as the "specific feature of the present situation in Russia" the fact that it is a period of *transition* from the first stage of the revolution to the second. And I there-



fore considered the basic slogan, the "task of the day," at *this* moment to be: "Workers, you have displayed marvels of proletarian heroism, the heroism of the people, in the civil war against tsardom. You must display marvels of organization, organization of the proletariat and of the whole people, in order to prepare the way for your victory in the second stage of the revolution." (*Pravda*, No. 15.)

In what does the first stage consist?

In the transfer of the power of state to the bourgeoisie.

Before the February-March Revolution of 1917, state power in Russia was in the hands of one old class, namely, the feudal landed nobility, headed by Nicholas Romanov.

Now, after that revolution, the power is in the hands of *another* class, a new class, namely, the *bourgeoisie*.

The transfer of state power from one *class* to another *class* is the first, the principal, the basic sign of a *revolution*, both in the strictly scientific and in the practical political meaning of the term.

To this extent, the bourgeois, or the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia *has been completed*.

At this point we hear the clamour of the objectors, of those who so readily call themselves "old Bolsheviks": Did we not always maintain, they say, that the bourgeois-democratic revolution is completed only by the "revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry"? Has the agrarian revolution, which is also a bourgeois-democratic revolution, been completed? Is it not a fact, on the contrary, that it has *not even begun*?

My answer is: The Bolshevik slogans and ideas *in general* have been fully corroborated by history; but *concretely*, things have shaped *differently* from what could have been anticipated (by anyone): they are more original, more peculiar, more variegated.

If we ignored or forgot this fact, we should resemble those "old Bolsheviks" who have more than once played so sorry a part in the history of our Party by reiterating meaninglessly a formula *learnt by rote*, instead of *studying* the specific features of the new and living reality.

"The revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" has *already* become a reality\* in the Russian revolution; for this "formula" envisages only a *relation of classes*, and not a *concrete political institution giving effect* to this relation, to this cooperation. The "Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies"—there you have the "revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" already accomplished in reality.

This formula is already antiquated. Events have transferred it from the realm of formulas to the realm of reality, clothed it in flesh and blood, lent it concrete form, and have *thereby* modified it.

A new and different task now faces us: to effect a split between the proletarian elements (the antidefencist, internationalist, "communist" elements, who stand for a transition to the commune) *within* this dictatorship and the *small-proprietor* or *petty-bourgeois* elements (Chkheidze, Tsereteli, Steklov, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the other revolutionary defencists, who are opposed to moving towards the commune and who are in favour of "supporting" the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois government).

Whoever speaks *now* of a "revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" only is behind the times, has consequently in effect *gone over* to the side of the petty bourgeoisie and is against the proletarian class struggle. He deserves to be consigned to the

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\* In a certain form and to a certain extent.

archive of "Bolshevik" prerevolutionary antiques (which might be called the archive of "old Bolsheviks").

The revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry has already been realized, but in an extremely original form, and with a number of highly important modifications. I will deal with them separately in one of my next letters. For the present it is essential to realize the incontestable truth that a Marxist must take cognizance of actual events, of the precise facts of *reality*, and must not cling to a theory of yesterday, which, like all theories, at best only outlines the main and general, and only *approximates* to an inclusive grasp of the complexities of life.

"Theory, my friend, is grey, but green is the eternal tree of life."

He who continues to regard the "completion" of the bourgeois revolution *in the old way*, sacrifices living Marxism to the dead letter.

According to the old conception, the rule of the proletariat and the peasantry, their dictatorship, can and must come *after* the rule of the bourgeoisie.

But in actual fact, it has *already* turned out *differently*: an extremely original, novel and unprecedented *interlacing of the one with the other* has taken place. We have existing side by side, together, simultaneously, *both* the rule of the bourgeoisie (the government of Lvov and Guchkov) *and* a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, which is *voluntarily* ceding power to the bourgeoisie, voluntarily transforming itself into an appendage of the bourgeoisie.

For it must not be forgotten that in Petrograd the power is actually in the hands of the workers and soldiers: the new government is *not* using and cannot use violence against them, for there is *no* police, *no* army separate

from the people, *no* officialdom standing omnipotently *above* the people. This is a fact; and it is precisely the kind of fact that is characteristic of a state of the type of the Paris Commune. This fact does not fit into the old schemes. One must know how to adapt schemes to facts, instead of reiterating now meaningless words about a "dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" *in general*.

In order the better to illuminate the question, let us approach it from another angle.

A Marxist must not abandon the ground of careful analysis of class relations. The bourgeoisie is in power. But is not the mass of the peasants *also* a bourgeoisie, only of a different stratum, a different kind, a different character? Whence does it follow that *this* stratum *cannot* come to power and thus "complete" the bourgeois-democratic revolution? Why should this be impossible?

That is how the old Bolsheviks often argue.

My reply is that it is quite possible. But, when assessing any given situation, a Marxist must proceed *not* from the possible, but from the actual.

And actuality reveals the *fact* that freely elected soldiers' and peasants' deputies are freely entering the second, parallel government and freely supplementing, developing and completing it. And, just as freely, they are *surrendering* power to the bourgeoisie—which phenomenon does not in the least "contravene" the theory of Marxism, for we have always known and have repeatedly pointed out that the bourgeoisie maintains itself *not* only by force but also by virtue of the lack of class consciousness, the clinging to old habits, the browbeaten state and lack of organization of the masses.

In view of this present-day actuality it is simply ridiculous to turn one's back on the facts and to talk about "possibilities."

It is possible that the peasantry may seize all the land and the entire power. Far from forgetting this possibility, far from confining myself to the present moment only, I definitely and clearly formulate the agrarian program, taking into account the *new* phenomenon, i.e., the deeper cleavage between the agricultural labourers and poor peasants on the one hand, and the well-to-do peasants, on the other.

But there is another possibility; it is possible that the peasants will hearken to the advice of the petty-bourgeois Socialist-Revolutionary Party, which has succumbed to the influence of the bourgeoisie, has gone over to defencism, and which advises waiting until the Constituent Assembly, although the date of its convocation has not yet even been fixed.\*

It is possible that the peasants will *maintain* and prolong their deal with the bourgeoisie, the deal which they have now concluded through the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies not only in form but in fact.

Many things are possible. It would be a profound mistake to forget the agrarian movement and the agrarian program. But it would be equally mistaken to forget *reality*, and reality reveals the *fact* that an *agreement*, or—to use a more exact, less legal, but more class-economic expression—*class collaboration* exists between the bourgeoisie and the peasantry.

When this fact ceases to be a fact, when the peasantry

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\* Lest my words be misinterpreted, I shall anticipate and state at once that I am absolutely in favour of the *Soviets* of Agricultural Labourers and Peasants *immediately* taking over *all* the land; but they should *themselves* observe the strictest order and discipline, not permit the slightest damage to machinery, structures or livestock, and in no case disorganize agriculture and the production of cereals, but rather *develop* them, for the soldiers need *twice* as much bread, and the people must not be allowed to starve.

separates from the bourgeoisie, seizes the land and the power despite the bourgeoisie, that will be a new stage of the bourgeois-democratic revolution; and of that we shall speak separately.

A Marxist who, because of the possibility of such a stage in the future, were to forget his duties *in the present*, when the peasantry is *in agreement* with the bourgeoisie, would become a petty bourgeois. For he would in practice be preaching to the proletariat *confidence* in the petty bourgeoisie ("the petty bourgeoisie, the peasantry, must separate from the bourgeoisie while the bourgeois-democratic revolution is still on"). Because of the "possibility" of so pleasant and sweet a future, in which the peasantry would *not* be the tail of the bourgeoisie, in which the Socialist-Revolutionaries, the Chkheidzes, Tseretelis and Steklovs would *not* be an appendage of the bourgeois government—because of the "possibility" of so pleasant a future, he would be forgetting *the unpleasant present*, in which the peasantry still forms the tail of the bourgeoisie, and in which the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Social-Democrats have not yet given up the role of an appendage of the bourgeois government, His Majesty Lvov's Opposition.

This hypothetical person would resemble a sugary Louis Blanc, or a saccharine Kautskyite, but not a revolutionary Marxist.

But are we not in danger of succumbing to subjectivism, of wanting to "skip" over the bourgeois-democratic revolution—which is not yet completed and has not yet exhausted the peasant movement—to the socialist revolution?

I should be incurring this danger had I said: "No tsar, and a *workers' government*." But I did *not* say that; I said something else. I said that there *can be* no government (apart from a bourgeois government) in Russia *other than*

a government of the Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Labourers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. I said that power in Russia can now pass from Guchkov and Lvov *only* to these Soviets. And the *fact* is that in these Soviets it is the peasants that predominate, it is the soldiers that predominate—it is the petty bourgeoisie that predominates, to use a scientific, Marxist term, a class designation, and not a common, or lay, or occupational designation.

I absolutely insured myself in my theses against skipping over the still existing peasant movement, or the petty-bourgeois movement in general, against any *playing* at the "seizure of power" by a workers' government, against any kind of Blanquist adventurism; for I definitely referred to the experience of the Paris Commune. And this experience, as we know, and as was shown in detail by Marx in 1871 and by Engels in 1891, absolutely excludes Blanquism, absolutely insures the direct, immediate and unquestionable rule of the *majority* and the activity of the masses only to the extent that the action of the majority itself is *conscious*.

In the theses I very definitely reduced the question to one of a *struggle for influence within* the Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Labourers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Deputies. In order to leave no shadow of doubt on this score, I *twice* emphasized in the theses the necessity for patient and persistent "explanatory" work "adapted to the *practical* needs of the *masses*."

Ignorant persons, or renegades from Marxism, like Mr. Plekhanov, may cry anarchism, Blanquism, and so forth. But those who really want to think and learn cannot fail to understand that Blanquism means the seizure of power by a minority, whereas the Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Labourers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies are *admittedly* the direct and immediate organization of the *majority* of the people. Work confined to a struggle

for influence *within* these Soviets cannot, absolutely *cannot*, stray into the swamp of Blanquism. Nor can it stray into the swamp of anarchism, for anarchism denies *the necessity for a state and state power* in the period of *transition* from the rule of the bourgeoisie to the rule of the proletariat, whereas I, with a precision that precludes all possibility of misunderstanding, *insist* on the necessity for a state in this period, although, in accordance with Marx and the experience of the Paris Commune, not the usual bourgeois parliamentary state, but a state *without* a standing army, *without* a police opposed to the people, *without* an officialdom placed above the people.

When Mr. Plekhanov, in his newspaper *Yedinstvo*, cries at the top of his voice that this is anarchism, he is only giving one more proof of his rupture with Marxism. In reply to my challenge in the *Pravda* (No. 26) that he should tell what Marx and Engels taught on the subject of the state in 1871, 1872 and 1875, Mr. Plekhanov is, and will be, obliged to preserve silence on the essence of the question, and indulge instead in outcries after the manner of the enraged bourgeoisie.

Mr. Plekhanov, the ex-Marxist, has *absolutely* failed to understand the Marxist doctrine of the state. Incidentally, the germs of this lack of understanding are to be observed also in his German pamphlet on anarchism.

April 1917



## THE STATE AND REVOLUTION

THE MARXIST TEACHING ON THE STATE AND THE TASKS  
OF THE PROLETARIAT IN THE REVOLUTION

(Excerpts)

### CHAPTER II

#### THE STATE AND REVOLUTION. THE EXPERIENCE OF 1848-51

##### 3. THE PRESENTATION OF THE QUESTION BY MARX IN 1852\*

In 1907, Mehring, in the magazine *Neue Zeit* (Vol. XXV, 2, p. 164), published extracts from a letter from Marx to Weydemeyer dated March 5, 1852. This letter, among other things, contains the following remarkable observation:

“And now as to myself, no credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society, nor yet the struggle between them. Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this struggle of the classes and bourgeois economists the economic anatomy of the classes. What I did that was new was to prove: 1) that the existence of classes is only bound up with particular historical phases in the development of production (*historische Entwicklungsphasen der Produktion*); 2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of

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\* Added in the second edition.

the proletariat; 3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society....”

In these words Marx succeeded in expressing with striking clarity, firstly, the chief and radical difference between his teaching and that of the foremost and most profound thinkers of the bourgeoisie; and, secondly, the essence of his teaching on the state.

It is often said and written that the main point in Marx's teachings is the class struggle; but this is not true. And from this untruth very often springs the opportunist distortion of Marxism, its falsification in such a way as to make it acceptable to the bourgeoisie. For the doctrine of the class struggle was created *not* by Marx, *but* by the bourgeoisie *before* Marx, and generally speaking it is *acceptable* to the bourgeoisie. Those who recognize *only* the class struggle are not yet Marxists; they may be found to be still within the boundaries of bourgeois thinking and bourgeois politics. To confine Marxism to the doctrine of the class struggle means curtailing Marxism, distorting it, reducing it to something which is acceptable to the bourgeoisie. Only he is a Marxist who *extends* the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the *dictatorship of the proletariat*. This is what constitutes the most profound difference between the Marxist and the ordinary petty (as well as big) bourgeois. This is the touchstone on which the *real* understanding and recognition of Marxism is to be tested. And it is not surprising that when the history of Europe brought the working class face to face with this question as a *practical* issue, not only all the opportunists and reformists, but all the “Kautskyites” (people who vacillate between reformism and Marxism) proved to be miserable philistines and petty-bourgeois democrats who *repudiate* the dictatorship of the proletar-

iat. Kautsky's pamphlet, *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, published in August 1918, i.e., long after the first edition of the present book, is a perfect example of petty-bourgeois distortion of Marxism and base renunciation of it *in practice*, while hypocritically recognizing it *in words* (see my pamphlet, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, Petrograd and Moscow, 1918).

Present-day opportunism in the person of its principal representative, the ex-Marxist, K. Kautsky, fits in completely with Marx's characterization of the *bourgeois* position quoted above, for this opportunism limits the recognition of the class struggle to the sphere of bourgeois relationships. (Within this sphere, within its framework, not a single educated liberal will refuse to recognize the class struggle "in principle"!) Opportunism *does not extend* the recognition of class struggle to what is the cardinal point, to the period of *transition* from capitalism to Communism, to the period of the *overthrow* and the complete *abolition* of the bourgeoisie. In reality, this period inevitably is a period of an unprecedentedly violent class struggle in unprecedentedly acute forms and, consequently, during this period the state must inevitably be a state that is democratic *in a new way* (for the proletariat and the propertyless in general) and dictatorial *in a new way* (against the bourgeoisie).

To proceed. The essence of Marx's teaching on the state has been mastered only by those who understand that the dictatorship of a *single* class is necessary not only for every class society in general, not only for the *proletariat* which has overthrown the bourgeoisie, but also for the entire *historical period* which separates capitalism from "classless society," from Communism. The forms of bourgeois states are extremely varied, but their essence is the same: all these states, whatever their form, in the final analysis are inevitably the *dictatorship of the bour-*

*geoisie*. The transition from capitalism to Communism certainly cannot but yield a tremendous abundance and variety of political forms, but the essence will inevitably be the same: *the dictatorship of the proletariat*.

## CHAPTER V

THE ECONOMIC BASIS OF THE WITHERING AWAY  
OF THE STATE

Marx explains this question most thoroughly in his *Critique of the Gotha Program* (letter to Bracke, May 5, 1875, which was not published until 1891 when it was printed in *Neue Zeit*, Vol. IX, 1, and which has appeared in Russian in a special edition). The polemical part of this remarkable work, which contains a criticism of Lassalleism, has, so to speak, overshadowed its positive part, namely, the analysis of the connection between the development of Communism and the withering away of the state.

## 1. PRESENTATION OF THE QUESTION BY MARX

From a superficial comparison of Marx's letter to Bracke of May 5, 1875, with Engels' letter to Bebel of March 28, 1875, which we examined above, it might appear that Marx was much more of a "champion of the state" than Engels, and that the difference of opinion between the two writers on the question of the state was very considerable.

Engels suggested to Bebel that all the chatter about the state be dropped altogether; that the word "state" be eliminated from the program altogether and the word "community" substituted for it. Engels even declared that the Commune was no longer a state in the proper sense

of the word. Yet Marx even spoke of the "future state in Communist society," i.e., as though he recognized the need for the state even under Communism.

But such a view would be fundamentally wrong. A closer examination shows that Marx's and Engels' views on the state and its withering away were completely identical, and that Marx's expression quoted above refers precisely to this state in the process of *withering away*.

Clearly there can be no question of defining the exact moment of the *future* "withering away"—the more so since it will obviously be a lengthy process. The apparent difference between Marx and Engels is due to the fact that they dealt with different subjects and pursued different aims. Engels set out to show Bebel graphically, sharply and in broad outline the utter absurdity of the current prejudices concerning the state (shared to no small degree by Lassalle). Marx only touched upon *this* question in passing, being interested in another subject, viz., the *development* of Communist society.

The whole theory of Marx is the application of the theory of development—in its most consistent, complete, considered and pithy form—to modern capitalism. Naturally, Marx was faced with the problem of applying this theory both to the *forthcoming* collapse of capitalism and to the *future* development of *future* Communism.

On the basis of what *data*, then, can the question of the future development of future Communism be dealt with?

On the basis of the fact that *it has its origin* in capitalism, that it develops historically from capitalism, that it is the result of the action of a social force to which capitalism *gave birth*. There is no trace of an attempt on Marx's part to conjure up a utopia, to make idle guesses about what cannot be known. Marx treats the question of Communism in the same way as a naturalist would treat the

question of the development, say, of a new biological variety, once he knew that such and such was its origin and such and such the exact direction in which it was changing.

Marx, first of all, brushes aside the confusion the Gotha Program brings into the question of the relation between state and society. He writes:

“... ‘Present-day society’ is capitalist society, which exists in all civilized countries, more or less free from medieval admixture, more or less modified by the special historical development of each country, more or less developed. On the other hand, the ‘present-day state’ changes with a country’s frontier. It is different in the Prusso-German Empire from what it is in Switzerland, it is different in England from what it is in the United States. The ‘present-day state’ is, therefore, a fiction.

“Nevertheless, the different states of the different civilized countries, in spite of their manifold diversity of form, all have this in common, that they are based on modern bourgeois society, only one more or less capitalistically developed. They have, therefore, also certain essential features in common. In this sense it is possible to speak of the ‘present-day state,’ in contrast with the future, in which its present root, bourgeois society, will have died off.

“The question then arises: what transformation will the state undergo in communist society? In other words, what social functions will remain in existence there that are analogous to present functions of the state? This question can only be answered scientifically, and one does not get a flea-hop nearer to the problem by a thousandfold combination of the word people with the word state...”

Having thus ridiculed all talk about a "people's state," Marx formulates the question and warns us, as it were, that a scientific answer to it can be secured only by using firmly-established scientific data.

The first fact that has been established with complete exactitude by the whole theory of development, by science as a whole—a fact that was forgotten by the utopians, and is forgotten by the present-day opportunists who are afraid of the socialist revolution—is that, historically, there must undoubtedly be a special stage or a special phase of *transition* from capitalism to Communism.

## 2. THE TRANSITION FROM CAPITALISM TO COMMUNISM

Marx continues:

"...Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. There corresponds to this also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*..."

Marx bases this conclusion on an analysis of the role played by the proletariat in modern capitalist society, on the data concerning the development of this society, and on the irreconcilability of the antagonistic interests of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

Previously the question was put in this way: in order to achieve its emancipation, the proletariat must overthrow the bourgeoisie, win political power and establish its revolutionary dictatorship.

Now the question is put somewhat differently: the transition from capitalist society—which is developing towards Communism—to a communist society is impos-

sible without a "political transition period," and the state in this period can only be the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

What, then, is the relation of this dictatorship to democracy?

We have seen that the *Communist Manifesto* simply places side by side the two concepts: "to raise the proletariat to the position of the ruling class" and "to win the battle of democracy." On the basis of all that has been said above, it is possible to determine more precisely how democracy changes in the transition from capitalism to Communism.

In capitalist society, providing it develops under the most favourable conditions, we have a more or less complete democracy in the democratic republic. But this democracy is always hemmed in by the narrow limits set by capitalist exploitation, and consequently always remains, in reality, a democracy for the minority, only for the propertied classes, only for the rich. Freedom in capitalist society always remains about the same as it was in the ancient Greek republics: freedom for the slaveowners. Owing to the conditions of capitalist exploitation the modern wage slaves are so crushed by want and poverty that "they cannot be bothered with democracy," "they cannot be bothered with politics"; in the ordinary peaceful course of events the majority of the population is debarred from participation in public and political life.

The correctness of this statement is perhaps most clearly confirmed by Germany, precisely because in that country constitutional legality steadily endured for a remarkably long time—for nearly half a century (1871-1914)—and during this period Social-Democracy there was able to achieve far more than in other countries in the way of "utilizing legality," and organized a larger



proportion of the workers into a political party than anywhere else in the world.

What is this largest proportion of politically conscious and active wage slaves that has so far been observed in capitalist society? One million members of the Social-Democratic Party—out of fifteen million wageworkers! Three million organized in trade unions—out of fifteen million!

Democracy for an insignificant minority, democracy for the rich—that is the democracy of capitalist society. If we look more closely into the machinery of capitalist democracy, we shall see everywhere, in the “petty”—supposedly petty—details of the suffrage (residential qualification, exclusion of women, etc.), in the technique of the representative institutions, in the actual obstacles to the right of assembly (public buildings are not for “beggars”!), in the purely capitalist organization of the daily press, etc., etc.—we shall see restriction after restriction upon democracy. These restrictions, exceptions, exclusions, obstacles for the poor, seem slight, especially in the eyes of one who has never known want himself and has never been in close contact with the oppressed classes in their mass life (and nine-tenths, if not ninety-nine hundredths, of the bourgeois publicists and politicians are of this category); but in their sum-total these restrictions exclude and squeeze out the poor from politics, from active participation in democracy.

Marx grasped this *essence* of capitalist democracy splendidly, when, in analyzing the experience of the Commune, he said that the oppressed are allowed once every few years to decide which particular representatives of the oppressing class shall represent and repress them in parliament!

But from this capitalist democracy—that is inevitably narrow, and stealthily pushes aside the poor, and is

therefore hypocritical and false to the core—forward development does not proceed simply, directly and smoothly towards “greater and greater democracy,” as the liberal professors and petty-bourgeois opportunists would have us believe. No, forward development, i.e., towards Communism, proceeds through the dictatorship of the proletariat, and cannot do otherwise, for the *resistance* of the capitalist exploiters cannot be *broken* by anyone else or in any other way.

And the dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e., the organization of the vanguard of the oppressed as the ruling class for the purpose of suppressing the oppressors, cannot result merely in an expansion of democracy. *Simultaneously* with an immense expansion of democracy, which *for the first time* becomes democracy for the poor, democracy for the people, and not democracy for the moneybags, the dictatorship of the proletariat imposes a series of restrictions on the freedom of the oppressors, the exploiters, the capitalists. We must suppress them in order to free humanity from wage slavery, their resistance must be crushed by force; it is clear that where there is suppression, where there is violence, there is no freedom and no democracy.

Engels expressed this splendidly in his letter to Bebel when he said, as the reader will remember, that “the proletariat uses the state not in the interests of freedom but in order to hold down its adversaries, and as soon as it becomes possible to speak of freedom the state as such ceases to exist.”

Democracy for the vast majority of the people, and suppression by force, i.e., exclusion from democracy, of the exploiters and oppressors of the people—this is the change democracy undergoes during the *transition* from capitalism to Communism.

Only in communist society, when the resistance of the

capitalists has been completely crushed, when the capitalists have disappeared, when there are no classes (i.e., when there is no difference between the members of society as regards their relation to the social means of production), *only* then "the state . . . ceases to exist," and it "*becomes possible to speak of freedom.*" Only then will there become possible and be realized a truly complete democracy, democracy without any exceptions whatever. And only then will democracy begin to *wither away*, owing to the simple fact that, freed from capitalist slavery, from the untold horrors, savagery, absurdities and infamies of capitalist exploitation, people will gradually *become accustomed* to observing the elementary rules of social intercourse that have been known for centuries and repeated for thousands of years in all copy-book maxims; they will become accustomed to observing them without force, without compulsion, without subordination, *without the special apparatus* for compulsion which is called the state.

The expression "the state *withers away*" is very well chosen, for it indicates both the gradual and the spontaneous nature of the process. Only habit can, and undoubtedly will, have such an effect; for we see around us on millions of occasions how readily people become accustomed to observing the necessary rules of social intercourse when there is no exploitation, when there is nothing that rouses indignation, nothing that evokes protest and revolt and creates the need for *suppression*.

Thus, in capitalist society we have a democracy that is curtailed, wretched, false; a democracy only for the rich, for the minority. The dictatorship of the proletariat, the period of transition to Communism, will for the first time create democracy for the people, for the majority, along with the necessary suppression of the minority—the exploiters. Communism alone is capable of giving really

complete democracy, and the more complete it is the more quickly will it become unnecessary and wither away of itself.

In other words: under capitalism we have the state in the proper sense of the word, that is, a special machine for the suppression of one class by another, and, what is more, of the majority by the minority. Naturally, to be successful, such an undertaking as the systematic suppression of the exploited majority by the exploiting minority calls for the utmost ferocity and savagery in the work of suppressing, it calls for seas of blood through which mankind has to wade in slavery, serfdom and wage labour.

Furthermore, during the *transition* from capitalism to Communism suppression is *still* necessary; but it is now the suppression of the exploiting minority by the exploited majority. A special apparatus, a special machine for suppression, the "state," is *still* necessary, but this is now a transitional state; it is no longer a state in the proper sense of the word; for the suppression of the minority of exploiters by the majority of the wage slaves of *yesterday* is comparatively so easy, simple and natural a task that it will entail far less bloodshed than the suppression of the risings of slaves, serfs or wage labourers, and it will cost mankind far less. And it is compatible with the extension of democracy to such an overwhelming majority of the population that the need for a *special machine* of suppression will begin to disappear. The exploiters are naturally unable to suppress the people without a highly complex machine for performing this task: but *the people* can suppress the exploiters even with a very simple "machine," almost without a "machine," without a special apparatus, by the simple *organization of the armed masses* (such as the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, let us remark, anticipating somewhat).

Lastly, only Communism makes the state absolutely unnecessary, for there is *nobody* to be suppressed—"nobody" in the sense of a *class*, in the sense of a systematic struggle against a definite section of the population. We are not utopians, and do not in the least deny the possibility and inevitability of excesses on the part of *individual persons*, or the need to suppress *such* excesses. But, in the first place, no special machine, no special apparatus of suppression is needed for this; this will be done by the armed people itself, as simply and as readily as any crowd of civilized people, even in modern society, interferes to put a stop to a scuffle or to prevent a woman from being assaulted. And, secondly, we know that the fundamental social cause of excesses, which consist in the violation of the rules of social intercourse, is the exploitation of the masses, their want and their poverty. With the removal of this chief cause, excesses will inevitably begin to "*wither away*." We do not know how quickly and in what succession, but we know that they will wither away. With their withering away the state will also *wither away*.

Without indulging in utopias, Marx defined more fully what can be defined *now* regarding this future, namely, the difference between the lower and higher phases (levels, stages) of communist society.

### 3. THE FIRST PHASE OF COMMUNIST SOCIETY

In the *Critique of the Gotha Program*, Marx goes into detail to disprove Lassalle's idea that under Socialism the worker will receive the "undiminished" or "full product of his labour." Marx shows that from the whole of the social labour of society there must be deducted a reserve fund, a fund for the expansion of production, for the replacement of the "wear and tear" of machinery, and

so on; then, from the means of consumption there must be deducted a fund for the expenses of administration, for schools, hospitals, homes for the aged, and so on.

Instead of Lassalle's hazy, obscure, general phrase ("the full product of his labour to the worker") Marx makes a sober estimate of exactly how socialist society will have to manage its affairs. Marx proceeds to make a *concrete* analysis of the conditions of life of a society in which there will be no capitalism, and says:

"What we have to deal with here" (in analyzing the program of the workers' party) "is a communist society, not as it has *developed* on its own foundations, but, on the contrary, just as it *emerges* from capitalist society; which is thus in every respect, economically, morally and intellectually, still stamped with the birthmarks of the old society from whose womb it emerges."

And it is this communist society—a society which has just emerged into the light of day out of the womb of capitalism and which, in every respect, bears the birthmarks of the old society—that Marx terms the "first," or lower phase of communist society.

The means of production are no longer the private property of individuals. The means of production belong to the whole of society. Every member of society, performing a certain part of the socially-necessary work, receives a certificate from society to the effect that he has done such and such an amount of work. And with this certificate he receives from the public store of articles of consumption a corresponding quantity of products. After a deduction is made of the amount of labour which goes to the public fund, every worker, therefore, receives from society as much as he has given to it.

"Equality" apparently reigns supreme.

But when Lassalle, having in view such a social order (usually called Socialism, but termed by Marx the first phase of Communism), says that this is "equitable distribution," that this is "the equal right of all members of society to an equal product of labour," Lassalle is erring and Marx exposes his error.

"Equal right," says Marx, we indeed have here; but it is *still* a "bourgeois right," which, like every right, *presupposes inequality*. Every right is an application of an *equal* measure to *different* people who in fact are not alike, are not equal to one another; that is why "equal right" is really a violation of equality and an injustice. Indeed, every man, having performed as much social labour as another, receives an equal share of the social product (after the above-mentioned deductions).

But people are not alike: one is strong, another is weak; one is married, another is not; one has more children, another has less, and so on. And the conclusion Marx draws is:

"...with an equal performance of labour, and hence an equal share in the social consumption fund, one will in fact receive more than another, one will be richer than another, and so on. To avoid all these defects, right instead of being equal would have to be unequal..."

Hence, the first phase of Communism cannot yet produce justice and equality: differences, and unjust differences, in wealth will still exist, but the *exploitation* of man by man will have become impossible, because it will be impossible to seize the *means of production*, the factories, machines, land, etc., as private property. While smashing Lassalle's petty-bourgeois, confused phrases about "equality" and "justice" *in general*, Marx shows the

*course of development* of communist society, which is *compelled* to abolish at first *only* the "injustice" of the means of production having been seized by individuals, and which is *unable* at once to eliminate the other injustice, which consists in the distribution of articles of consumption "according to the amount of labour performed" (and not according to needs).

The vulgar economists, including the bourgeois professors and "our" Tugan among them, constantly reproach the Socialists with forgetting the inequality of people and with "dreaming" of eliminating this inequality. Such a reproach, as we see, only proves the extreme ignorance of Messrs. the bourgeois ideologists.

Marx not only most scrupulously takes account of the inevitable inequality of men, but he also takes into account the fact that the mere conversion of the means of production into the common property of the whole of society (commonly called "Socialism") *does not remove* the defects of distribution and the inequality of "bourgeois right" which *continues to prevail* as long as products are divided "according to the amount of labour performed." Continuing, Marx says:

"...But these defects are inevitable in the first phase of communist society as it is when it has just emerged after prolonged birth pangs from capitalist society. Right can never be higher than the economic structure of society and its cultural development conditioned thereby...."

And so, in the first phase of communist society (usually called Socialism) "bourgeois right" is *not* abolished in its entirety, but only in part, only in proportion to the economic revolution so far attained, i.e., only in respect of the means of production. "Bourgeois right" recognizes them as the private property of individuals. Socialism



converts them into *common* property. *To that extent*—and to that extent alone—“bourgeois right” disappears.

However, it continues to exist as far as its other part is concerned; it continues to exist in the capacity of regulator (determining factor) in the distribution of products and the allotment of labour among the members of society. The socialist principle: “He who does not work, neither shall he eat,” is *already* realized; the other socialist principle: “An equal amount of products for an equal amount of labour,” is also *already* realized. But this is not yet Communism, and it does not yet abolish “bourgeois right,” which gives to unequal individuals, in return for unequal (really unequal) amounts of labour, equal amounts of products.

This is a “defect,” says Marx, but it is unavoidable in the first phase of Communism; for if we are not to indulge in utopianism, we must not think that having overthrown capitalism people will at once learn to work for society *without any standard of right*; and indeed the abolition of capitalism *does not immediately* create the economic premises for *such* a change.

And there is no other standard than that of “bourgeois right.” To this extent, therefore, there still remains the need for a state, which, while safeguarding the public ownership of the means of production, would safeguard equality in labour and equality in the distribution of products.

The state withers away in so far as there are no longer any capitalists, any classes, and, consequently, no *class* can be *suppressed*.

But the state has not yet completely withered away, since there still remains the safeguarding of “bourgeois right,” which sanctifies actual inequality. For the state to wither away completely complete Communism is necessary.

#### 4. THE HIGHER PHASE OF COMMUNIST SOCIETY

Marx continues:

“... In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labour, and therewith also the antithesis between mental and physical labour, has vanished; after labour has become not only a means of life but life's prime want; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-round development of the individual, and all the springs of cooperative wealth flow more abundantly—only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: ‘From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!’”

Only now can we appreciate to the full the correctness of Engels' remarks in which he mercilessly ridiculed the absurdity of combining the words “freedom” and “state.” So long as the state exists there is no freedom. When there will be freedom, there will be no state.

The economic basis for the complete withering away of the state is such a high stage of development of Communism that the antithesis between mental and physical labour disappears when there, consequently, disappears one of the principal sources of modern *social* inequality—a source, moreover, which cannot on any account be removed immediately by the mere conversion of the means of production into public property, by the mere expropriation of the capitalists.

This expropriation will create *the possibility* of an enormous development of the productive forces. And when we see how incredibly capitalism is already *retarding* this development, when we see how much progress could be achieved on the basis of the level of technique

now already attained, we are entitled to say with the fullest confidence that the expropriation of the capitalists will inevitably result in an enormous development of the productive forces of human society. But how rapidly this development will proceed, how soon it will reach the point of breaking away from the division of labour, of doing away with the antithesis between mental and physical labour, of transforming labour into "the prime necessity of life"—we do not and *cannot* know.

That is why we are entitled to speak only of the inevitable withering away of the state, emphasizing the protracted nature of this process and its dependence upon the rapidity of development of the *higher phase* of Communism, and leaving the question of the time required for, or the concrete forms of, the withering away quite open, because there is *no* material for answering these questions.

It will become possible for the state to wither away completely when society adopts the rule: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs," i.e., when people have become so accustomed to observing the fundamental rules of social intercourse and when their labour becomes so productive that they will voluntarily work *according to their ability*. "The narrow horizon of bourgeois right," which compels one to calculate with the coldheartedness of a Shylock whether one has not worked half an hour more than somebody else, whether one is not getting less pay than somebody else—this narrow horizon will then be crossed. There will then be no need for society to regulate the quantity of products to be received by each; each will take freely "according to his needs."

From the bourgeois point of view, it is easy to declare that such a social order is "sheer utopia" and to sneer at the Socialists for promising everyone the right to re-

ceive from society, without any control over the labour of the individual citizen, any quantity of truffles, automobiles, pianos, etc. Even to this day, most bourgeois "savants" confine themselves to sneering in this way, thereby displaying both their ignorance and their mercenary defence of capitalism.

Ignorance—for it has never entered the head of any Socialist to "promise" that the higher phase of the development of Communism will arrive; whereas the great Socialists, in *foreseeing* that it will arrive, presuppose not the present productivity of labour *and not the present* ordinary run of people, who, like the seminary students in Pomyalovsky's stories,<sup>40</sup> are capable of damaging the stocks of public wealth "just for fun," and of demanding the impossible.

Until the "higher" phase of Communism arrives, the Socialists demand the *strictest* control by society *and by the state* of the measure of labour and the measure of consumption; but this control must *start* with the expropriation of the capitalists, with the establishment of workers' control over the capitalists, and must be exercised not by a state of bureaucrats, but by a state of *armed workers*.

The mercenary defence of capitalism by the bourgeois ideologists (and their hangers-on, like Messrs. the Tsere-telis, Chernovs and Co.) consists precisely in that they *substitute* controversies and discussions about the distant future for the vital and burning question of *present-day* politics, viz., the expropriation of the capitalists, the conversion of *all* citizens into workers and employees of *one* huge "syndicate"—the whole state—and the complete subordination of the entire work of this syndicate to a genuinely democratic state, to *the state of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies*.

Actually, when a learned professor, and following him

the philistine, and following him Messrs. the Tseretelis and Chernovs, talk of unreasonable utopias, of the demagogic promises of the Bolsheviks, of the impossibility of "introducing" Socialism, it is the higher stage or phase of Communism they have in mind, which no one has ever promised or even thought to "introduce," because it generally cannot be "introduced."

And this brings us to the question of the scientific difference between Socialism and Communism, which Engels touched on in his above-quoted argument about the incorrectness of the name "Social-Democrat." Politically the difference between the first, or lower, and the higher phase of Communism will in time, probably, be tremendous; but it would be ridiculous to take cognizance of this difference now, under capitalism, and only individual anarchists, perhaps, could invest it with primary importance (if there still remain people among the anarchists who have learned nothing from the "Plekhanovite" conversion of the Kropotkins, the Graveses, the Cornelissens and other "stars" of anarchism into social-chauvinists or "anarcho-trenchists," as Ge, one of the few anarchists who have still preserved a sense of honour and a conscience, has put it).

But the scientific difference between Socialism and Communism is clear. What is usually called Socialism was termed by Marx the "first" or lower phase of communist society. In so far as the means of production become *common* property, the word "Communism" is also applicable here, providing we do not forget that this is *not* complete Communism. The great significance of Marx's explanations is that here, too, he consistently applies materialist dialectics, the theory of development, and regards Communism as something which develops *out of* capitalism. Instead of scholastically invented, "concocted" definitions and fruitless disputes about words (what is

Socialism? what is Communism?), Marx gives an analysis of what might be called the stages of the economic ripeness of Communism.

In its first phase, or first stage, Communism *cannot* as yet be fully ripe economically and entirely free from traditions or traces of capitalism. Hence the interesting phenomenon that Communism in its first phase retains "the narrow horizon of *bourgeois* right." Of course, bourgeois right in regard to the distribution of articles of *consumption* inevitably presupposes the existence of the *bourgeois state*, for right is nothing without an apparatus capable of *enforcing* the observance of the standards of right.

It follows that under Communism there remains for a time not only bourgeois right, but even the bourgeois state—without the bourgeoisie!

This may sound like a paradox or simply a dialectical conundrum, of which Marxism is often accused by people who do not take the slightest trouble to study its extraordinarily profound content.

But as a matter of fact, remnants of the old surviving in the new confront us in life at every step, both in nature and in society. And Marx did not arbitrarily insert a scrap of "bourgeois" right into Communism, but indicated what is economically and politically inevitable in a society emerging *out of the womb* of capitalism.

Democracy is of enormous importance to the working class in its struggle against the capitalists for its emancipation. But democracy is by no means a boundary not to be overstepped; it is only one of the stages on the road from feudalism to capitalism, and from capitalism to Communism.

Democracy means equality. The great significance of the proletariat's struggle for equality and of equality as a slogan will be clear if we correctly interpret it as mean-

ing the abolition of *classes*. But democracy means only *formal* equality. And as soon as equality is achieved for all members of society *in relation to* ownership of the means of production, that is, equality of labour and equality of wages, humanity will inevitably be confronted with the question of advancing farther, from formal equality to actual equality, i.e., to the operation of the rule, "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs." By what stages, by means of what practical measures humanity will proceed to this supreme aim—we do not and cannot know. But it is important to realize how infinitely mendacious is the ordinary bourgeois conception of Socialism as something lifeless, petrified, fixed once for all, whereas in reality *only* under Socialism will a rapid, genuine, really mass forward movement, embracing first the *majority* and then the whole of the population, commence in all spheres of public and personal life.

Democracy is a form of the state, one of its varieties. Consequently, it, like every state, represents on the one hand the organized, systematic use of violence against persons; but on the other hand it signifies the formal recognition of equality of citizens, the equal right of all to determine the structure of, and to administer, the state. This, in turn, results in the fact that, at a certain stage in the development of democracy, it first welds together the class that wages a revolutionary struggle against capitalism—the proletariat, and enables it to crush, smash to atoms, wipe off the face of the earth the bourgeois, even the republican bourgeois, state machine, the standing army, the police and the bureaucracy, and to substitute for them a *more* democratic state machine, but a state machine nevertheless, in the shape of the armed masses of workers who develop into a militia in which the entire population takes part.

Here "quantity turns into quality": *such* a degree of democracy implies overstepping the boundaries of bourgeois society, the beginning of its socialist reconstruction. If really *all* take part in the administration of the state, capitalism cannot retain its hold. And the development of capitalism, in turn, itself creates the *premises* that enable really "all" to take part in the administration of the state. Some of these premises are: universal literacy, which has already been achieved in a number of the most advanced capitalist countries, then the "training and disciplining" of millions of workers by the huge, complex, socialized apparatus of the postal service, railways, big factories, large-scale commerce, banking, etc., etc.

Given these *economic* premises it is quite possible, after the overthrow of the capitalists and the bureaucrats, to proceed immediately, overnight, to supersede them in the *control* of production and distribution, in the work of *keeping account* of labour and products by the armed workers, by the whole of the armed population. (The question of control and accounting should not be confused with the question of the scientifically trained staff of engineers, agronomists and so on. These gentlemen are working today in obedience to the wishes of the capitalists; they will work even better tomorrow in obedience to the wishes of the armed workers.)

Accounting and control—that is the *main* thing required for "arranging" the smooth working, the correct functioning of the *first phase* of communist society. *All* citizens are transformed here into hired employees of the state, which consists of the armed workers. *All* citizens become employees and workers of a *single* nation-wide state "syndicate." All that is required is that they should work equally, do their proper share of work, and get equally paid. The accounting and control necessary for this have been *simplified* by capitalism to the extreme



and reduced to the extraordinarily simple operations—which any literate person can perform—of supervising and recording, knowledge of the four rules of arithmetic, and issuing appropriate receipts.\*

When the *majority* of the people begin independently and everywhere to keep such accounts and maintain such control over the capitalists (now converted into employees) and over the intellectual gentry who preserve their capitalist habits, this control will really become universal, general, popular; and there will be no way of getting away from it, there will be “nowhere to go.”

The whole of society will have become a single office and a single factory, with equality of labour and equality of pay.

But this “factory” discipline, which the proletariat, after defeating the capitalists, after overthrowing the exploiters, will extend to the whole of society is by no means our ideal, or our ultimate goal. It is but a necessary *step* for the purpose of thoroughly purging society of all the infamies and abominations of capitalist exploitation, *and for further progress.*

From the moment all members of society, or even only the vast majority, have learned to administer the state *themselves*, have taken this work into their own hands, have “set going” control over the insignificant minority of capitalists, over the gentry who wish to preserve their capitalist habits and over the workers who have been profoundly corrupted by capitalism—from this moment the need for government of any kind begins to

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\* When most of the functions of the state are reduced to such accounting and control by the workers themselves, it will cease to be a “political state” and the “public functions will lose their political character and be transformed into simple administrative functions” (cf. above, Chapter IV, §2, Engels’ controversy with the anarchists). (See Lenin, *Collected Works*, Fourth Russian Edition, Vol. 25, p. 407.—*Ed.*)

disappear altogether. The more complete the democracy, the nearer the moment approaches when it becomes unnecessary. The more democratic the "state" which consists of the armed workers, and which is "no longer a state in the proper sense of the word," the more rapidly does *every form* of state begin to wither away.\*

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\* Developing further the Marxist-Leninist teaching on the state in the new historical situation, J. V. Stalin formulated the theory of the socialist state and its tasks under the conditions of the victory of Socialism and the building up of Communism.

In his Report to the Eighteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U.(B.) on the work of the Central Committee of the Party, Comrade Stalin said:

"... Lenin wrote his famous book, *The State and Revolution*, in August 1917, that is, a few months before the October Revolution and the establishment of the Soviet State. Lenin considered it the main task of this book to defend Marx's and Engels' teaching on the state from distortion and vulgarization by the opportunists. Lenin was preparing to write a second volume of *The State and Revolution*, in which he intended to sum up the principal lessons of the experience of the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917. There can be no doubt that Lenin intended in the second volume of his book to elaborate and develop the theory of the state on the basis of the experience gained during the existence of Soviet power in our country. Death, however, prevented him from carrying this task into execution. But what Lenin did not manage to do should be done by his disciples.

"The state arose because society split up into antagonistic classes; it arose in order to keep in restraint the exploited majority in the interest of the exploiting minority. The instruments of state power have been mainly concentrated in the army, the punitive organs, the espionage service, the prisons. Two basic functions characterize the activity of the state: at home (the main function), to keep in restraint the exploited majority; abroad (not the main function), to extend the territory of its class, the ruling class, at the expense of the territory of other states, or to defend the territory of its own state from attack by other states. Such was the case in slave society and under feudalism. Such is the case under capitalism.

"In order to overthrow capitalism it was necessary not only to remove the bourgeoisie from power, not only to expropriate the capitalists, but also to smash entirely the bourgeois state machine, its old army, its bureaucratic officialdom and its police force, and to substitute for it a new, proletarian form of state, a new, socialist state. And that, as we know, is exactly what the Bolsheviks did.

For when *all* have learned to administer and actually do independently administer social production, independently keep accounts and exercise control over the idlers,

But it does not at all follow that the new, the proletarian state may not preserve certain functions of the old state, modified to suit the requirements of the proletarian state. Still less does it follow that the forms of our socialist state must remain unchanged, that all the original functions of our state must be fully preserved in future. As a matter of fact, the forms of our state are changing and will continue to change in line with the development of our country and with the changes in the international situation.

"Lenin was absolutely right when he said:

"The forms of bourgeois states are extremely varied, but their essence is the same: all these states, whatever their form, in the final analysis are inevitably the *dictatorship of the bourgeoisie*. The transition from capitalism to Communism certainly cannot but yield a tremendous abundance and variety of political forms, but the essence will inevitably be the same: *the dictatorship of the proletariat*." (Lenin, Vol. XXI, p. 393.)

"Since the October Revolution, our socialist state has passed through two main phases in its development.

"The first phase was the period from the October Revolution to the elimination of the exploiting classes. The principal task in that period was to suppress the resistance of the overthrown classes, to organize the defence of the country against the attack of the interventionists, to restore industry and agriculture, and to prepare the conditions for the elimination of the capitalist elements. Accordingly, in this period our state performed two main functions. The first function was to suppress the overthrown classes inside the country. In this respect our state bore a superficial resemblance to previous states whose function had also been to suppress recalcitrants, with the fundamental difference, however, that our state suppressed the exploiting minority in the interests of the labouring majority, while previous states had suppressed the exploited majority in the interests of the exploiting minority. The second function was to defend the country from foreign attack. In this respect it likewise bore a superficial resemblance to previous states, which also undertook the armed defence of their countries, with the fundamental difference, however, that our state defended from foreign attack the gains of the labouring majority, while previous states in such cases defended the wealth and privileges of the exploiting minority. Our state had yet a third function: this was the work of economic organization and cultural education performed by our state bodies with the purpose of developing the sprouts of the new, socialist economic system and re-educating the people in the spirit

the gentlefolk, the swindlers and suchlike "guardians of capitalist traditions," the escape from this popular ac-

of Socialism. But this new function did not attain any considerable development in that period.

"The second phase was the period from the elimination of the capitalist elements in town and country to the complete victory of the socialist economic system and the adoption of the new Constitution. The principal task in this period was to organize the socialist economic system all over the country and to eliminate the last remnants of the capitalist elements, to organize a cultural revolution, and to form a thoroughly modern army for the defence of the country. And the functions of our socialist state changed accordingly. The function of military suppression inside the country ceased, died away; for exploitation had been abolished, there were no more exploiters left, and so there was no one to suppress. In place of this function of suppression the state acquired the function of protecting socialist property from thieves and pilferers of the people's property. The function of armed defence of the country from foreign attack fully remained; consequently, the Red Army and the Navy also fully remained, as did the punitive organs and the intelligence service, which are indispensable for the detection and punishment of the spies, assassins and wreckers sent into our country by foreign espionage services. The function of economic organization and cultural education by the state organs also remained, and was developed to the full. Now the main task of our state inside the country is the work of peaceful economic organization and cultural education. As for our army, punitive organs, and intelligence service, their edge is no longer turned to the inside of the country but to the outside, against external enemies.

"As you see, we now have an entirely new, socialist state, without precedent in history and differing considerably in form and functions from the socialist state of the first phase.

"But development cannot stop there. We are going on ahead, towards Communism. Will our state remain in the period of Communism also?

"Yes, it will, unless the capitalist encirclement is liquidated, and unless the danger of foreign military attack has been eliminated. Naturally, of course, the forms of our state will again change in conformity with the change in the situation at home and abroad.

"No, it will not remain and will wither away if the capitalist encirclement is liquidated, if it is replaced by a socialist encirclement.

"That is how the question stands with regard to the socialist state." (J. Stalin, *Problems of Leninism*, 11th Russ. ed., pp. 604-06.)  
—Ed.

counting and control will inevitably become so incredibly difficult, such a rare exception, and will probably be accompanied by such swift and severe punishment (for the armed workers are practical men and not sentimental intellectuals, and they will scarcely allow anyone to trifle with them), that the *necessity* of observing the simple, fundamental rules of human intercourse will very soon become a *habit*.

And then the door will be wide open for the transition from the first phase of communist society to its higher phase, and with it to the complete withering away of the state.

August-September 1917

## MARXISM AND INSURRECTION

A LETTER TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE R.S.D.L.P.

One of the most vicious and probably most widespread distortions of Marxism practised by the prevailing "Socialist" parties is the opportunist lie that preparation for insurrection, and generally the treatment of insurrection as an art, is "Blanquism."

Bernstein, the leader of opportunism, has already earned himself a wretched notoriety by accusing Marxism of Blanquism, and when our present-day opportunists cry Blanquism they do not improve on or "enrich" the meagre "ideas" of Bernstein one jot.

Marxists are accused of Blanquism for treating insurrection as an art! Can there be a more flagrant perversion of the truth, when not a single Marxist will deny that it was Marx who expressed himself on this score in the most definite, precise and categorical manner, referring to insurrection precisely as an *art*, and saying that it must be treated as an art, that one must *win* the first success and then proceed from success to success, never ceasing the *offensive* against the enemy, taking advantage of his confusion, etc., etc.?

To be successful, insurrection must rely not upon conspiracy and not upon a party, but upon the advanced class. That is the first point. Insurrection must rely upon a *revolutionary upsurge of the people*. That is the second point. Insurrection must rely upon such a *crucial moment* in the history of the growing revolution when the

activity of the advanced ranks of the people is at its height, and when the *vacillations* in the ranks of the enemy and *in the ranks of the weak, halfhearted and irresolute friends of the revolution* are strongest. That is the third point. And these three conditions for raising the question of insurrection distinguish *Marxism from Blanquism*.

But once these conditions are present, to refuse to treat insurrection as an *art* is a betrayal of Marxism and a betrayal of the revolution.

In order to show that precisely this present moment must be regarded as one in which the Party is *obliged* to admit that *insurrection* has been placed upon the order of the day by the whole course of objective developments, and must treat insurrection as an art, it will perhaps be best to use the method of comparison, and to draw a parallel between July 3-4 and the September days.

On July 3-4 it was possible to argue, without transgressing against the truth, that the correct thing to do was to take power, for our enemies would in any case accuse us of insurrection and ruthlessly treat us as rebels. However, to decide on this account in favour of taking power at that time would have been wrong, because the objective conditions for the victory of the insurrection did not exist.

1) We still lacked the support of the class which is the vanguard of the revolution.

We still did not have a majority among the workers and soldiers of the capitals. Now, we have a majority in both Soviets. It was created *solely* by the history of July and August, by the experience of the "ruthless treatment" meted out to the Bolsheviks, and by the experience of the Kornilov affair.<sup>41</sup>

2) There was no nation-wide revolutionary upsurge at that time. There is now, after the Kornilov affair, as is proved by the situation in the provinces and by the taking over of power by the Soviets in many localities.

3) At that time there was no *vacillation* on any serious political scale among our enemies and among the irresolute petty bourgeoisie. Now the vacillation is enormous. Our main enemy, Allied and world imperialism (for world imperialism is being led by the "Allies"), *has begun to waver* between a war to a victorious finish and a separate peace directed against Russia. Our petty-bourgeois democrats, having clearly lost their majority among the people, have begun to vacillate enormously, and have rejected a bloc, i.e., a coalition, with the Cadets.

4) Therefore, an insurrection on July 3-4 would have been a mistake: we could not have retained power either physically or politically. We could not have retained it physically in spite of the fact that at certain moments Petrograd was in our hands, because at that time our workers and soldiers would not have *fought and died* for the possession of Petrograd. There was not at that time that "savageness," nor that fierce hatred *both of* the Kerenskys *and of* the Tseretelis and Chernovs. Our people had still not been tempered by the experience of the persecution of the Bolsheviks in which the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks participated.

We could not have retained power politically on July 3-4 because *before the Kornilov affair* the army and the provinces might have, and would have, marched against Petrograd.

Now the picture is entirely different.

We have the following of the majority of a *class*, the vanguard of the revolution, the vanguard of the people, which is capable of carrying the masses with it.



We have the following of the *majority* of the people, for Chernov's resignation, while by no means the only symptom, is the most striking and obvious symptom that the peasantry *will not receive land* from the Socialist-Revolutionaries' bloc (or from the Socialist-Revolutionaries themselves). And that is the chief reason for the popular character of the revolution.

We have the advantageous position of a party that firmly knows the path it must follow, whereas *imperialism as a whole* and the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary bloc as a whole are vacillating incredibly.

*Our victory is assured*, for the people are close on desperation, and we are showing the whole people a sure way out; for during the "Kornilov days" we demonstrated to the whole people the value of our leadership, and then we *proposed* to the politicians of the bloc a compromise, *which they rejected*, although their vacillations continue unremittingly.

It would be an utter mistake to think that our offer of a compromise has not *yet* been rejected, and that the "Democratic Conference"<sup>42</sup> may *still* accept it. The compromise was proposed by *a party to parties*; it could not have been proposed in any other way. It was rejected by *parties*.<sup>43</sup> The Democratic Conference is a *conference*, and nothing more. One thing must not be forgotten, namely, that the *majority* of the revolutionary people, the poor and embittered peasantry, are not represented in it. It is a conference of *a minority of the people*—this obvious truth must not be forgotten. It would be an utter mistake, utter parliamentary cretinism on our part, were we to regard the Democratic Conference as a parliament; for even *if it were* to proclaim itself a parliament, and the sovereign parliament of the revolution, all the same it will *decide nothing*. The power of decision lies *outside*

*it*; it lies in the working-class quarters of Petrograd and Moscow.

All the objective conditions for a successful insurrection exist. We have the exceptional advantage of a situation in which *only* our victory in the insurrection can put an end to that most painful thing on earth, vacillation, which has worn the people out; a situation in which *only* our victory in the insurrection can *foil* the game of a separate peace directed against the revolution by publicly proposing a fuller, juster and earlier peace, a peace that will *benefit* the revolution.

Finally, our Party alone *can*, by a victorious insurrection, save Petrograd; for if our proposal for peace is rejected, if we do not secure even an armistice, then *we* shall become "defencists," then we shall place ourselves *at the head of the war parties*, we shall be the "war" party *par excellence*, and we shall conduct the war in a truly revolutionary manner. We shall take away all the bread and boots from the capitalists. We shall leave them only crusts, we shall dress them in bast shoes. We shall send all the bread and footwear to the front.

And then we shall save Petrograd.

The resources, both material and spiritual, for a truly revolutionary war in Russia are still immense; the chances are a hundred to one that the Germans will grant us at least an armistice. And to secure an armistice now would in itself mean to win the *whole world*.

\* \* \*

Having recognized the absolute necessity of an insurrection of the workers of Petrograd and Moscow in order to save the revolution and to save Russia from a "separate" partition by the imperialists of both coalitions, we

must first adapt our political tactics at the Conference to the conditions of the growing insurrection, and, secondly, we must show that our acceptance of Marx's idea that insurrection must be treated as an art is not merely a verbal acceptance.

At the Conference we must immediately form a united Bolshevik group, without striving after numbers, and without fearing to leave the waverers in the camp of the waverers: they are more useful to the cause of the revolution *there* than in the camp of the resolute and devoted fighters.

We must draw up a brief declaration of the Bolsheviks, emphasizing in the most trenchant manner the irrelevance of long speeches and of "speeches" in general, the necessity for immediate action to save the revolution, the absolute necessity for a complete break with the bourgeoisie, for the removal of the whole present government, for a complete rupture with the Anglo-French imperialists, who are preparing a "separate" partition of Russia, and for the immediate transfer of the whole power *to the revolutionary democracy headed by the revolutionary proletariat*.

Our declaration must consist of the briefest and most trenchant formulation of this conclusion in connection with the proposals of the program: peace for the peoples, land for the peasants, confiscation of outrageous profits, and a check on the outrageous sabotage of production by the capitalists.

The briefer and more trenchant the declaration the better. Only two other highly important points must be clearly indicated in it, namely, that the people are worn out by the vacillations, that they are tormented by the irresolution of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks; and that we are definitely breaking with these *parties* because they have betrayed the revolution.

And another thing. By immediately proposing a peace without annexations, by immediately breaking with the Allied imperialists and with all imperialists, either we shall at once obtain an armistice, or the entire revolutionary proletariat will rally to the defence of the country, and a really just, really revolutionary war will then be waged by the revolutionary democracy under the leadership of the proletariat.

Having read this declaration, and having appealed for *decisions* and not talk, for *action* and not resolution-writing, we must *dispatch* our whole group to the *factories and the barracks*. Their place is there, the pulse of life is there, the source of salvation of the revolution is there, and there is the motive force of the Democratic Conference.

There, in ardent and impassioned speeches, we must explain our program and put the alternative: either the Conference adopts it *in its entirety*, or else insurrection. There is no middle course. Delay is impossible. The revolution is perishing.

By putting the question thus, by concentrating our entire group in the factories and barracks, *we shall be able to determine the right moment for launching the insurrection*.

And in order to treat insurrection in a Marxist way, i.e., as an art, we must at the same time, without losing a single moment, organize a *headquarter staff* of the insurgent detachments, distribute our forces, move the reliable regiments to the most important points, surround the Alexandrinsky Theatre, occupy the Peter and Paul Fortress,<sup>44</sup> arrest the general staff and the government, and move against the cadets and the Savage Division such detachments as will rather die than allow the enemy to approach the centres of the city; we must mobilize the armed workers and call them to fight the last desperate

fight, occupy the telegraph and the telephone exchange at once, place *our* headquarter staff of the insurrection at the central telephone exchange and connect it by telephone with all the factories, all the regiments, all the points of armed fighting, etc.

Of course, this is all by way of example, only to *illustrate* the fact that at the present moment it is impossible to remain loyal to Marxism, to remain loyal to the revolution, *without treating insurrection as an art.*

*N. Lenin*

September 1917

## ADVICE OF AN ONLOOKER

I am writing these lines on October 8 and have but little hope that they will reach the Petrograd comrades by the 9th. It is possible that they will arrive too late, since the Congress of the Northern Soviets has been fixed for October 10. Nevertheless, I shall try to give my "Advice of an Onlooker" in the event that the probable action of the workers and soldiers of Petrograd and of the whole "region" will take place soon but has not taken place yet.

It is clear that all power must pass to the Soviets. It should be equally indisputable for every Bolshevik that the revolutionary-proletarian power (or the Bolshevik power—which is now one and the same thing) is assured of the utmost sympathy and unreserved support of all the toilers and exploited all over the world in general, in the warring countries in particular, and among the Russian peasantry especially. There is no point in dwelling on these all too well known and long demonstrated truths.

What must be dwelt on is something that is probably not quite clear to all comrades, viz., that the passing of power to the Soviets now means in practice armed insurrection. This would seem obvious, but not all have pondered or are pondering over the point. To repudiate armed insurrection now would be to repudiate the chief slogan of Bolshevism (All Power to the Soviets) and revolutionary-proletarian internationalism in general.

But armed insurrection is a *special* form of political struggle, one subject to special laws which must be attentively pondered over. Karl Marx expressed this truth with

remarkable saliency when he wrote that armed "*insurrection is an art quite as much as war.*"

Of the principal rules of this art, Marx noted the following:

1) Never *play* with insurrection, but when beginning it firmly realize that you must *go to the end*.

2) Concentrate a *great superiority of forces* at the decisive point, at the decisive moment, otherwise the enemy, who has the advantage of better preparation and organization, will destroy the insurgents.

3) Once the insurrection has begun, you must act with the greatest *determination*, and by all means, without fail, take the *offensive*. "The defensive is the death of every armed rising."

4) You must try to take the enemy by surprise and seize the moment when his forces are scattered.

5) You must strive for *daily* successes, even if small (one might say hourly, if it is the case of one town), and at all costs retain the "*moral ascendancy*."

Marx summed up the lessons of all revolutions in respect to armed insurrection in the words of "Danton, the greatest master of revolutionary policy yet known: *de l'audace, de l'audace, encore de l'audace.*"

Applied to Russia and to October 1917, this means: a simultaneous offensive on Petrograd, as sudden and as rapid as possible, which must without fail be carried out from within and from without, from the working-class quarters and from Finland, from Revel and from Kronstadt, an offensive of the *whole* fleet, the concentration of a *gigantic superiority* of forces over the 15,000 or 20,000 (perhaps more) of our "bourgeois guard" (the officers' schools), our "Vendean troops" (part of the Cossacks), etc.

Our *three* main forces—the navy, the workers, and the army units—must be so combined as to occupy without fail and to hold *at the cost of any sacrifice*: a) the

telephone exchange; b) the telegraph office; c) the railway stations; d) above all, the bridges.

The *most determined* elements (our "shock forces" and *young workers*, as well as the best of the sailors) must be formed into small detachments to occupy all the more important points and to *take part* everywhere in all important operations, for example:

To encircle and cut off Petrograd; to seize it by a combined attack of the navy, the workers, and the troops—a task which requires *art and triple audacity*.

To form detachments composed of the best workers, armed with rifles and bombs, for the purpose of attacking and surrounding the enemy's "centres" (the officers' schools, the telegraph office, the telephone exchange, etc.). Their watchword must be: "*Rather perish to a man than let the enemy pass!*"

Let us hope that if action is decided on, the leaders will successfully apply the great precepts of Danton and Marx.

The success of both the Russian and the world revolution depends on two or three days of fighting.

October 1917



## PROPHETIC WORDS

Nobody, thank God, believes in miracles nowadays. Miraculous prophecy is a fairy tale. But scientific prophecy is a fact. And in these days, when we so very often meet with shameful despondency and even despair round about us, it is useful to recall one scientific prophecy which has come true.

Frederick Engels had occasion in 1887 to write of the coming world war in a preface to a pamphlet by Sigismund Borkheim, *In Memory of the German Arch-Patriots of 1806-1807 (Zur Erinnerung für die deutschen Mordspatrioten 1806-1807)*. (This pamphlet is No. XXIV of the *Social-Democratic Library* published in Göttingen-Zürich in 1888.)

This is how Frederick Engels spoke over thirty years ago of the future world war:

“... No war is any longer possible for Prussia-Germany except a world war and a world war indeed of an extension and violence hitherto undreamt of. Eight to ten millions of soldiers will mutually massacre one another and in doing so devour the whole of Europe until they have stripped it barer than any swarm of locusts has ever done. The devastations of the Thirty Years' War compressed into three or four years, and spread over the whole Continent; famine, pestilence, general demoralization both of the armies and of the mass of the people produced by acute distress; hopeless confusion of our artificial machinery in trade, industry and credit, ending in general bank-

ruptcy; collapse of the old states and their traditional state wisdom to such an extent that crowns will roll by dozens on the pavement and there will be nobody to pick them up; absolute impossibility of foreseeing how it will all end and who will come out of the struggle as victor; only one result absolutely certain: general exhaustion and the establishment of the conditions for the ultimate victory of the working class.

“This is the prospect when the system of mutual out-bidding in armaments, driven to extremities, at last bears its inevitable fruits. This, my lords, princes and statesmen, is where in your wisdom you have brought old Europe. And when nothing more remains to you but to open the last great war dance—that will suit us all right (uns kann es recht sein). The war may perhaps push us temporarily into the background, may wrench from us many a position already conquered. But when you have unfettered forces which you will then no longer be able again to control, things may go as they will: at the end of the tragedy you will be ruined and the victory of the proletariat will either be already achieved or at any rate (doch) inevitable.

“London, December 15, 1887      *Frederick Engels*”

What genius is displayed in this prophecy! And how infinitely rich in ideas is every sentence of this precise, clear, brief and scientific class analysis! How much could be learnt from it by those who are now shamefully succumbing to lack of faith, despondency and despair, if . . . if people who are accustomed to kowtow to the bourgeoisie, or who allow themselves to be frightened by it, could but think, were but capable of thinking!

Some of Engels' predictions have turned out differently: and one could not expect the world and capitalism not to have changed during thirty years of frenzied imperialist development. But what is most astonishing is that so

many of Engels' predictions are turning out "to the letter." For Engels gave a perfectly exact class analysis, and classes and their mutual relations have remained unchanged.

"... the war may perhaps push us temporarily into the background..." Developments have proceeded precisely along these lines, but have gone even further and more badly: some of the social-chauvinists who have been "pushed back," and their spineless "semiopponents," the Kautskyites, have begun to extol their backward movement and have become direct traitors and betrayers of Socialism.

"... The war may perhaps wrench from us many a position already conquered..." A number of "legal" positions have been wrenched from the working class. But on the other hand it has been steeled by trials and is receiving severe but salutary lessons in illegal organization, in illegal struggle and in preparing its forces for a revolutionary attack.

"... Crowns will roll by dozens..." Several crowns have already fallen. And one of them is worth dozens of others—the crown of the autocrat of all the Russias, Nicholas Romanov.

"... Absolute impossibility of foreseeing how it will all end..." After four years of war this absolute impossibility has, if one may say so, become even more absolute.

"... Hopeless confusion of our artificial machinery in trade, industry and credit..." At the end of the fourth year of war this has been fully borne out in the case of one of the biggest and most backward of the states drawn into the war by the capitalists—Russia. But do not the growing starvation in Germany and Austria, the shortage of clothing and raw material and the using up of the means of production show that a similar state of affairs is very rapidly overtaking other countries as well?

Engels depicts the consequences brought about only by "foreign" war; he does not deal with internal, i.e., civil war, without which not a single one of the great revolutions of history has taken place, and without which not a single serious Marxist has conceived the transition from capitalism to Socialism. And while a foreign war may drag on for a certain time without causing "hopeless confusion" in the "artificial machinery" of capitalism, it is obvious that a civil war without such a consequence is quite inconceivable.

What stupidity, what spinelessness—not to say mercenary service to the bourgeoisie—is displayed by those who, like our *Novaya Zhizn*-ists, Mensheviks, Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, etc., while continuing to call themselves "Socialists," maliciously point to the manifestation of this "hopeless confusion" and lay the blame for everything on the revolutionary proletariat, the Soviet power, the "utopia" of the transition to Socialism. The "confusion," or *razrukha*,\* to use the excellent Russian expression, has been brought about by the war. There can be no severe war without disruption. There can be no civil war—the inevitable condition and concomitant of socialist revolution—without disruption. To renounce revolution and Socialism "on account" of disruption, only means to display one's lack of principle and in practice to desert to the bourgeoisie.

"...Famine, pestilence, general demoralization both of the armies and of the mass of the people produced by acute distress...."

How simply and clearly Engels draws this indisputable conclusion, which must be obvious to everyone who is at all capable of reflecting on the objective consequences of many years of severe and painful war. And how aston-

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\* Dislocation, disruption.—Ed.

ishly stupid are those numerous "Social-Democrats" and pseudo Socialists who will not or cannot realize this most simple idea.

Is it conceivable that a war can last many years without both the armies and the masses of the people becoming *demoralized*? Of course, not. Such a consequence of a long war is absolutely inevitable over a period of several years, if not a whole generation. And our "men in mufflers," the bourgeois intellectual snivellers who call themselves "Social-Democrats" and "Socialists," second the bourgeoisie in blaming the revolution for the manifestations of demoralization or for the inevitable sternness of the measures taken to combat particularly acute cases of demoralization—although it is as clear as noonday that this demoralization has been produced by the imperialist war, and that no revolution can rid itself of *such* consequences of war without a long struggle and without a number of stern measures of repression.

Our sugary writers of the *Novaya Zhizn*, the *Vperyod* or the *Dyelo Naroda*<sup>45</sup> are prepared to grant a revolution of the proletariat and other oppressed classes "theoretically," provided only that the revolution drops from heaven and is not born and bred on earth soaked in the blood of four years of imperialist butchery of the peoples and with millions upon millions of men and women exhausted, tormented and demoralized by this butchery.

They had heard and admitted "in theory" that a revolution should be compared to an act of childbirth; but when it came to the point, they disgracefully took fright and their fainthearted whimperings echoed the malicious outbursts of the bourgeoisie against the insurrection of the proletariat. Take the descriptions of childbirth given in literature, when the authors aim at presenting a truthful picture of the severity, pain and horror of the act of travail, as in Emile Zola's *La joie de vivre* (*The Joy of*

*Life*) for instance, or in Veresayev's *Notes of a Doctor*. Human childbirth is an act which transforms the woman into an almost lifeless, bloodstained heap of flesh, tortured, tormented and driven frantic by pain. But can the "type" that sees *only* this in love and its sequel, in the transformation of the woman into a mother, be regarded as a human being? Who would renounce love and procreation for *this* reason?

Travail may be light or severe. Marx and Engels, the founders of scientific Socialism, always said that the transition from capitalism to Socialism would be inevitably accompanied by *prolonged birth pangs*. And analyzing the consequences of a world war, Engels outlines in a simple and clear manner the indisputable and obvious fact that a revolution that follows on and is connected with a war (and still more—let us add for our part—a revolution which breaks out during a war and which is obliged to grow and maintain itself in the midst of a world war), is a *particularly severe* case of childbirth.

Clearly realizing this, Engels speaks with great caution of Socialism being given birth to by a capitalist society which is perishing in a world war. "Only one result (of a world war)," he says, "is absolutely certain: general exhaustion and the *establishment* of the conditions for the ultimate victory of the working class."

This thought is expressed even more clearly at the end of the preface we are examining:

"... At the end of the tragedy you (the capitalists and landlords, the kings and statesmen of the bourgeoisie) will be ruined and the victory of the proletariat will either be already achieved or at any rate inevitable."

Severe travail greatly increases the danger of grave illness or of a fatal issue. But while individuals may die in the act of childbirth, the new society to which the old system gives birth cannot die; all that may happen is that

the birth may be more painful, more prolonged, and growth and development slower.

The war has not yet ended. General exhaustion has already set in. As regards the two *direct* results of war predicted by Engels conditionally (either the victory of the working class already achieved, or the establishment of conditions which will make it inevitable, *despite all difficulties*), as regards these two conditions, now, in the middle of 1918, we find *both* in evidence.

In one, the less developed, of the capitalist countries, the victory of the working class *is already achieved*. In the others, with unparalleled pain and effort, the conditions are being established which will make this victory "at any rate inevitable."

Let the "Socialist" snivellers croak, let the bourgeoisie rage and fume, but only people who shut their eyes so as not to see, and stuff their ears so as not to hear can fail to notice that all over the world the birth pangs of the old capitalist society, which is pregnant with Socialism, have begun. Our country, which has temporarily been advanced by the march of events to the van of the socialist revolution, is undergoing the particularly severe pains of the first period of travail, which has already begun. We have every reason to face the future with complete assurance and absolute confidence, for it is preparing for us new allies and new victories of the socialist revolution in a number of the more advanced countries. We are entitled to be proud and to consider ourselves fortunate that it has been our lot to be the first in one part of the globe to fell that wild beast, capitalism, which has drenched the earth in blood, which has reduced humanity to starvation and demoralization, and which will most certainly soon perish, no matter how monstrous and savage its frenzy in the face of death.

June 29, 1918

## THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION AND THE RENEGADE KAUTSKY

(Excerpt)

### HOW KAUTSKY TRANSFORMED MARX INTO AN ORDINARY LIBERAL

The fundamental question that Kautsky discusses in his pamphlet is that of the root content of proletarian revolution, namely, the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is a question that is of the greatest importance for all countries, especially for the advanced ones, especially for the belligerent countries, and especially at the present time. One may say without fear of exaggeration that this is the most important problem of the entire proletarian class struggle. Hence it is necessary to deal with it with particular attention.

Kautsky formulates the question as follows: "The contrast between the two socialist trends" (i.e., the Bolsheviks and the non-Bolsheviks) is "the contrast between two radically different methods: the *democratic* and the *dictatorial*." (P. 3.)

Let us point out, in passing, that when calling the non-Bolsheviks in Russia, i.e., the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, Socialists, Kautsky was guided by their *appellation*, that is, by a word, and not by the *actual place* they are occupying in the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. What an excellent understanding and application of Marxism! But of this more anon.



At present we must deal with the main point, viz., with Kautsky's great discovery of the "fundamental contrast" between the "democratic and dictatorial methods." That is the crux of the matter; that is the essence of Kautsky's pamphlet. And that is such a monstrous theoretical muddle, such a complete renunciation of Marxism, that Kautsky, it must be confessed, has far excelled Bernstein.

The question of the dictatorship of the proletariat is a question of the relation of the proletarian state to the bourgeois state, of proletarian democracy to bourgeois democracy. One would think that this is as plain as noon-day. But Kautsky, like a schoolmaster who has become as dry as dust from repeating the same old textbooks on history, persistently turns his back on the twentieth century and his face to the eighteenth century, and for the hundredth time, in a number of paragraphs, incredibly tediously chews the old cud over the relation of bourgeois democracy to absolutism and medievalism!

It sounds indeed as if he were chewing rags in his sleep!

But this means that he utterly fails to understand what is what! One cannot help smiling at Kautsky's efforts to make it appear that there are people who preach "contempt for democracy" (p. 11) and so forth. It is by such twaddle that Kautsky finds himself compelled to befog and confuse the issue, for he poses it in the manner of the liberals, speaks of democracy in general, and not of *bourgeois* democracy; he even avoids using this precise, class term, and, instead, tries to speak about "presocialist" democracy. This windbag devotes almost one-third of his pamphlet, twenty pages out of a total of sixty-three, to this twaddle, which is so agreeable to the bourgeoisie, for it is tantamount to embellishing bourgeois democracy, and obscures the question of the proletarian revolution.

But, after all, the title of Kautsky's pamphlet is *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*. Everybody knows that this is the very *essence* of Marx's doctrine; and after a lot of irrelevant twaddle Kautsky *was obliged* to quote Marx's words on the dictatorship of the proletariat.

But the *way* in which he, the "Marxist," did it was simply farcical! Listen to this:

"This view" (which Kautsky dubs "contempt for democracy") "rests upon a single word of Karl Marx's." This is what Kautsky literally says on page 20. And on page 60 the same thing is repeated even in the form that they (the Bolsheviks) "opportunistly recalled the little word" (that is literally what he says—des Wörtchens!!) "about the dictatorship of the proletariat which Marx once used in 1875 in a letter."

Here is Marx's "little word":

"Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. There corresponds to this also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat."

First of all, to call this celebrated proposition of Marx's, which sums up the whole of his revolutionary teaching, "a single word" and even "a little word," is an insult to and complete renunciation of Marxism. It must not be forgotten that Kautsky knows Marx almost by heart, and, judging by all he has written, he has in his desk, or in his head, a number of pigeonholes in which all that was ever written by Marx is most carefully filed so as to be ready at hand for quotation. Kautsky *cannot but know* that both Marx and Engels, in their letters as well as in their published works, *repeatedly* spoke about the dictatorship of the proletariat, before and especially after the Paris Commune. Kautsky cannot but know that the formula "dictatorship of the proletariat" is merely a

more historically concrete and scientifically exact formulation of the proletariat's task of "smashing" the bourgeois state machine, about which both Marx and Engels, in summing up the experience of the Revolution of 1848, and, still more so, of 1871, spoke *for forty years*, between 1852 and 1891.

How is this monstrous distortion of Marxism by that Marxist textualist Kautsky to be explained? As far as the philosophical roots of this phenomenon are concerned, it amounts to the substitution of eclecticism and sophistry for dialectics. Kautsky is a past master in this sort of substitution. Regarded from the standpoint of practical politics, it amounts to subserviency to the opportunists, that is, in the last analysis to the bourgeoisie. Since the outbreak of the war, Kautsky has made increasingly rapid progress in this art of being a Marxist in words and a lackey of the bourgeoisie in deeds, until he has become a virtuoso in it.

One feels still more convinced of this when one examines the remarkable way in which Kautsky "interprets" Marx's "little word" about the dictatorship of the proletariat. Listen:

"Marx, unfortunately, neglected to show us in greater detail how he conceived this dictatorship."... (This is the utterly mendacious phrase of a renegade, for Marx and Engels gave us, indeed, quite a number of most detailed indications, which Kautsky, the Marxist textualist, has deliberately ignored.) "Literally, the word dictatorship means the abolition of democracy. But, of course, taken literally, this word also means the undivided rule of a single person unrestricted by any laws—an autocracy, which differs from despotism only in the fact that it is not regarded as a permanent state institution, but as a transient emergency measure.

"The term, 'dictatorship of the proletariat,' hence not the dictatorship of a single individual, but of a class, ipso facto precludes the possibility that Marx in this connection had in mind a dictatorship in the literal sense of the term.

"He speaks here not of a *form of government*, but of a *condition*, which must necessarily arise wherever the proletariat has gained political power. That Marx in this case did not have in mind a form of government is proved by the fact that he was of the opinion that in England and America the transition might take place peacefully, i.e., in a democratic way." (P. 20.)

We have deliberately quoted this argument in full in order that the reader may clearly see the methods Kautsky the "theoretician" employs.

Kautsky chose to approach the question in such a way as to begin with a definition of the "word" dictatorship.

Very well. Everyone has a sacred right to approach a question in whatever way he pleases. One must only distinguish a serious and honest approach from a dishonest one. Anyone who wanted to be serious in approaching the question in this way ought to have given *his own definition* of the "word." Then the question would have been put fairly and squarely. But Kautsky does not do that. "Literally," he writes, "the word dictatorship means the abolition of democracy."

In the first place, this is not a definition. If Kautsky wanted to avoid giving a definition of the concept dictatorship, why did he choose this particular approach to the question?

Secondly, it is obviously wrong. It is natural for a liberal to speak of "democracy" in general; but a Marxist will never forget to ask: "for what class?" Everyone knows, for instance (and Kautsky the "historian" knows it too), that rebellions, or even strong ferment, among the slaves in antique times at once revealed the fact that the antique state was essentially a *dictatorship of the slave-owners*. Did this dictatorship abolish democracy *among*, and *for*, the slaveowners? Everybody knows that it did not.

Kautsky the "Marxist" said this monstrously absurd and untrue thing because he "*forgot*" the class struggle. . . .

In order to transform Kautsky's liberal and false assertion into a Marxian and true one, one must say: dictatorship does not necessarily mean the abolition of democracy for the class that exercises the dictatorship over the other classes; but it necessarily does mean the abolition (or very material restriction, which is also a form of abolition) of democracy for the class over which, or against which, the dictatorship is exercised.

But, however true this assertion may be, it does not give a definition of dictatorship.

Let us examine Kautsky's next sentence:

"... But, of course, taken literally, this word also means the undivided rule of a single person unrestricted by any laws."

Like a blind puppy casually sniffing first in one direction and then in another, Kautsky accidentally stumbled upon *one* true idea (namely, that dictatorship is rule unrestricted by any laws), *nevertheless*, he *failed* to give a definition of dictatorship, and, moreover, he gave vent to an obvious historical falsehood, viz., that dictatorship means the rule of a single person. This is even grammatically incorrect, since dictatorship may also be exercised by a handful of persons, or by an oligarchy, or by a class, etc.

Kautsky then goes on to point out the difference between dictatorship and despotism, but, although what he says is obviously incorrect, we shall not dwell upon it, as it is wholly irrelevant to the question that interests us. Everyone knows Kautsky's inclination to turn from the twentieth century to the eighteenth, and from the eighteenth century to classical antiquity, and we hope that the German proletariat, after it has attained its dictatorship, will bear this inclination of his in mind and appoint him, say, teacher of ancient history at some high school. To try to evade a definition of the dictatorship of the prole-

variat by philosophizing about despotism is either crass stupidity or very clumsy trickery.

As a result, we find that, having undertaken to discuss the dictatorship, Kautsky rattled off a great deal of manifest lies, but has not given a definition! Yet, without trusting his mental faculties, he might have had recourse to his memory and extracted from his "pigeonholes" all those instances in which Marx speaks of dictatorship. Had he done so, he would certainly have arrived either at the following definition or at one in substance coinciding with it:

Dictatorship is rule based directly upon force and unrestricted by any laws.

The revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat is rule won and maintained by the use of violence by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, rule that is unrestricted by any laws.

And this simple truth, a truth that is as plain as noon-day to every class-conscious worker (who represents the masses, and not an upper stratum of petty-bourgeois scoundrels who have been bribed by the capitalists, such as are the social-imperialists of all countries), this truth, which is obvious to every representative of the exploited classes that are fighting for their emancipation, this truth, which is beyond dispute for every Marxist, has to be "extracted by main force" from the most learned Mr. Kautsky! How is it to be explained? Simply by that spirit of servility with which the leaders of the Second International, who have become contemptible sycophants in the service of the bourgeoisie, are imbued.

Kautsky first committed a sleight of hand by proclaiming the obvious nonsense that the word dictatorship, in its literal sense, means the dictatorship of a single person, and then—on the strength of this sleight of hand!—he declared that "hence" Marx's words about the dictatorship

of a class were *not* meant in the literal sense (but in one in which dictatorship does not imply revolutionary violence, but the "peaceful" winning of a majority under bourgeois—mark you—"democracy").

One must, if you please, distinguish between a "condition" and a "form of government." A wonderfully profound distinction; it is like drawing a distinction between the "condition" of stupidity of a man who reasons foolishly and the "form" of his stupidity.

Kautsky *finds it necessary* to interpret dictatorship as a "condition of rulership" (this is the literal expression he uses on the very next page, p. 21), because then *revolutionary violence, and violent revolution, disappear*. The "condition of rulership" is a condition in which any majority finds itself under . . . "democracy"! Thanks to such a fraudulent trick, *revolution happily disappears!*

But the trick is too crude and will not save Kautsky. One cannot hide the fact that dictatorship presupposes and implies a "condition," one so disagreeable to renegades, of *revolutionary violence* of one class against another. The absurdity of drawing a distinction between a "condition" and a "form of government" becomes patent. To speak of forms of government in this connection is trebly stupid, for every schoolboy knows that monarchy and republic are two different forms of government. It must be explained to Mr. Kautsky that *both* these forms of government, like all transitional "forms of government" under capitalism, are but varieties of the *bourgeois state*, that is, of the *dictatorship of the bourgeoisie*.

Lastly, to speak of forms of government is not only a stupid, but also a very crude falsification of Marx, who was very clearly speaking here of this or that form or type of *state*, and not of forms of government.

The proletarian revolution is impossible without the forcible destruction of the bourgeois state machine and

the substitution for it of a *new one* which, in the words of Engels, is "no longer a state in the proper sense of the word."

But Kautsky finds it necessary to befog and belie all this—his renegade position demands it.

See to what wretched subterfuges he resorts.

First subterfuge. . . . "That Marx in this case did not have in mind a form of government is proved by the fact that he was of the opinion that in England and America a peaceful revolution was possible, i.e., by democratic means."

The *form of government* has absolutely nothing to do with the case here, for there are monarchies which are not typical of the bourgeois *state*, such, for instance, as have no military clique, and there are republics which are quite typical in this respect, such, for instance, as have a military clique and a bureaucracy. This is a universally known historical and political fact, and Kautsky will not succeed in falsifying it.

If Kautsky had wanted to argue in a serious and honest manner he would have asked himself: are there historical laws relating to revolution which know of no exception? And the reply would have been: no, there are no such laws. Such laws only apply to the typical, to what Marx once termed the "ideal," meaning average, normal, typical capitalism.

Further, was there in the seventies anything which made England and America exceptional *in regard to what we are now discussing*? It will be obvious to anyone at all familiar with the requirements of science in regard to the problems of history that this question must be put. To fail to put it is tantamount to falsifying science, to engaging in sophistry. And, the question having been put, there can be no doubt as to the reply: the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat is *violence* against the bour-



geoisie; and the necessity of such violence is *particularly* created, as Marx and Engels have repeatedly explained in detail (especially in *The Civil War in France* and in the preface to it), by the existence of a *military clique and a bureaucracy*. But it is precisely these institutions that were *non-existent* precisely in England and in America and precisely in the 1870's, when Marx made his observations (they *do* exist in England and in America *now*)!

Kautsky has to resort to trickery literally at every step to cover up his apostasy!

And note how he inadvertently betrayed the cloven hoof; he wrote: "peacefully, *that is*, in a *democratic way*"!!

In defining dictatorship, Kautsky tried his utmost to conceal from the reader the fundamental feature of this concept, namely, revolutionary *violence*. But now the truth is out: it is a question of the contrast between *peaceful* and *violent revolutions*.

That is where the trouble lies. Kautsky had to resort to all these subterfuges, sophistries and fraudulent falsifications only in order to *dissociate* himself from *violent* revolution, and to conceal his renunciation of it, his desertion to the *liberal* labour policy, i.e., to the bourgeoisie. That is where the trouble lies.

Kautsky the "historian" so shamelessly falsifies history that he "forgets" the fundamental fact that pre-monopoly capitalism—which reached its zenith actually in the 1870's—was by virtue of its fundamental *economic* traits, which found most typical expression in England and in America, distinguished by a, relatively speaking, maximum fondness for peace and freedom. Imperialism, on the other hand, i.e., monopoly capitalism, which finally matured only in the twentieth century, is, by virtue of its fundamental *economic* traits, distinguished by a

minimum fondness for peace and freedom, and by a maximum and universal development of militarism. To "fail to notice" this in discussing the extent to which a peaceful or violent revolution is typical or probable is to stoop to the position of a most ordinary lackey of the bourgeoisie.

Second subterfuge: The Paris Commune is a dictatorship of the proletariat, but it was elected by *universal* suffrage, i.e., without depriving the bourgeoisie of the franchise, i.e., "*democratically*." And Kautsky says triumphantly: "...The dictatorship of the proletariat was for Marx" (or: according to Marx) "a condition which necessarily follows from pure democracy, if the proletariat forms the majority" (bei überwiegendem Proletariat, S. 21).

This argument of Kautsky's is so amusing that one truly suffers from a veritable *embarras de richesses* (an embarrassment due to the wealth ... of replies that can be made to it). Firstly, it is well known that the flower, the General Staff, the upper strata of the bourgeoisie had fled from Paris to Versailles. In Versailles there was the "Socialist" Louis Blanc—which, by the way, proves the falsity of Kautsky's assertion that "all trends" of Socialism took part in the Paris Commune. Is it not ridiculous to represent the division of the inhabitants of Paris into two belligerent camps, one of which gathered the entire militant and politically active section of the bourgeoisie, as "pure democracy" with "universal suffrage"?

Secondly, the Paris Commune waged war against Versailles as the workers' government of *France* against the bourgeois government. What has "pure democracy" and "universal suffrage" got to do with it, when Paris was deciding the fate of France? When Marx expressed the opinion that the Paris Commune had committed a mistake in failing to seize the bank, which belonged to the

whole of France, did he proceed from the principles and practice of "pure democracy"?

Really, it was obvious that Kautsky was writing in a country where the people are forbidden by the police to laugh "in crowds," otherwise Kautsky would have been killed by ridicule.

Thirdly, I would respectfully remind Mr. Kautsky, who knows Marx and Engels by heart, of the following appreciation of the Paris Commune given by Engels from the point of view of ... "pure democracy":

"Have these gentlemen" (the antiauthoritarians) "ever seen a revolution? A revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing there is; it is the act whereby one part of the population imposes its will upon the other part by means of rifles, bayonets and cannon—authoritarian means, if such there be at all; and if the victorious party does not want to have fought in vain, it must maintain this rule by means of the terror which its arms inspire in the reactionaries. Would the Paris Commune have lasted a single day if it had not made use of this authority of the armed people against the bourgeois? Should we not, on the contrary, reproach it for not having used it freely enough?"

Here you have your "pure democracy"! How Engels would have ridiculed the vulgar petty bourgeois, the "Social-Democrat" (in the French sense of the forties and the general European sense of 1914-18), who took it into his head to talk about "pure democracy" in a society divided into classes!

But enough. It is impossible to enumerate all the various absurdities Kautsky goes to the length of, since every phrase he utters is a bottomless pit of apostasy.

Marx and Engels analyzed the Paris Commune in a most detailed manner and showed that its merit lies in its attempt to *smash, to break up* the "ready-made state

machinery." Marx and Engels considered this conclusion to be so important that this was the *only* amendment they introduced in 1872 in the "obsolete" (in parts) program of the *Communist Manifesto*. Marx and Engels showed that the Paris Commune had abolished the army and the bureaucracy, had abolished *parliamentarism*, had destroyed "that parasitic excrescence, the state," etc.; but the sage Kautsky, donning his nightcap, repeats the fairy tale about "pure democracy," which has been told a thousand times by liberal professors.

Not without reason did Rosa Luxemburg declare, on August 4, 1914, that German Social-Democracy was now a *stinking corpse*.

Third subterfuge: "When we speak of the dictatorship as a form of government we cannot speak of the dictatorship of a class, since a class, as we have already pointed out, can only rule but not govern...." It is "organizations" or "parties" that govern.

That is a muddle, a disgusting muddle, Mr. "Muddle Counsellor"! Dictatorship is not a "form of government"; that is ridiculous nonsense. And Marx does not speak of the "form of government" but of the form or type of *state*. That is something altogether different, altogether different. It is altogether wrong, too, to say that a *class* cannot govern: such an absurdity could only have been uttered by a "parliamentary cretin," who sees nothing but bourgeois parliaments and notices nothing but "ruling parties." Any European country will provide Kautsky with examples of government by a ruling *class*, for instance, by the landlords in the Middle Ages, in spite of their insufficient organization.

To sum up: Kautsky has in a most unparalleled manner distorted the concept dictatorship of the proletariat, and has transformed Marx into an ordinary liberal; that is, he himself has sunk to the level of a liberal who utters

banal phrases about "pure democracy," embellishing and glossing over the class content of *bourgeois* democracy, and shrinking, above all, from the use of *revolutionary violence* by the oppressed class. By so "interpreting" the concept "revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat" as to expunge the revolutionary violence of the oppressed class against its oppressors, Kautsky beat the world record in the liberal distortion of Marx. The renegade Bernstein has proved to be a mere puppy compared with the renegade Kautsky.

October-November 1918

## THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL AND ITS PLACE IN HISTORY

The imperialists of the "Entente" countries are blockading Russia, striving to cut off the Soviet Republic, as a seat of infection, from the capitalist world. These people, who boast about their "democratic" institutions, are so blinded by their hatred of the Soviet Republic that they do not see how ridiculous they are making themselves. Just think, the advanced, most civilized and "democratic" countries, countries armed to the teeth and enjoying undivided military sway over the whole world, are mortally afraid of the *ideological* infection coming from a ruined, starving, backward, and even, as they assert, semisavage country!

Just this contradiction alone is helping to open the eyes of the toiling masses in all countries and to expose the hypocrisy of the imperialists Clemenceau, Lloyd George, Wilson and their governments.

But not only is the blindness of the capitalists caused by their hatred of the Soviets helping us; so also is their bickering among themselves, which induces them to put spokes in each other's wheel. They have entered into a veritable conspiracy of silence, for they are desperately afraid of the spread of true information about the Soviet Republic in general, and of its official documents in particular. Yet, the *Times* (*Le Temps*), principal organ of the French bourgeoisie, has published a report of the foundation in Moscow of the Third, Communist International.

For this we express our most respectful thanks to the principal organ of the French bourgeoisie, to this leader of French chauvinism and imperialism. We are prepared to send an illuminated address to *Le Temps* in token of our appreciation of the effective and able assistance it is giving us.

The manner in which *Le Temps* compiled its report on the basis of our radio broadcasts clearly and fully reveals the motive that prompted this organ of the moneybags. It wanted to have a dig at Wilson, as if to say: Look at the people you allow yourself to negotiate with! The wiseacres who write to the order of the moneybags do not see that their attempt to frighten Wilson with the bogey of the Bolsheviks becomes, in the eyes of the toiling masses, an advertisement for the Bolsheviks. Once more, our most respectful thanks to the organ of the French millionaires!

The Third International has been formed at a time when the world situation is such that no prohibitions, no petty and miserable devices of the "Entente" imperialists or of capitalist lackeys, like the Scheidemanns in Germany and the Renners in Austria, can prevent the spread of news about this International, and of sympathy for it, among the working class of the world. This situation has been brought about by the proletarian revolution, which is manifestly growing everywhere, not daily, but hourly. It has been brought about by the *Soviet* movement among the toiling masses, which has already achieved such strength as to become really *international*.

The First International (1864-72) laid the foundation of an international organization of the workers for the preparation of their revolutionary onslaught on capital. The Second International (1889-1914) was an international organization of the proletarian movement whose

growth was in *breadth*, at the cost of a temporary fall in the revolutionary level, a temporary increase in the strength of opportunism, which in the end led to the disgraceful collapse of this International.

The Third International actually arose in 1918, when the long years of struggle against opportunism and social-chauvinism, especially during the war, led to the formation of Communist parties in a number of countries. Officially, the Third International was founded at its first congress, in March 1919, in Moscow. And the most characteristic feature of this International, its mission to carry out, to put into practice, the precepts of Marxism, and to achieve the age-old ideals of Socialism and the working-class movement—this most characteristic feature of the Third International manifested itself immediately in the fact that the new, third “International Workingmen’s Association” *has already begun to coincide*, to a certain extent, with the *Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*.

The First International laid the foundation of the proletarian, international struggle for Socialism.

The period of the Second International was a period of preparation of the soil for the broad, the mass spread of the movement in a number of countries.

The Third International gathered the fruits of the work of the Second International, discarded its opportunist, social-chauvinist, bourgeois and petty-bourgeois, dross and *has begun to realize* the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The international alliance of the parties which are leading the most revolutionary movement in the world, the movement of the proletariat for the overthrow of the yoke of capital, now rests on an unprecedentedly firm base in the shape of several *Soviet republics*, which are giving embodiment to the dictatorship of the proletariat,



and to its victory over capitalism on an international scale.

The epoch-making significance of the Third, Communist International lies in the fact that it has begun to put into practice Marx's cardinal slogan, the slogan which sums up the centuries of development of Socialism and the working-class movement, the slogan which is expressed in the concept: dictatorship of the proletariat.

This prevision, this theory—the prevision, the theory of a genius—is now becoming a reality.

This Latin phrase has now been translated into the languages of all the peoples of contemporary Europe—more, into all the languages of the world.

A new era in world history has begun.

Mankind is throwing off the last form of slavery: capitalist, or wage slavery.

Emancipating itself from slavery, mankind is for the first time passing to real freedom.

How is it that the first country to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat, to organize a Soviet Republic, was one of the most backward countries of Europe? We shall hardly be wrong if we say that it is precisely this contradiction between the backwardness of Russia and the "leap" she has made across bourgeois democracy to a higher form of democracy, to Soviet, or proletarian democracy—that it was precisely this contradiction that was one of the reasons (apart from the deadweight of opportunist habits and philistine prejudices that burdened the majority of the Socialist leaders) which particularly hindered or retarded an understanding of the role of the Soviets in the West.

The working masses all over the world instinctively grasped the significance of the Soviets as a weapon in the struggle of the proletariat and as a form of the prole-

tarian state. But the "leaders" who were corrupted by opportunism continued, and still continue, to worship bourgeois democracy, which they call "democracy" in general.

Is it surprising that the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat brought out primarily the "contradiction" between the backwardness of Russia and her "leap" *across* bourgeois democracy? It would have been surprising had history granted us the establishment of a *new* form of democracy *without* a number of contradictions.

If any Marxist, or any person indeed who is familiar with modern science in general, were asked whether it was probable that the transition of the various capitalist countries to the dictatorship of the proletariat would be even, harmonious and proportionate, his answer would undoubtedly be: "No." There never has been and never can be such a thing as evenness, or harmoniousness, or proportion in the capitalist world. Each country developed with particular salience, now one, now another aspect or feature or body of characteristics of capitalism and the working-class movement. The process of development was uneven.

At the time when France was making her great bourgeois revolution and rousing the whole continent of Europe to a historically new life, it was England that headed the counterrevolutionary coalition, although she was much more developed capitalistically than France. And the English working-class movement of that period brilliantly anticipated much that the future Marxism was to preach.

At the time when England was giving the world the first broad, truly mass and politically clear-cut proletarian revolutionary movement, Chartism, on the continent of Europe bourgeois revolutions were taking place, most

of them weak; and in France, the first great civil war between proletariat and bourgeoisie broke out. The bourgeoisie defeated the various national detachments of the proletariat one by one, and in different ways in different countries.

England was the model country where, as Engels put it, the bourgeoisie, together with a bourgeoisified aristocracy, produced the most bourgeoisified upper stratum of the proletariat. As far as the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat is concerned this advanced capitalist country lagged several decades. France, as it were, exhausted the strength of the proletariat in two heroic risings of the working class against the bourgeoisie of unusual world-historical significance, in 1848 and 1871. Then the hegemony in the International of the working-class movement passed to Germany, in the 1870's, when Germany lagged economically behind England and France. And when Germany outstripped these two countries economically, i.e., by the second decade of the twentieth century, the Marxist workers' party of Germany, which had been a model for the whole world, proved to be headed by a handful of utter scoundrels, of the most filthy blackguards who had sold themselves to the capitalists—from Scheidemann and Noske to David and Legien, people who had emerged from the ranks of the workers and were the most loathsome hangmen in the service of the monarchy and the counterrevolutionary bourgeoisie.

World history is marching unswervingly toward the dictatorship of the proletariat, but its path toward it is anything but smooth, simple and straight.

When Karl Kautsky was still a Marxist and not the renegade from Marxism he became when he began to champion unity with the Scheidemanns, and bourgeois democracy in opposition to Soviet, or proletarian democracy, he—this was right at the beginning of the twen-

tieth century—wrote an article entitled “The Slavs and Revolution.” In this article he traced the historical conditions that were pointing to the possibility of the hegemony in the international revolutionary movement passing to the Slavs.

And so it has. Hegemony in the revolutionary proletarian International has passed for the time being—but not for long, it goes without saying—to the Russians, just as at various periods of the nineteenth century it was in the hands of the English, then of the French, then of the Germans.

I have had occasion more than once to say that, compared with the advanced countries, it was easier for the Russians to *begin* the great proletarian revolution, but that it will be more difficult for them to *continue* it and carry it to a victorious finish, in the sense of the complete organization of a socialist society.

It was easier for us to begin, firstly, because the unusual—for Europe of the twentieth century—political backwardness of the tsarist monarchy lent unusual impetus to the revolutionary onslaught of the masses. Secondly, Russia’s backwardness merged in a peculiar way the proletarian revolution against the bourgeoisie with the peasant revolution against the landlords. That is where we started in October 1917, and we would not have achieved victory so easily then if we had not started there. As long ago as 1856, Marx spoke, in reference to Prussia, of the possibility of a peculiar combination of proletarian revolution and peasant war. From the beginning of 1905 the Bolsheviks advocated the idea of a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry. Thirdly, the 1905 revolution contributed enormously to the political education of the worker and peasant masses, both in respect to the familiarization of their vanguard with “the last word” in Socialism in the

West, and in respect to the revolutionary *action* of the masses. Without the "dress rehearsal" of 1905, the revolution of 1917—both the bourgeois, February Revolution and the proletarian, October Revolution—would have been impossible. Fourthly, Russia's geographical conditions permitted her to hold out longer than other countries could have against the military superiority of the capitalist, advanced countries. Fifthly, the peculiar relation between the proletariat and the peasantry facilitated the transition from the bourgeois revolution to the socialist revolution, made it easier for the urban proletarians to influence the semiproletarian, poorer sections of the rural toilers. Sixthly, long schooling in strike action and the experience of the European mass working-class movement facilitated—in a profound and rapidly intensifying revolutionary situation—the rise of so unique a form of proletarian revolutionary organization as the *Soviets*.

This list, of course, is incomplete; but it will suffice for the time being.

Soviet, or proletarian, democracy was born in Russia. The Paris Commune was the first epoch-making step; this was the second. The proletarian-peasant Soviet Republic has proved to be the first stable socialist republic in the world. As a *new type of state*, it cannot die. It no longer stands alone.

For the continuance, and completion, of the work of building Socialism, much, very much is still required. Soviet republics in more cultured countries, where the proletariat has greater weight and influence, will have every chance of surpassing Russia once they take the path of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The bankrupt Second International is now dying and rotting alive. Actually, it is playing the role of lackey of the international bourgeoisie. It is a truly yellow Inter-

national. Its most prominent ideological leaders, such as Kautsky, laud *bourgeois* democracy and call it "democracy" in general, or—which is still more stupid and still more crude—"pure democracy."

Bourgeois democracy has outlived its day, just as the Second International has outlived its day, although it performed historically necessary and useful work when the task of the moment was to train the working-class masses within the framework of bourgeois democracy.

Even the most democratic bourgeois republic never was and never could be anything but a machine for the suppression of the toilers by capital, an instrument of the political rule of capital, of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The democratic bourgeois republic promised and proclaimed majority rule, but it could never put this into effect as long as private ownership of the land and other means of production existed.

"Freedom" in the bourgeois-democratic republic was actually freedom *for the rich*. The proletarians and toiling peasants could and should have utilized it for the purpose of preparing their forces for overthrowing capital, for overcoming bourgeois democracy, but *in actual fact* the toiling masses were, as a general rule, unable to enjoy democracy under capitalism.

Soviet, or proletarian, democracy has for the first time in the world created *democracy* for the masses, for the toilers, for the workers and small peasants.

Never before in the world has there been such a state power as the Soviet power, the power of the *majority* of the population, the *actual* rule of the majority.

It suppresses the "freedom" of the exploiters and their accomplices; it deprives them of "freedom" to exploit, "freedom" to batten on starvation, "freedom" to fight for the restoration of the rule of capital, "freedom" to com-

pact with the foreign bourgeoisie against the workers and peasants of their own country.

The Kautskys may champion such freedom, but to do so one must be a renegade from Marxism, a renegade from Socialism.

In nothing is the bankruptcy of the ideological leaders of the Second International, such as Hilferding and Kautsky, so strikingly expressed as in their utter inability to understand the significance of Soviet, or proletarian, democracy, its relation to the Paris Commune, its place in history, its necessity as a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The newspaper *Freedom (Die Freiheit)*, organ of the "Independent" (alias, middle-class, philistine, petty-bourgeois) German Social-Democratic Party, in its issue No. 74, of February 11, 1919, published a manifesto "To the Revolutionary Proletariat of Germany."

This manifesto is signed by the party executive and by all its members in the "National Assembly," the German "Uchredilka."

This manifesto accuses the Scheidemanns of wanting to abolish the *Soviets*, and it proposes—don't laugh!—that the Soviets be *combined* with the Uchredilka, that the Soviets be granted certain rights of state, a certain place in the constitution.

The dictatorship of the bourgeoisie reconciled and united with the dictatorship of the proletariat! How simple! How brilliantly philistine an idea!

The only pity is that this was tried already in Russia, under Kerensky, by the united Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, those petty-bourgeois democrats who imagine themselves Socialists.

Whoever has read Marx and has not understood that in capitalist society, at every acute moment, in every serious conflict of classes, the only thing possible is the

dictatorship of the bourgeoisie or the dictatorship of the proletariat, has understood nothing either of Marx's economic or political doctrines.

But the brilliantly philistine idea of Hilferding, Kautsky and Co. of peacefully combining the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the dictatorship of the proletariat requires separate examination, if the economic and political absurdities with which this most remarkable and comical manifesto of February 11 is loaded are to be exhaustively treated. It will have to be put off for another article.<sup>46</sup>

Moscow, April 15, 1919



## GREETINGS TO THE HUNGARIAN WORKERS

Comrades, the news we have been receiving from the Hungarian Soviet leaders fills us with delight and joy. The Soviet power has been in existence in Hungary for only a little over two months, yet as regards organization the Hungarian proletariat already seems to have excelled us. That is understandable, for in Hungary the general cultural level of the population is higher; furthermore, the proportion of industrial workers to the total population is immeasurably greater (Budapest with its three million of the eight million population of present-day Hungary), and, lastly, in Hungary the transition to the Soviet system, to the dictatorship of the proletariat, was incomparably easier and more peaceful.

This last circumstance is particularly important. The majority of the European Socialist leaders, both the social-chauvinists and the Kautsky trend, have become so much a prey to purely philistine prejudices, fostered by decades of relatively "peaceful" capitalism and bourgeois parliamentarism, that they are unable to understand what Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat mean. The proletariat cannot perform its epoch-making emancipatory mission unless it removes these leaders from its path, unless it sweeps them out of its way. These people believed, or half-believed, the bourgeois lies about the Soviet regime in Russia and were unable to distinguish the essence of the new, proletarian democracy—democracy for the working people, socialist democracy, as embodied in Soviet government—from bourgeois democracy,

which they slavishly worship and call "pure democracy" or "democracy" in general.

These purblind people stuffed with bourgeois prejudices failed to understand the epoch-making swing from bourgeois to proletarian democracy, from bourgeois to proletarian dictatorship. They confused certain peculiarities of Russian Soviet government, of Russian history and its development, with Soviet government as an international category.

The Hungarian proletarian revolution is helping even the blind to see. The form of transition to the dictatorship of the proletariat in Hungary is altogether different from that in Russia: the voluntary resignation of the bourgeois government, and the instantaneous restoration of the unity of the working class, the unification of the Socialist movement *on a Communist program*. This makes the essence of Soviet government all the clearer: nowhere in the world is any form of government, supported by the working people and by the proletariat heading them, possible now except Soviet government, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

This dictatorship presupposes the ruthlessly severe, swift and resolute use of force to crush the resistance of the exploiters, of the capitalists, landlords and their underlings. Whoever does not understand this is not a revolutionary, and must be removed from the post of leader or adviser of the proletariat.

But the essence of proletarian dictatorship does not lie in force alone, or even mainly in force. Its quintessence is the organization and discipline of the advanced detachment of the working people, of their vanguard, their sole leader, the proletariat, whose object is to build Socialism, to abolish the division of society into classes, to make all members of society working people, to remove the basis for any kind of exploitation of man by

man. This object cannot be achieved at one stroke. It requires a fairly long period of transition from capitalism to Socialism, because the reorganization of production is a difficult matter, because radical changes in all spheres of life need time, and because the enormous force of habit of petty-bourgeois and bourgeois dealings can be overcome only by a long and stubborn struggle. That is why Marx spoke of an entire period of the dictatorship of the proletariat, as the period of transition from capitalism to Socialism.

Throughout the whole of this transition period resistance to the revolution will be offered both by the capitalists and by their numerous myrmidons among the bourgeois intelligentsia, who will resist consciously, and by the vast mass of the working people, including the peasants, who are overwhelmed by petty-bourgeois habits and traditions, and who for the most part will resist unconsciously. Vacillations among these strata are inevitable. As a toiler the peasant gravitates towards Socialism, and prefers the dictatorship of the workers to the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. As a seller of grain, the peasant gravitates towards the bourgeoisie, towards freedom of trade, i.e., back to the "habitual," old, "time-hallowed" capitalism.

What is needed to enable the proletariat to *lead* the peasantry and the petty-bourgeois strata in general is the dictatorship of the proletariat, the rule of one class, its strength of organization and discipline, its centralized power based on all the achievements of the culture, science and technology of capitalism, its proletarian affinity to the mentality of every toiler, its prestige with the scattered, less developed toilers in the countryside or in petty industry, who are less firm in politics. Here phrasemongering about "democracy" in general, about "unity" or the "unity of the labouring democracy," about the "equality"

of all "men of labour," and so on and so forth—phrasemongering for which the petty-bourgeoisified social-chauvinists and Kautskyites have such a predilection—is of no use whatever. Phrasemongering only throws dust in the eyes, blinds the mind and strengthens the old stupidity, conservatism, and routine of capitalism, parliamentarism and bourgeois democracy.

The abolition of classes requires a long, difficult and stubborn *class struggle*, which, *after* the overthrow of the power of capital, *after* the destruction of the bourgeois state, *after* the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, *does not disappear* (as the vulgar representatives of the old Socialism and the old Social-Democracy imagine), but merely changes its forms and in many respects becomes more fierce.

By means of a class struggle against the resistance of the bourgeoisie, against the conservatism, routine, irresolution and vacillation of the petty bourgeoisie, the proletariat must uphold its power, strengthen its organizing influence, "neutralize" those strata which fear to leave the bourgeoisie and which follow the proletariat too hesitantly, and consolidate the new discipline, the comradely discipline of the working people, their firm tie with the proletariat, their union around the proletariat—that new discipline, that new basis of social ties which replaces the serf discipline of the Middle Ages and the discipline of starvation, the discipline of "free" wage slavery under capitalism.

In order to abolish classes a period of dictatorship of one class is needed, the dictatorship of precisely that oppressed class which is capable not only of overthrowing the exploiters, not only of ruthlessly crushing their resistance, but also of breaking intellectually with the entire bourgeois-democratic ideology, with all the philistine phrasemongering about liberty and equality in gen-

eral (in reality, this phrasemongering implies, as Marx demonstrated long ago, the "liberty and equality" of the *commodity owners*, the "liberty and equality" of the *capitalist and the worker*).

More, only that oppressed class is capable of abolishing classes by its dictatorship which has been schooled, united, trained and steeled by decades of strike and political struggle against capital—only that class which has assimilated all the urban, industrial, big-capitalistic culture and has the determination and ability to protect it and to preserve and further develop all its achievements, and make them available to all the people, to all the toilers—only that class which will be able to stand all the hardships, trials, privations and great sacrifices which history inevitably imposes upon those who break with the past and boldly hew a road for themselves to a new future—only that class whose finest members are filled with hatred and contempt for everything which is petty bourgeois and philistine, for those qualities which flourish so profusely among the petty bourgeoisie, the minor employees and the "intelligentsia"—only that class which "has been through the hardening school of labour" and is able to inspire respect for its efficiency in every toiler and every honest man.

Comrades, Hungarian workers, you have set the world an even better example than Soviet Russia by having been able at once to unite all Socialists on the platform of genuine proletarian dictatorship. You are now faced with the most grateful and most difficult task of holding your own in a rigorous war against the Entente. Be firm. If vacillation should manifest itself among the Socialists who only yesterday gave their adherence to you, to the dictatorship of the proletariat, or among the petty bourgeoisie, suppress it ruthlessly. The lawful fate of the coward in war is the bullet.

You are waging the only legitimate, just and truly revolutionary war, a war of the oppressed against the oppressors, a war of the working people against the exploiters, a war for the victory of Socialism. All honest members of the working class all over the world are on your side. Every month brings the world proletarian revolution nearer.

Be firm! Victory will be yours!

May 27, 1919

## A GREAT BEGINNING

HEROISM OF THE WORKERS IN THE REAR.  
"COMMUNIST SUBBOTNIKS"

*(Excerpt)*

I have given the information about the communist subbotniks in the fullest and most detailed manner because in this we undoubtedly observe one of the most important aspects of communist construction, to which our press pays insufficient attention, and which all of us have as yet failed properly to appreciate.

Less political fireworks and more attention to the simplest but living facts of communist construction, taken from and tested by actual life—this is the slogan which all of us, our writers, agitators, propagandists, organizers, etc., should repeat unceasingly.

It was natural and inevitable in the first period after the proletarian revolution that we should be engaged primarily on the main and fundamental task of overcoming the resistance of the bourgeoisie, of vanquishing the exploiters, of crushing their conspiracy (like the "slaveowners' conspiracy" to surrender Petrograd, in which all from the Black Hundreds and Cadets to the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries were involved). But simultaneously with this task, another task comes to the forefront just as inevitably and ever more imperatively as time goes on, viz., the more important task of positive communist construction, the creation of new economic relations, of a new society.

As I have had occasion to point out more than once, particularly in the speech I delivered at the meeting of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies on March 12,<sup>47</sup> the dictatorship of the proletariat is not only the use of force against the exploiters, and not even mainly the use of force. The economic foundation of this use of revolutionary force, the guarantee of its effectiveness and success is the fact that the proletariat represents and creates a higher type of social organization of labour compared with capitalism. This is the essence. This is the source of the strength and the guarantee of the inevitable complete triumph of Communism.

The feudal organization of social labour rested on the discipline of the bludgeon, while the toilers, robbed and tyrannized over by a handful of landlords, were utterly ignorant and downtrodden. The capitalist organization of social labour rested on the discipline of hunger, and, notwithstanding all the progress of bourgeois culture and bourgeois democracy, the vast mass of the toilers in the most advanced, civilized and democratic republics remained an ignorant and downtrodden mass of wage slaves, or oppressed peasants, robbed and tyrannized over by a handful of capitalists. The communist organization of social labour, the first step towards which is Socialism, rests, and will do so more and more as time goes on, on the free and conscious discipline of the toilers themselves who have thrown off the yoke both of the landlords and capitalists.

This new discipline does not drop from the skies, nor is it born from pious wishes; it grows out of the material conditions of large-scale capitalist production, and out of them alone. Without them it is impossible. And the repository, or the vehicle, of these material conditions is a definite historical class, created, organized,



united, trained, educated and hardened by large-scale capitalism. This class is the proletariat.

If we translate the Latin, scientific, historical-philosophical term "dictatorship of the proletariat" into simpler language, it means just the following:

Only a definite class, namely, the urban workers and the factory, industrial workers in general, is able to lead the whole mass of the toilers and exploited in the struggle for the overthrow of the yoke of capital, in the process of this overthrow, in the struggle to maintain and consolidate the victory, in the work of creating the new, socialist social system, in the whole struggle for the complete abolition of classes. (Let us observe in parenthesis that the only scientific distinction between Socialism and Communism is that the first term implies the first stage of the new society arising out of capitalism, while the second implies the next and higher stage.)

The mistake the "Berne"<sup>48</sup> yellow International makes is that its leaders accept the class struggle and the leading role of the proletariat only in word and are afraid to think it out to its logical conclusion. They are afraid of that inevitable conclusion which particularly terrifies the bourgeoisie, and which is absolutely unacceptable to it. They are afraid to admit that the dictatorship of the proletariat is *also* a period of class struggle, which is inevitable as long as classes have not been abolished, and which changes in form, being particularly fierce and particularly peculiar in the period immediately following the overthrow of capital. The proletariat does not cease the class struggle after it has captured political power, but continues it until classes are abolished—of course, under different circumstances, in different form and by different means.

And what does the "abolition of classes" mean? All those who call themselves Socialists recognize this as

the ultimate goal of Socialism, but by no means all ponder over its significance. Classes are large groups of people which differ from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated in law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organization of labour, and, consequently, by the dimensions and mode of acquiring the share of social wealth of which they dispose. Classes are groups of people one of which can appropriate the labour of another owing to the different places they occupy in a definite system of social economy.

Clearly, in order to abolish classes completely, it is not enough to overthrow the exploiters, the landlords and capitalists, not enough to abolish *their* rights of ownership; it is necessary also to abolish *all* private ownership of the means of production, it is necessary to abolish the distinction between town and country, as well as the distinction between manual workers and brain workers. This requires a very long period of time. In order to achieve this an enormous step forward must be taken in developing the productive forces; it is necessary to overcome the resistance (frequently passive, which is particularly stubborn and particularly difficult to overcome) of the numerous survivals of small production; it is necessary to overcome the enormous force of habit and conservatism which are connected with these survivals.

The assumption that all "toilers" are equally capable of doing this work would be an empty phrase, or the illusion of an antediluvian, pre-Marxian socialist; for this ability does not come of itself, but grows historically, and grows *only* out of the material conditions of large-scale capitalist production. This ability, at the beginning of the road from capitalism to Socialism, is pos-

essed by the proletariat *alone*. It is capable of fulfilling the gigantic task that confronts it, first, because it is the strongest and most advanced class in civilized societies; second, because in the most developed countries it constitutes the majority of the population, and third, because in backward capitalist countries, like Russia, the majority of the population consists of semiproletarians, i.e., of people who regularly live in a proletarian way part of the year, who regularly earn a part of their means of subsistence as wageworkers in capitalist enterprises.

Those who try to solve the problems involved in the transition from capitalism to Socialism on the basis of general talk about liberty, equality, democracy in general, equality of the labouring democracy, etc., (as Kautsky, Martov and other heroes of the Berne yellow International do), thereby only reveal their petty-bourgeois, philistine nature and ideologically slavishly follow in the wake of the bourgeoisie. The correct solution of this problem can be found only in a concrete study of the specific relations between the specific class which has conquered political power, namely, the proletariat, and the whole nonproletarian, and also semiproletarian, mass of the toiling population—relations which do not take shape in fantastically harmonious, “ideal” conditions, but in the real conditions of the frantic resistance of the bourgeoisie which assumes many and diverse forms.

The vast majority of the population—and all the more so of the toiling population—of any capitalist country, including Russia, have thousands of times experienced, themselves and through their kith and kin, the oppression, the robbery and every sort of tyranny of capitalism. The imperialist war, i.e., the slaughter of ten million people in order to decide whether British or German capital was to have supremacy in plundering the whole world, intensified, increased and deepened

these ordeals exceedingly, and made the people realize their meaning. Hence the inevitable sympathy displayed by the vast majority of the population, particularly the toiling masses, for the proletariat, because it is with heroic courage and revolutionary ruthlessness overthrowing the yoke of capital, overthrowing the exploiters, suppressing their resistance, and shedding its blood to pave the road for the creation of the new society, in which there will be no room for exploiters.

Great and inevitable as may be their petty-bourgeois waverings and vacillations back to the bourgeois "order," under the "wing" of the bourgeoisie, the nonproletarian and semiproletarian masses of the toiling population cannot but recognize the moral and political authority of the proletariat, which is not only overthrowing the exploiters and suppressing their resistance, but is building a new and higher social tie, a social discipline, the discipline of class-conscious and united working people, who know no yoke, and no authority except the authority of their own unity, of their own, more class-conscious, bold, solid, revolutionary and steadfast vanguard.

In order to achieve victory, in order to build and consolidate Socialism, the proletariat must fulfil a two-fold or dual task: first, it must, by its supreme heroism in the revolutionary struggle against capital, win over the entire mass of the toilers and exploited; it must win them over, organize them and lead them in the struggle to overthrow the bourgeoisie and utterly suppress its resistance. Second, it must lead the whole mass of the toilers and exploited, as well as all the petty-bourgeois strata, into the road of new economic construction, into the road to the creation of new social ties, a new labour discipline, a new organization of labour, which will combine the last word in science and capitalist tech-

nology with the mass association of class-conscious workers creating large-scale socialist production.

The second task is more difficult than the first, for it cannot possibly be fulfilled by single acts of heroic fervour; it requires the most prolonged, most persistent and most difficult mass heroism in *prosaic, everyday* work. But this task is more essential than the first, because, in the last analysis, the deepest source of strength for victories over the bourgeoisie and the sole guarantee of the durability and permanence of this victory can only be a new and higher mode of social production, the substitution of large-scale socialist production for capitalist and petty-bourgeois production.

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“Communist subbotniks” are of such enormous historic significance precisely because they demonstrate the conscious and voluntary initiative of the workers in developing productivity of labour, in adopting a new labour discipline, in creating socialist conditions of economy and life.

J. Jacoby, one of the few, in fact it would be more correct to say, one of the exceptionally rare German bourgeois democrats who, after the lessons of 1870-71, went over not to chauvinism or national-liberalism, but to Socialism, once said that the formation of a single trade union was of greater historical importance than the battle of Sadowa.<sup>49</sup> This is true. The battle of Sadowa decided the supremacy of one of two bourgeois monarchies, the Austrian or the Prussian, in creating a German national capitalist state. The formation of one trade union was a small step towards the world victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie. And we may similarly say that the first communist subbotnik, organized by the

workers of the Moscow-Kazan Railway in Moscow on May 10, 1919, was of greater historical significance than any of the victories of Hindenburg, or of Foch and the British, in the imperialist war of 1914-18. The victories of the imperialists mean the slaughter of millions of workers for the sake of the profits of the Anglo-American and French billionaires, the brutality of doomed capitalism, which is overbloated and is rotting alive. The communist subbotnik organized by the workers of the Moscow-Kazan Railway is one of the cells of the new, socialist society, which brings to all the peoples of the earth emancipation from the yoke of capital and from wars.

Messieurs the bourgeois and their hangers-on, including the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, who are wont to regard themselves as the representatives of "public opinion," jeer of course at the hopes of the Communists, call them "a baobab tree in a mignonette pot," sneer at the insignificance of the number of subbotniks compared with the vast number of cases of thieving, idleness, decline of productivity, spoilage of raw materials and finished goods, etc. Our reply to these gentry is: If the bourgeois intellectuals had dedicated their knowledge to assisting the toilers instead of giving it to the Russian and foreign capitalists in order to restore their power, the revolution would have proceeded more rapidly and more peacefully. But this is utopian, for the issue is decided by the struggle of classes, and the majority of the intellectuals gravitate towards the bourgeoisie. Not with the assistance of the intellectuals will the proletariat achieve victory, but in spite of their opposition (at least in the majority of cases), removing those of them who are incorrigibly bourgeois, reforming, re-educating and subordinating the waverers, and gradually winning ever larger sections of them to its

side. Gloating over the difficulties and setbacks of the revolution, sowing panic, preaching a return to the past—these are all weapons and methods of class struggle of the bourgeois intellectuals. The proletariat will not allow itself to be deceived by them.

But if we take the matter in its essence, has it ever happened in history that a new mode of production took root immediately, without a long succession of setbacks, blunders and relapses? Half a century after the abolition of serfdom there were still quite a number of survivals of serfdom in the Russian countryside. Half a century after the abolition of slavery in America the position of the Negroes was still very often one of semislavery. The bourgeois intellectuals, including the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, are true to themselves in serving capital and in continuing to use utterly false arguments: before the proletarian revolution they accused us of being utopian; after the revolution they demand that we wipe out all traces of the past with fantastic rapidity!

But we are not utopians and we know the real value of bourgeois "arguments"; we also know that for some time after the revolution traces of the old ethics will inevitably predominate over the young shoots of the new. When the new has just been born the old always remains stronger than it for some time; this is always the case in nature and in social life. Jeering at the feebleness of the young shoots of the new order, cheap scepticism of the intellectuals and the like—these are, essentially, methods of class struggle of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat, a defence of capitalism against Socialism. We must carefully study the new shoots, we must devote the greatest attention to them, do everything to promote their growth and "nurse" these feeble shoots. Some of them will inevitably perish. We cannot vouch that precisely the "communist subbotniks" will play a particularly

important role. But that is not the point. The point is to foster each and every shoot of the new; and life will select the most virile. If the Japanese scientist, in order to help mankind vanquish syphilis, had the patience to test six hundred and five preparations before he developed a six hundred and sixth which met definite requirements, then those who want to solve a more difficult problem, namely, to vanquish capitalism, must have the perseverance to try hundreds and thousands of new methods, means and weapons of struggle in order to elaborate the most suitable of them.

The "communist subbotniks" are so important because they were initiated by workers who were by no means placed in exceptionally good conditions, by workers of various specialities, and some with no speciality at all, just unskilled labourers, who are living under *ordinary*, i.e., *exceedingly hard*, conditions. We all know very well the main cause of the decline in the productivity of labour that is to be observed not only in Russia, but all over the world: it is ruin and impoverishment, embitterment and weariness caused by the imperialist war, sickness and malnutrition. The latter is first in importance. Starvation—that is the cause. And in order to do away with starvation, productivity of labour must be raised in agriculture, in transport and in industry. Thus we get a sort of vicious circle: in order to raise productivity of labour we must save ourselves from starvation, and in order to save ourselves from starvation we must raise productivity of labour.

We know that in practice such contradictions are solved by breaking the vicious circle, by bringing about a radical change in the mood of the masses, by the heroic initiative of individual groups which, against the background of such a radical change, often plays a decisive role. The unskilled labourers and railway work-



ers of Moscow (of course, we have in mind the majority of them, and not a handful of profiteers, officials and other whiteguards) are toiling people who are living in desperately hard conditions. They are constantly underfed, and now, before the new harvest is gathered, with the general worsening of the food situation, they are actually starving. And yet these starving workers, surrounded by the malicious counterrevolutionary agitation of the bourgeoisie, the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries, are organizing "communist subbotniks," working overtime *without any pay*, and achieving *an enormous increase in productivity of labour* in spite of the fact that they are weary, tormented, and exhausted from malnutrition. Is this not supreme heroism? Is this not the beginning of a change of momentous significance?

In the last analysis, productivity of labour is the most important, the principal thing for the victory of the new social system. Capitalism created a productivity of labour unknown under serfdom. Capitalism can be utterly vanquished, and will be utterly vanquished, by the fact that Socialism creates a new and much higher productivity of labour. This is a very difficult matter and must take a long time; but *it has been started*, and that is the main thing. If in starving Moscow, in the summer of 1919, the starving workers who had gone through four trying years of imperialist war and another year and a half of still more trying civil war could start this great work, how will it develop later when we triumph in the civil war and win peace?

Communism is the higher productivity of labour—compared with that existing under capitalism—of voluntary, class-conscious and united workers employing advanced technique. Communist subbotniks are extraordinarily valuable as the *actual* beginning of *Communism*; and this is a very rare thing, because we are in a stage when

"only the *first steps* in the transition from capitalism to Communism are being taken" (as our Party program quite rightly says).

Communism begins when the *rank-and-file workers* begin to display a self-sacrificing concern that is undaunted by arduous toil for increasing productivity of labour, for husbanding *every pood of grain, coal, iron* and other products, which do not accrue to the workers personally or to their "close" kith and kin, but to their "distant" kith and kin, i.e., to society as a whole, to tens and hundreds of millions of people united first in one socialist state, and then in a Union of Soviet Republics.

In *Capital*, Karl Marx ridicules the pompous and grandiloquent bourgeois-democratic great charter of liberty and the rights of man, ridicules all this phrasemongering about liberty, equality and fraternity *in general*, which dazzles the petty bourgeois and philistines of all countries, including the present despicable heroes of the despicable Berne International. Marx contrasts these pompous declarations of rights to the plain, modest, practical, simple manner in which the question is treated by the proletariat: legislative enactment of a shorter working day is a typical example of such treatment. The aptness and profundity of Marx's observation become the clearer and more obvious to us the more the content of the proletarian revolution unfolds. The "formulas" of genuine Communism differ from the pompous, intricate, and solemn phraseology of the Kautskys, the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries and their beloved "brethren" of Berne in that they reduce everything to the *conditions of labour*. Less chatter about "labour democracy," about "liberty, equality and fraternity," about "government by the people," and all such stuff; the class-conscious workers and peasants of our

day see the trickery of the bourgeois intellectual through these pompous phrases as easily as a person of ordinary common sense and experience, when glancing at the irreproachably "polished" features and immaculate appearance of the "fain fellow, dontcher know," immediately and unerringly puts him down as "in all probability, a scoundrel."

Fewer pompous phrases, more plain, *everyday* work, concern for the pood of grain and the pood of coal! More concern for supplying this pood of grain and pood of coal needed by the hungry workers and ragged and barefooted peasants, not by means of *huckstering*, not in a capitalist manner, but by means of the conscious, voluntary, boundlessly heroic labour of plain working men like the unskilled labourers and workers of the Moscow-Kazan Railway.

We must all admit that traces of the bourgeois-intellectual phrasemongering approach to questions of the revolution are observed at every step, everywhere, even in our own ranks. Our press, for example, does not fight sufficiently against these putrid survivals of the putrid, bourgeois-democratic past; it does not sufficiently foster the simple, modest, commonplace but virile shoots of genuine Communism.

Take the position of women. Not a single democratic party in the world, not even in the most advanced bourgeois republic, has done in tens of years a hundredth part of what we did in the very first year we were in power. We literally did not leave a single stone standing of the despicable laws which placed women in a position of inequality, or which restricted divorce and surrounded it with disgusting formalities, or which denied recognition to illegitimate children and enforced a search for their fathers, etc.—laws, numerous survivals of which, to the shame of the bourgeoisie and of capi-

talism be it said, are to be found in all civilized countries. We have a thousand times the right to be proud of what we have done in this sphere. But the more *thoroughly* we have cleared the ground of the lumber of the old, bourgeois, laws and institutions, the clearer it is to us that we have only cleared the ground to build on, but are not yet building.

Notwithstanding all the laws emancipating woman, she continues to be a *domestic slave*, because *petty housework* crushes, strangles, stultifies and degrades her, chains her to the kitchen and to the nursery, and wastes her labour on barbarously unproductive, petty, nerve-racking, stultifying and crushing drudgery. The real *emancipation of women*, real Communism, will begin only where and when a mass struggle begins (led by the proletariat wielding the power of the state) against this petty domestic economy, or rather when its *wholesale transformation* into large-scale socialist economy begins.

Do we in practice pay sufficient attention to this question, which, theoretically, is indisputable for every Communist? Of course not. Are we sufficiently solicitous about the young *shoots* of Communism which already exist in this sphere? Again we must say emphatically, No! Public dining rooms, crèches, kindergartens—here we have examples of these shoots, here we have the simple, everyday means, involving nothing pompous, grandiloquent or ceremonial, which can *in actual fact emancipate women*, which can in actual fact lessen and abolish their inequality with men as regards their role in social production and public life. These means are not new, they (like all the material prerequisites for Socialism) were created by large-scale capitalism; but under capitalism they remained, first, a rarity, and second, which is particularly important, either *profit-making* enterprises, with all the worst features of spec-

ulation, profiteering, cheating and fraud, or "acrobatics of bourgeois philanthropy," which the best workers quite rightly detested and despised.

There is no doubt that the number of these institutions in our country has increased enormously and that they are *beginning* to change in character. There is no doubt that there is far more *organizing talent* among the working women and peasant women than we are aware of, that there are far more people than we think who are capable of organizing practical work, with the participation of large numbers of workers and of still larger numbers of consumers, without that abundance of talk, fuss, squabbling and chatter about plans, systems, etc., from which our swelled-headed "intelligentsia" or half-baked "Communists" "suffer." But we *do not nurse* these shoots of the new as we should.

Look at the bourgeoisie! How excellently it knows how to advertise what *it* needs! See how what the capitalists regard as "model" enterprises are lauded in millions of copies of *their* newspapers; see how "model" bourgeois institutions are made an object of national pride! Our press does not take the trouble, or hardly takes the trouble, to describe the best dining rooms or crèches, in order, by daily insistence, to get some of them turned into models of their kind. It does not give them enough publicity, does not describe in detail what a saving of human labour, what conveniences for the consumer, what economy of products, what emancipation of women from domestic slavery, what an improvement in sanitary conditions can be achieved with *exemplary communist labour* and extended to the whole of society, to all the toilers.

Exemplary production, exemplary communist subbotniks, exemplary care and conscientiousness in procuring and distributing every pood of grain, exemplary

dining rooms, exemplary cleanliness in such-and-such a workers' apartment house, in such-and-such a block—all these should receive ten times more attention and care from our press, as well as from *every* workers' and peasants' organization, than they receive now. All these are young shoots of Communism; and it is our common and primary duty to nurse them. Difficult as our food and production situation is, in the year and a half of Bolshevik rule there has been undoubted progress *along the whole front*: grain procurements have increased from 30,000,000 poods (from August 1, 1917, to August 1, 1918) to 100,000,000 poods (from August 1, 1918, to May 1, 1919); vegetable gardening has expanded, the margin of unsown land has diminished, railway transport has begun to improve notwithstanding the enormous fuel difficulties, and so on. Against this general background, and with the support of the proletarian state power, the young shoots of Communism will not wither; they will grow and blossom into complete Communism.

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We must ponder very deeply over the significance of the "communist subbotniks," in order that we may draw all the very important practical lessons that follow from this great beginning.

The first and main lesson is that this beginning must have every assistance. The word "commune" is being bandied much too freely. Any kind of enterprise started by Communists or with their participation is very often at once declared to be a "commune," it being not infrequently forgotten that this *very honourable title* must be *won* by prolonged and persistent effort, by *practical* achievement in genuine communist construction.

That is why, in my opinion, the decision that has matured in the minds of the majority of the members of the

Central Executive Committee to *repeal* the decree of the Council of People's Commissars, as far as it pertains to the *title* "consumers' communes," is quite right. Let the title be simpler—and; incidentally, the defects and shortcomings of the *initial* stages of the new organizational work will not be blamed on the "communes," but (as in all fairness they should be) on *bad* Communists. It would be a good thing to eliminate the word "commune" from *common* use, to prohibit every firstcomer from snatching at it, or to *allow this title to be borne only* by genuine communes, which have really demonstrated in practice (unanimously recognized by the whole of the surrounding population) that they are capable of organizing their work in a communist manner. First show that you are capable of working without remuneration in the interests of society, in the interests of all the toilers, show that you are capable of "working in a revolutionary way," that you are capable of raising productivity of labour, of organizing the work in an exemplary manner, and then hold out your hand for the honourable title "commune"!

In this respect, the "communist subbotniks" are a most valuable exception; for the unskilled labourers and railway workers of the Moscow-Kazan Railway *first* demonstrated *by deeds* that they are capable of working like *Communists*, and then adopted the title of "communist subbotniks" for their undertaking. We must see to it and make sure that in future anyone who calls his enterprise, institution or undertaking a commune *without having proved* by hard work and practical *success in prolonged effort* that it is organized on exemplary and truly communist lines, is mercilessly ridiculed and pilloried as a charlatan or a windbag.

That great beginning, the "communist subbotniks," must also be utilized for another purpose, namely, to

*purge* the Party. In the early period following the revolution, when the masses of "honest" and philistine-minded people were particularly timorous, and when the bourgeois intelligentsia to a man, including, of course, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, played the lackey to the bourgeoisie and sabotaged, it was absolutely inevitable that adventurers and other pernicious elements should hitch themselves to the ruling party. There never has been, and there never can be, a revolution without that. The whole point is that the ruling party should be able, relying on a sound and strong advanced class, to purge its ranks.

We started this work long ago. It must be continued steadily and untiringly. The mobilization of Communists for the war helped us in this respect: the cowards and scoundrels fled the Party's ranks. Good riddance! *Such* a reduction in the Party's membership means an *enormous increase* in its strength and weight. We must continue the purging, and that new beginning, the "communist subbotniks," must be utilized for this purpose: members should be accepted into the Party only after six months', say, "trial," or "probation," at "working in a revolutionary way." A similar test should be demanded of *all* members of the Party who joined after October 25, 1917, and who have not proved by some special work or service that they are absolutely reliable, loyal and capable of being Communists.

The purging of the Party, through the steadily *increasing demands* it will make in regard to working in a genuinely communist way, will improve the state *apparatus*, and will bring ever so much nearer the *final transition* of the peasants to the side of the revolutionary proletariat.

Incidentally, the "communist subbotniks" have thrown a remarkably strong light on the class character of the state apparatus under the dictatorship of the proletariat.



The Central Committee of the Party drafts a letter on "working in a revolutionary way." The idea is suggested by the Central Committee of a party with from 100,000 to 200,000 members (I assume that that is the number that will remain after a thorough purging; at present the membership is larger).

The idea is taken up by the workers organized in trade unions. In Russia and the Ukraine they number about 4,000,000. The overwhelming majority of them are for the state power of the proletariat, for the proletarian dictatorship. Two hundred thousand and four million: such is the ratio of the "cogwheels," if one may so express it. Then follow the *tens of millions* of peasants, who are divided into three main groups: the most numerous and the one standing closest to the proletariat is that of the semiproletarians or poor peasants; then come the middle peasants, and lastly the numerically very small group of kulaks or rural bourgeoisie.

As long as it is possible to trade in grain and to make profit out of famine, the peasant will remain (and this will for some time be inevitable under the dictatorship of the proletariat) a semitoiler, semiprofitier. As a profiteer he is hostile to us, hostile to the proletarian state; he is inclined to agree with the bourgeoisie and their faithful lackeys, up to and including the Menshevik Sher or the Socialist-Revolutionary B. Chernenkov, who stand for freedom to trade in grain. But *as a toiler*, the peasant is a friend of the proletarian state, a most loyal ally of the worker in the struggle against the landlord and against the capitalist. As toilers, the peasants, the vast mass of them, the peasant millions, support the state "machine" which is headed by the one or two hundred thousand Communists of the proletarian vanguard, and which consists of millions of organized proletarians.

A state more democratic, in the true sense of the word, one more closely connected with the toiling and exploited masses, has *never yet existed*.

It is precisely such proletarian work as is marked "communist subbotniks" and which is performed at these subbotniks, that will win the complete respect and love of the peasantry for the proletarian state. Such work, and such work alone, will completely convince the peasant that we are right, that Communism is right, and make him our devoted ally, and, hence, will lead to the complete elimination of our food difficulties, to the complete victory of Communism over capitalism in the matter of the production and distribution of grain, to the unqualified consolidation of Communism.

June 28, 1919

## THE STATE

A LECTURE DELIVERED AT THE SVERDLOV UNIVERSITY

JULY 11, 1919

Comrades, according to the plan adopted by you and conveyed to me, the subject of today's talk is the state. I do not know how familiar you are already with this subject. If I am not mistaken your courses have only just begun and this is the first time you will be approaching this subject systematically. If that is so, then it may very well be that in the first lecture on this difficult subject I may not succeed in making my exposition sufficiently clear and comprehensible to many of my listeners. And if this should prove to be the case, I would request you not to be perturbed by the fact, because the question of the state is a most complex and difficult one, perhaps one that more than any other has been confused by bourgeois scholars, writers and philosophers. It should not therefore be expected that a clear understanding of this subject can be obtained from one brief talk, at a first sitting. After the first talk on this subject you should make a note of the passages which you have not understood or which are not clear to you, and return to them a second, a third and a fourth time, so that what you have not understood may be further supplemented and elucidated afterwards, both by reading and by various lectures and talks. I hope that we may manage to meet once again and that then we shall be able to exchange opinions on all supplementary questions and to see what has remained most unclear. I also

hope that in addition to talks and lectures you will devote some time to reading at least some of the most important works of Marx and Engels. I have no doubt that these most important works are to be found in the catalogues of literature and in the handbooks which are available in your library for the pupils of the Soviet and Party school; and although, again, some of you may at first be dismayed by the difficulty of the exposition, I must again warn you that you should not be perturbed by this fact and that what is unclear at a first reading will become clear at a second reading, or when you subsequently approach the question from a somewhat different angle. For I once more repeat that the question is so complex and has been so confused by bourgeois scholars and writers that anybody who desires to study this question seriously and to master it independently must attack it several times, return to it again and again and consider the question from various angles in order to attain a clear and firm understanding of it. And it will be all the easier to return to this question because it is such a fundamental, such a basic question of all politics, and because not only in such stormy and revolutionary times as the present, but even in the most peaceful times, you will come across this question every day in any newspaper in connection with any economic or political question. Every day, in one connection or another, you will be returning to this question: what is the state, what is its nature, what is its significance and what is the attitude of our party, the party that is fighting for the overthrow of capitalism, the Communist Party—what is its attitude to the state? And the chief thing is that as a result of your reading, as a result of the talks and lectures you will hear on the state, you should acquire the ability to approach this question independently, since you will be meeting this question on the most diverse occasions, in connection with the most trifling

questions, in the most unexpected conjunctures, and in discussions and disputes with opponents. Only when you learn to find your way about independently in this question may you consider yourself sufficiently confirmed in your convictions and able with sufficient success to defend them against anybody and at any time.

After these brief remarks, I shall proceed to deal with the question itself—what is the state, how did it arise and what fundamentally should be the attitude to the state of the party of the working class, which is fighting for the complete overthrow of capitalism—the Communist Party?

I have already said that you will scarcely find another question which has been so confused, deliberately and undeliberately, by representatives of bourgeois science, philosophy, jurisprudence, political economy and journalism, as the question of the state. To this day this question is very often confused with religious questions; not only representatives of religious doctrines (it is quite natural to expect it of them), but even people who consider themselves free from religious prejudice, very often confuse the specific question of the state with questions of religion and endeavour to build up a doctrine—very often a complex one, with an ideological, philosophical approach and argumentation—which claims that the state is something divine, something supernatural, that it is a certain force, by virtue of which mankind has lived, and which confers on people, or which can confer on people, which brings with it, something that is not of man, but is given him from without—that it is a force of divine origin. And it must be said that this doctrine is so closely bound up with the interests of the exploiting classes—the landlords and the capitalists—so serves their interests, has so deeply permeated all the customs, views and science of the gentlemen who represent the bourgeoisie, that you

will meet with relics of it on every hand, even in the view of the state held by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, who reject with disgust the suggestion that they are under the sway of religious prejudices and are convinced that they can regard the state with sober eyes. This question has been so confused and complicated because it affects the interests of the ruling classes more than any other (yielding in this respect only to the foundations of economic science). The doctrine of the state serves as a justification of social privilege, a justification of the existence of exploitation, a justification of the existence of capitalism—and that is why it would be the greatest mistake to expect impartiality on this question, to approach this question in the belief that people who claim to be scientific can give you a purely scientific view on the subject. In the question of the state, in the doctrine of the state, in the theory of the state, when you have become familiar with this question and have gone into it sufficiently deeply, you will always discern the mutual struggle of different classes, a struggle which is reflected or expressed in a conflict of views on the state, in the estimate of the role and significance of the state.

To approach this question as scientifically as possible we must cast at least a fleeting glance back on the history of the rise and development of the state. The most reliable thing in a question of social science, and one that is most necessary in order really to acquire the habit of approaching this question correctly and not allowing oneself to get lost in the mass of detail or in the immense variety of conflicting opinions—the most important thing in order to approach this question scientifically is not to forget the underlying historical connection, to examine every question from the standpoint of how the given phenomenon arose in history and what principal stages this phenomenon passed through in its development, and,

from the standpoint of its development, to examine what the given thing has become today.

I hope that in connection with the question of the state you will acquaint yourselves with Engels' book, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. This is one of the fundamental works of modern Socialism, every sentence of which can be accepted with confidence, in the assurance that it has not been said at random but is based on immense historical and political material. Undoubtedly, not all the parts of this work have been expounded in an equally popular and comprehensible way; some of them presume a reader who already possesses a certain knowledge of history and economics. But I again repeat that you should not be perturbed if on reading this work you do not understand it at once. That hardly happens with anyone. But returning to it later, when your interest has been aroused, you will succeed in understanding the greater part of it, if not the whole of it. I mention this book because it gives the correct approach to the question in the sense mentioned. It begins with a historical sketch of the origin of the state.

In order to approach this question correctly, as every other question—for example, the question of the origin of capitalism, the exploitation of man by man, Socialism, how Socialism arose, what conditions gave rise to it—every such question can be approached soundly and confidently only if we cast a glance back on the history of its development as a whole. In connection with this question it should first of all be noted that the state has not always existed. There was a time when there was no state. It appears wherever and whenever a division of society into classes appears, whenever exploiters and exploited appear.

Before the first form of exploitation of man by man arose, the first form of division into classes—slaveowners

and slaves—there existed the patriarchal family, or, as it is sometimes called, the *clan* family. (Clan—generation, kinship, when people lived together according to kinship and generation.) Fairly definite traces of these primitive times have survived in the life of many primitive peoples; and if you take any work whatsoever on primitive culture, you will always come across more or less definite descriptions, indications and recollections of the fact that there was a time, more or less similar to primitive communism, when the division of society into slaveowners and slaves did not exist. And in those times there was no state, no special apparatus for the systematic application of force and the subjugation of people by force. It is such an apparatus that is called the state.

In primitive society, when people lived in small family groups and were still at the lowest stages of development, in a condition approximating to savagery—an epoch from which modern, civilized human society is separated by several thousands of years—there were yet no signs of the existence of a state. We find the predominance of custom, authority, respect, the power enjoyed by the elders of the clan; we find this power sometimes accorded to women—the position of women then was not like the downtrodden and oppressed condition of women today—but nowhere do we find a special *category* of people who are set apart to rule others and, for the sake and purpose of rule, systematically and permanently to wield a certain apparatus of coercion, an apparatus of violence, such as is represented at the present time, as you all realize, by the armed detachments of troops, the prisons and the other means of subjugating the will of others by force—all that which constitutes the essence of the state.

If we abstract ourselves from the so-called religious teachings, subtleties, philosophical arguments and the vari-



ous opinions advanced by bourgeois scholars, if we abstract ourselves from these and try to get at the real essence of the matter, we shall find that the state really does amount to such an apparatus of rule separated out from human society. When there appears such a special group of men who are occupied with ruling and nothing else, and who in order to rule need a special apparatus of coercion and of subjugating the will of others by force—prisons, special detachments of men, armies, etc.—then there appears the state.

But there was a time when there was no state, when general ties, society itself, discipline and the ordering of work were maintained by force of custom and tradition, or by the authority or the respect enjoyed by the elders of the clan or by women—who in those times not only frequently enjoyed equal status with men, but not infrequently enjoyed even a higher status—and when there was no special category of persons, specialists in ruling. History shows that the state as a special apparatus for coercing people arose only wherever and whenever there appeared a division of society into classes, that is, a division into groups of people some of whom are permanently in a position to appropriate the labour of others, where some people exploit others.

And this division of society into classes must always be clearly borne in mind as a fundamental fact of history. The development of all human societies for thousands of years, in all countries without exception, reveals a general conformity to law, a regularity and consistency in this development; so that at first we had a society without classes—the original patriarchal, primitive society, in which there were no aristocrats; then we had a society based on slavery—a slaveowning society. The whole of modern civilized Europe has passed through this stage—slavery ruled supreme two thousand years ago.

The vast majority of peoples of the other parts of the world also passed through this stage. Among the less developed peoples traces of slavery survive to this day; you will find the institution of slavery in Africa, for example, at the present time. Slaveowners and slaves were the first important class divisions. The former group not only owned all the means of production—the land and the implements, however primitive they may have been in those times—but also owned people. This group was known as slaveowners, while those who laboured and supplied labour for others were known as slaves.

This form was followed in history by another—feudalism. In the great majority of countries slavery in the course of its development evolved into serfdom. The fundamental division of society was now into feudal landlords and peasant serfs. The form of relations between people changed. The slaveowners had regarded the slaves as their property; the law had confirmed this view and regarded the slave as a chattel completely owned by the slaveowner. As far as the peasant serf was concerned, class oppression and dependence remained, but it was not considered that the feudal landlord owned the peasants as chattels, but that he was only entitled to their labour and to compel them to perform certain services. In practice, as you know, serfdom, especially in Russia, where it survived longest of all and assumed the grossest forms, in no way differed from slavery.

Further, with the development of trade, the appearance of the world market and the development of money circulation, a new class arose within feudal society—the capitalist class. From the commodity, the exchange of commodities and the rise of the power of money, there arose the power of capital. During the eighteenth century—or rather, from the end of the eighteenth century and during the nineteenth century—revolutions took place

all over the world. Feudalism was eliminated in all the countries of Western Europe. This took place latest of all in Russia. In 1861 a radical change took place in Russia as well, as a consequence of which one form of society was replaced by another—feudalism was replaced by capitalism, under which division into classes remained, as well as various traces and relics of serfdom, but in which the division into classes fundamentally assumed a new form.

The owners of capital, the owners of the land, the owners of the mills and factories in all capitalist countries constituted and still constitute an insignificant minority of the population who have complete command of the labour of the whole people, and, consequently, command, oppress and exploit the whole mass of labourers, the majority of whom are proletarians, wage workers, that procure their livelihood in the process of production only by the sale of their own worker's hands, their labour power. With the transition to capitalism, the peasants, who were already disunited and downtrodden in feudal times, were converted partly (the majority) into proletarians, and partly (the minority) into wealthy peasants who themselves hired workers and who constituted a rural bourgeoisie.

This fundamental fact—the transition of society from primitive forms of slavery to serfdom and finally to capitalism—you must always bear in mind, for only by remembering this fundamental fact, only by inserting all political doctrines into this fundamental framework will you be able properly to appraise these doctrines and understand what they refer to; for each of these great periods in the history of mankind—slaveowning, feudal and capitalist—embraces scores and hundreds of centuries and presents such a mass of political forms, such a variety of political doctrines, opinions and revolutions, that this

extreme diversity and immense variety can be understood—especially in connection with the political, philosophical and other doctrines of bourgeois scholars and politicians—only by firmly holding, as to a guiding thread, to this division of society into classes, this change in the forms of class rule, and from this standpoint examining all social questions—economic, political, spiritual, religious, etc.

If you examine the state from the standpoint of this fundamental division, you will find that before the division of society into classes, as I have already said, no state existed. But as the social division into classes arose and took firm root, as class society arose, the state also arose and took firm root. The history of mankind knows scores and hundreds of countries that have passed through or are still passing through slavery, feudalism and capitalism. In each of these countries, despite the immense historical changes that have taken place, despite all the political vicissitudes and all the revolutions associated with this development of mankind, in the transition from slavery through feudalism to capitalism and to the present world-wide struggle against capitalism, you will always discern the rise of the state. It has always been a certain apparatus which separated out from society and consisted of a group of people engaged solely, or almost solely, or mainly, in ruling. People are divided into ruled, and into specialists in ruling, those who rise above society and are called rulers, representatives of the state. This apparatus, this group of people who rule others, always takes possession of a certain apparatus of coercion, of physical force, irrespective of whether this violence over people is expressed in the primitive club, or, in the epoch of slavery, in more perfected types of weapons, or in the firearms which appeared in the Middle Ages, or, finally, in modern weapons, which in the twentieth century are

marvels of technique and are entirely based on the latest achievements of modern technology. The methods of violence changed, but whenever there was a state there existed in every society a group of persons who ruled, who commanded, who dominated and who in order to maintain their power possessed an apparatus of physical coercion, an apparatus of violence, with those weapons which corresponded to the technical level of the given epoch. And by examining these general phenomena, by asking ourselves why no state existed when there were no classes, when there were no exploiters and exploited, and why it arose when classes arose—only in this way shall we find a definite answer to the question of the essence of the state and its significance.

The state is a machine for maintaining the rule of one class over another. When there were no classes in society, when, before the epoch of slavery, people laboured in primitive conditions of greater equality, in conditions when productivity of labour was still at its lowest, and when primitive man could barely procure the wherewithal for the crudest and most primitive existence, a special group of people, specially separated off to rule and dominate over the rest of society, had not yet arisen, and could not have arisen. Only when the first form of the division of society into classes appeared, only when slavery appeared, when a certain class of people, by concentrating on the crudest forms of agricultural labour, could produce a certain surplus, when this surplus was not absolutely essential for the most wretched existence of the slave and passed into the hands of the slaveowner, when in this way the existence of this class of slaveowners took firm root—then in order that it might take firm root it was essential that a state should appear.

And it did appear—the slaveowning state, an apparatus which gave the slaveowners power and enabled them to

rule over the slaves. Both society and the state were then much smaller than they are now, they possessed an incomparably weaker apparatus of communication—the modern means of communication did not then exist. Mountains, rivers and seas were immeasurably greater obstacles than they are now, and the formation of the state was confined within far narrower geographical boundaries. A technically weak state apparatus served a state confined within relatively narrow boundaries and a narrow circle of action. Nevertheless, there did exist an apparatus which compelled the slaves to remain in slavery, which kept one part of society subjugated to and oppressed by another. It is impossible to compel the greater part of society to work systematically for the other part of society without a permanent apparatus of coercion. So long as there were no classes, there was no apparatus like this. When classes appeared, everywhere and always as this division grew and took firmer hold, there also appeared a special institution—the state. The forms of state were extremely varied. During the period of slavery we already find diverse forms of the state in the most advanced, cultured and civilized countries according to the standards of the time—for example, in ancient Greece and Rome, which rested entirely on slavery. At that time the difference was already arising between the monarchy and the republic, between the aristocracy and the democracy. A monarchy is the power of a single person, a republic is the absence of any nonelected power; an aristocracy is the power of a relatively small minority, a democracy is the power of the people (democracy in Greek literally means the power of the people). All these differences arose in the epoch of slavery. Despite these differences, the state of the slaveowning epoch was a slaveowning state, irrespective of whether it was a monarchy or a republic, aristocratic or democratic.

In every course on the history of ancient times, when hearing a lecture on this subject you will hear about the struggle which was waged between the monarchical and republican states. But the fundamental fact is that the slaves were not regarded as human beings—not only were they not regarded as citizens, they were not even regarded as human beings. Roman law regarded them as chattels. The law of manslaughter, not to mention the other laws for the protection of the person, did not extend to slaves. It defended only the slaveowners, who were alone recognized as citizens with full rights. But whether a monarchy was instituted or a republic, it was a monarchy of the slaveowners or a republic of the slaveowners. All rights under them were enjoyed by the slaveowners, while the slave was a chattel in the eyes of the law: and not only could any sort of violence be perpetrated against a slave, but even the murder of a slave was not considered a crime. Slaveowning republics differed in their internal organization: there were aristocratic republics and democratic republics. In an aristocratic republic a small number of privileged persons took part in the elections; in a democratic republic everybody took part in the elections—but again only the slaveowners, everybody except the slaves. This fundamental fact must be borne in mind, because it throws more light than any other on the question of the state and clearly demonstrates the nature of the state.

The state is a machine for the oppression of one class by another, a machine for holding in obedience to one class other, subordinated classes. There are various forms of this machine. In the slaveowning state we had a monarchy, an aristocratic republic or even a democratic republic. In fact the forms of government varied extremely, but their essence was always the same: the slaves enjoyed no rights and constituted an oppressed class; they

were not regarded as human beings. We find the same thing in the feudal state.

The change in the form of exploitation transformed the slaveowning state into the feudal state. This was of immense importance. In slaveowning society the slave enjoys no rights whatever and is not regarded as a human being; in feudal society the peasant is tied to the soil. The chief token of serfdom was that the peasants (and at that time the peasants constituted the majority; there was a very poorly developed urban population) were considered attached to the land—hence the very concept serfdom. The peasant might work a definite number of days for himself on the plot assigned to him by the landlord; on the other days the peasant serf worked for his lord. The essence of class society remained: society was based on class exploitation. Only the landlords could enjoy full rights; the peasants had no rights at all. In practice their condition differed very little from the condition of slaves in the slaveowning state. Nevertheless a wider road was opened for their emancipation, for the emancipation of the peasants, since the peasant serf was not regarded as the direct property of the landlord. He could work part of his time on his own plot, could, so to speak, belong to himself to a certain extent; and with the wider opportunities for the development of exchange and trade relations the feudal system steadily disintegrated and the scope of emancipation of the peasantry steadily widened. Feudal society was always more complex than slave society. There was a greater element of development of trade and industry, which even in those days led to capitalism. In the Middle Ages feudalism predominated. And here too the forms of state varied, here too we find both the monarchy and the republic, although the latter was much more weakly expressed. But always the feudal landlord was regarded as the only



ruler. The peasant serfs were absolutely excluded from all political rights.

Both under slavery and under the feudal system a small minority of people could not dominate over the vast majority without coercion. History is full of the constant attempts of the oppressed classes to throw off oppression. The history of slavery contains records of wars of emancipation from slavery which lasted for decades. Incidentally, the name "Spartacist" now adopted by the German Communists—the only German party which is really fighting the yoke of capitalism—was adopted by them because Spartacus was one of the most prominent heroes of one of the greatest revolts of slaves, which took place about two thousand years ago. For many years the seemingly omnipotent Roman Empire, which rested entirely on slavery, experienced shocks and blows under the impact of a vast uprising of slaves who armed and united to form a vast army under the leadership of Spartacus. In the end they were defeated, captured and put to torture by the slaveowners. Such civil wars mark the whole history of the existence of class society. I have just mentioned an example of the greatest of these civil wars in the epoch of slavery. The whole epoch of feudalism is likewise marked by constant uprisings of the peasants. For example, in Germany in the Middle Ages the struggle between the two classes—the landlords and the serfs—assumed wide dimensions and was transformed into a civil war of the peasants against the landlords. You are all familiar with similar examples of repeated uprisings of the peasants against the feudal landlords in Russia.

In order to maintain their rule and to preserve their power, the landlords had to have an apparatus by which they could unite under their subjugation a vast number of people and subordinate them to certain laws and regulations; and all these laws fundamentally amounted to

one thing—the maintenance of the power of the landlords over the peasant serfs. And this was the feudal state, which in Russia, for example, or in quite backward Asiatic countries, where feudalism prevails to this day—it differed in form—was either republican or monarchical. When the state was a monarchy, the rule of one person was recognized: when it was a republic, the participation of the elected representatives of landlord society was in one degree or another recognized—this was in feudal society. Feudal society represented a division of classes under which the vast majority—the peasant serfs—were completely subjected to an insignificant minority—the landlords, who owned the land.

The development of trade, the development of commodity exchange, led to the crystallization of a new class—the capitalists. Capital arose at the close of the Middle Ages, when, after the discovery of America, world trade developed enormously, when the quantity of precious metals increased, when silver and gold became the instrument of exchange, when money circulation made it possible for individuals to hold tremendous wealth. Silver and gold were recognized as wealth all over the world. The economic power of the landlord class declined and the power of the new class—the representatives of capital—developed. The reconstruction of society was such that all citizens supposedly became equal, the old division into slaveowners and slaves disappeared, all were regarded as equal before the law irrespective of what capital each owned; whether he owned land as private property, or was a starveling who owned nothing but his labour power—all were equal before the law. The law protects everybody equally; it protects the property of those who have it from attack by the masses who, possessing no property, possessing nothing but their labour power, grow steadily impoverished and ruined and

become converted into proletarians. Such is capitalist society.

I cannot dwell on it in detail. You will return to this question when you come to discuss the program of the Party—you will then hear a description of capitalist society. This society advanced against serfdom, against the old feudal system, under the slogan of liberty. But it was liberty for those who owned property. And when feudalism was shattered, which occurred at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century—in Russia it occurred later than in other countries, in 1861—the feudal state was then superseded by the capitalist state, which proclaims liberty for the whole people as its slogan, which declares that it expresses the will of the whole people and denies that it is a class state. And here there developed a struggle between the Socialists, who are fighting for the liberty of the whole people, and the capitalist state—a struggle which has now led to the creation of the Soviet Socialist Republic and which embraces the whole world.

To understand the struggle that has been started against world capital, to understand the essence of the capitalist state, we must remember that when the capitalist state advanced against the feudal state it entered the fight under the slogan of liberty. The abolition of feudalism meant liberty for the representatives of the capitalist state and served their purpose, inasmuch as serfdom was breaking down and the peasants had acquired the opportunity of owning as their full property the land which they had purchased for compensation or in part by quit rent—this did not concern the state: it protected property no matter how it arose, because the state rested on private property. The peasants became private owners in all the modern civilized states. Even when the landlord surrendered part of his land to the peasant, the state protected private

property, rewarding the landlord by compensation, sale for money. The state as it were declared that it would fully preserve private property, and it accorded it every support and protection. The state recognized the property rights of every merchant, industrialist and manufacturer. And this society, based on private property, on the power of capital, on the complete subjection of the propertyless workers and labouring masses of the peasantry, proclaimed that its rule was based on liberty. Combating feudalism, it proclaimed freedom of property and was particularly proud of the fact that the state had supposedly ceased to be a class state.

Yet the state continued to be a machine which helped the capitalists to hold the poor peasants and the working class in subjection. But in outward appearance it was free. It proclaimed universal suffrage, and declared through its champions, preachers, scholars and philosophers, that it was not a class state. Even now, when the Soviet Socialist Republics have begun to fight it, they accuse us of violating liberty, of building a state based on coercion, on the suppression of some by others, whereas they represent a popular, democratic state. And now, when the world socialist revolution has begun, and just when the revolution has succeeded in some countries, when the fight against world capital has grown particularly acute, this question of the state has acquired the greatest importance and has become, one might say, the most burning one, the focus of all political questions and of all political disputes of the present day.

Whatever party we take in Russia or in any of the more civilized countries, we find that nearly all political disputes, disagreements and opinions now centre around the conception of the state. Is the state in a capitalist country, in a democratic republic—especially one like Switzerland or America—in the freest democratic re-

publics, an expression of the popular will, the sum-total of the general decision of the people, the expression of the national will, and so forth; or is the state a machine that enables the capitalists of the given country to maintain their power over the working class and the peasantry? That is the fundamental question around which all political disputes all over the world now centre. What do they say about Bolshevism? The bourgeois press abuses the Bolsheviks. You will not find a single newspaper that does not repeat the hackneyed accusation that the Bolsheviks violate popular rule. If our Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries in their simplicity of heart (perhaps it is not simplicity, or perhaps it is the simplicity which the proverb says is worse than robbery) think that they discovered and invented the accusation that the Bolsheviks have violated liberty and popular rule, they are ludicrously mistaken. Today not a single one of the richest newspapers in the richest countries, which spend tens of millions on their distribution and disseminate bourgeois lies and imperialist policy in tens of millions of copies—there is not one of these newspapers which does not repeat these basic arguments and accusations against Bolshevism, namely, that America, England and Switzerland are advanced states based on popular rule, whereas the Bolshevik Republic is a state of bandits in which liberty is unknown, and that the Bolsheviks have violated the idea of popular rule and have even gone so far as to disperse the Constituent Assembly. These terrible accusations against the Bolsheviks are repeated all over the world. These accusations bring us fully up against the question—what is the state? In order to understand these accusations, in order to examine them and have a fully intelligent attitude towards them, and not to examine them on hearsay but with a firm opinion of our own, we must have a clear idea of what the state is. Here we have capitalist states of every

kind and all the theories in defence of them which were created before the war. In order to answer the question properly we must critically examine all these theories and views.

I have already advised you to turn for help to Engels' book, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. This book says that every state in which private ownership of the land and means of production exists, in which capital dominates, however democratic it may be, is a capitalist state, a machine used by the capitalists to keep the working class and the poor peasants in subjection; while universal suffrage, a Constituent Assembly, parliament are merely a form, a sort of promissory note, which does not alter the essence of the matter.

The forms of domination of the state may vary: capital manifests its power in one way where one form exists, and in another way where another form exists—but essentially the power is in the hands of capital, whether there are voting qualifications or not, or whether the republic is a democratic one or not—in fact the more democratic it is the cruder and more cynical is the rule of capitalism. One of the most democratic republics in the world is the United States of America, yet nowhere (and those who were there after 1905 probably know it) is the power of capital, the power of a handful of billionaires over the whole of society, so crude and so openly corrupt as in America. Once capital exists, it dominates the whole of society, and no democratic republic, no form of franchise can alter the essence of the matter.

The democratic republic and universal suffrage were an immense progressive advance on feudalism: they have enabled the proletariat to achieve its present unity and solidarity, to form those firm and disciplined ranks which are waging a systematic struggle against capital. There was nothing even approximately resembling this among

the peasant serfs, not to speak of the slaves. The slaves as we know revolted, rioted, started civil wars, but they could never create a class-conscious majority and parties to lead the struggle, they could not clearly realize what they were aiming for, and even in the most revolutionary moments of history they were always pawns in the hands of the ruling classes. The bourgeois republic, parliament, universal suffrage—all represent great progress from the standpoint of the world development of society. Mankind moved towards capitalism, and it was capitalism alone which, thanks to urban culture, enabled the oppressed proletarian class to learn to know itself and to create the world working-class movement, the millions of workers organized all over the world in parties—the Socialist parties which are consciously leading the struggle of the masses. Without parliamentarism, without an electoral system, this development of the working class would have been impossible. That is why all these things have acquired such great importance in the eyes of the broad masses of people. That is why a radical change seems to be so difficult. It is not only the conscious hypocrites, scientists and priests that uphold and defend the bourgeois lie that the state is free and that it is its mission to defend the interests of all; so also do a large number of people who sincerely adhere to the old prejudices and who cannot understand the transition from the old capitalist society to Socialism. It is not only people who are directly dependent on the bourgeoisie, not only those who are oppressed by the yoke of capital or who have been bribed by capital (there are a large number of all sorts of scientists, artists, priests, etc., in the service of capital), but even people who are simply under the sway of the prejudice of bourgeois liberty that have taken up arms against Bolshevism all over the world because of the fact that when it was founded the Soviet Republic rejected these

bourgeois lies and openly declared: you say your state is free, whereas in reality, as long as there is private property, your state, even if it is a democratic republic, is nothing but a machine used by the capitalists to suppress the workers, and the freer the state, the more clearly is this expressed. Examples of this are Switzerland in Europe and the United States in the Americas. Nowhere does capital rule so cynically and ruthlessly, and nowhere is this so clearly apparent, as in these countries, although they are democratic republics, no matter how finely they are painted and notwithstanding all the talk about labour democracy and the equality of all citizens. The fact is that in Switzerland and America capital dominates, and every attempt of the workers to achieve the slightest real improvement in their condition is immediately met by civil war. There are fewer soldiers, a smaller standing army, in these countries—Switzerland has a militia and every Swiss has a gun at home, while in America there was no standing army until quite recently—and so when there is a strike the bourgeoisie arms, hires soldiery and suppresses the strike; and nowhere is this suppression of the working-class movement accompanied by such ruthless severity as in Switzerland and America, and nowhere does the influence of capital in parliament manifest itself as powerfully as in these countries. The power of capital is everything, the stock exchange is everything, while parliament and elections are marionettes, puppets. . . . But the eyes of the workers are being opened more and more, and the idea of Soviet government is spreading wider and wider, especially after the bloody carnage through which we have just passed. The necessity for a relentless war on the capitalists is becoming clearer and clearer to the working class.

Whatever guise a republic may assume, even the most democratic republic, if it is a bourgeois republic, if it re-



tains private ownership of the land, mills and factories, and if private capital keeps the whole of society in wage slavery, that is, if it does not carry out what is proclaimed in the program of our Party and in the Soviet Constitution, then this state is a machine for the suppression of some people by others. And we shall place this machine in the hands of the class that is to overthrow the power of capital. We shall reject all the old prejudices about the state meaning universal equality—for that is a fraud: as long as there is exploitation there cannot be equality. The landlord cannot be the equal of the worker, or the hungry man the equal of the full man. The proletariat casts aside the machine which was called the state and before which people bowed in superstitious awe, believing the old tales that it means popular rule—the proletariat casts aside this machine and declares that it is a bourgeois lie. We have deprived the capitalists of this machine and have taken it over. With this machine, or bludgeon, we shall destroy all exploitation. And when the possibility of exploitation no longer exists anywhere in the world, when there are no longer owners of land and owners of factories, and when there is no longer a situation in which some gorge while others starve—only when the possibility of this no longer exists shall we consign this machine to the scrap heap. Then there will be no state and no exploitation. Such is the view of our Communist Party. I hope that we shall return to this subject in subsequent lectures, and return to it again and again.

## **ECONOMICS AND POLITICS IN THE ERA OF THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT**

I had intended in connection with the second anniversary of Soviet rule to write a small pamphlet dealing with the subject indicated in the title. But owing to the rush of everyday work I have been unable so far to get beyond the preliminary preparations for certain of the sections. I have therefore decided to essay a brief, summarized exposition of what, in my opinion, are the most essential ideas on the subject. A summarized exposition, of course, possesses many disadvantages and shortcomings. Nevertheless, a short magazine article may perhaps achieve the modest aim in view, which is, to present the problem and the groundwork for its discussion by the Communists in the various countries.

### **I**

Theoretically, there can be no doubt that between capitalism and Communism there lies a definite transition period. It cannot but combine the features and properties of both these forms of social economy. This transition period cannot but be a period of struggle between moribund capitalism and nascent Communism—or, in other words, between capitalism which has been defeated but not destroyed and Communism which has been born but which is still very feeble.

The necessity for a whole historical era distinguished by these features of a transition period should be obvious not only to Marxists, but to every educated person who is in any degree acquainted with the theory of development. Yet all the talk on the subject of the transition to Socialism which we hear from present-day representatives of petty-bourgeois democracy (and such, in spite of their spurious Socialist label, are all the representatives of the Second International, including such individuals as MacDonald, Jean Longuet, Kautsky and Friedrich Adler) is marked by complete obliviousness to this obvious truth. Petty-bourgeois democrats are distinguished by an aversion to class struggle, by the hope of managing without a class struggle, by an endeavour to smooth over and reconcile, to take the edge off sharp corners. Such democrats therefore either avoid recognizing any necessity for a whole historical period of transition from capitalism to Communism or regard it as their duty to concoct schemes for reconciling the two contending forces, instead of leading the struggle of one of these forces.

## 2

In Russia, the dictatorship of the proletariat must inevitably differ in certain particulars from that in the advanced countries, owing to the very great backwardness and petty-bourgeois character of our country. But the basic forces—and the basic forms of social economy—are the same in Russia as in any capitalist country, so that these peculiarities can apply to only what is not most important.

These basic forms of social economy are capitalism, petty commodity production and Communism. The basic forces are the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie (particularly the peasantry) and the proletariat.

The economic system of Russia in the era of the dictatorship of the proletariat represents a struggle of the first steps of labour communistically united—on the scale of a single vast state—against petty commodity production and capitalism, the capitalism which still persists and the capitalism which arises anew on the basis of petty commodity production.

In Russia, labour is united communistically for the reason that, firstly, private ownership of the means of production has been abolished, and, secondly, the proletarian state power is organizing large-scale production on state-owned land and in state-owned enterprises on a national scale, is distributing labour power among the various branches of production and the various enterprises, and is distributing large quantities of articles of consumption belonging to the state to the working people.

We say “the first steps” of Communism in Russia (so spoken of also in the program of our Party adopted in March 1919), because all these conditions have been only partially achieved in our country, or, to put it otherwise, the achievement of these conditions is only in its early stages. We accomplished instantly, at one revolutionary blow, all that can be instantly accomplished in general: for instance, on the first day of the dictatorship of the proletariat, October 26 (November 8), 1917, private ownership of land was abolished without compensation to the big proprietors; the big proprietors were expropriated. Within the space of a few months practically all the big capitalists, owners of mills and factories, joint-stock companies, banks, railways, and so forth, were also expropriated without compensation. The state organization of large-scale production in industry and the transition from “workers’ control” to “workers’ administration” of factories, mills and railways—this, by and large, has already

been accomplished; but in relation to agriculture it has only just begun ("state farms," i.e., large farms organized by the workers' state on state-owned land). Similarly, we have only just begun the organization of various forms of cooperative societies of small husbandmen as a transition from petty commodity agriculture to communist agriculture.\* The same must be said of the state organization of the distribution of products in place of private trade, i.e., the state procurement and delivery of grain to the cities and of industrial products to the countryside. Available statistical data on this subject will be given below.

Peasant farming continues to be petty commodity production. Here we have an extremely broad and very profoundly and firmly rooted basis for capitalism. On this basis capitalism persists and arises anew in a bitter struggle with Communism. The forms of this struggle are bag-trading and profiteering, as against state procurement of grain (and other products) and state distribution of products in general.

### 3

In illustration of these abstract theoretical propositions, we shall cite concrete data.

According to the figures of Komprod (the People's Commissariat of Food), state procurements of grain in Russia between August 1, 1917, and August 1, 1918, amounted to about 30,000,000 poods, and in the following year to about 110,000,000 poods. During the first three

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\* The number of "state farms" and "agricultural communes" in Soviet Russia amounts to approximately 3,536 and 1,961 respectively, and the number of agricultural artels to 3,696. Our Central Statistical Board is at present making an exact census of all state farms and communes. The results will begin to become available in November 1919.

months of the next campaign (1919-20) total procurements will presumably attain to about 45,000,000 poods, as against 37,000,000 poods for the same period (August-October) in 1918.

These figures obviously speak of a slow but steady improvement in the state of affairs from the point of view of the victory of Communism over capitalism. This improvement is being achieved in spite of the difficulties without world parallel, caused by the civil war, which the Russian and foreign capitalists are organizing, harnessing all the forces of the strongest powers in the world.

Therefore, in spite of the lies and slanders of the bourgeoisie of all countries and of their confessed and unconfessed henchmen (the "Socialists" of the Second International), one thing remains beyond dispute, viz., that from the point of view of the basic economic problem of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the victory of Communism over capitalism in our country is assured. All over the world the bourgeoisie is raging and fuming against Bolshevism and is organizing military expeditions, plots, etc., against the Bolsheviks just because it fully realizes that our success in reconstructing our social economy is inevitable, provided we are not crushed by military force. And its attempts to crush us in this way are not succeeding.

The extent to which we have already vanquished capitalism in the short time we have had at our disposal, and amidst the incredible difficulties under which we have had to work, will be seen from the following summarized figures. The Central Statistical Board has just prepared for the press data regarding the production and consumption of grain, not, it is true, for the whole of Soviet Russia, but for twenty-six of her provinces.

The results are as follows:

26 Provinces of Soviet Russia	Population, in millions	Production of grain (excluding seed and fodder), in millions of poods	Grain delivered, in millions of poods		Total amount of grain at disposal of population, in millions of poods	Grain consumption per capita of population, in poods
			Commissariat of Food	Profiteers		
Producing provinces	Urban 4.4	—	20.9	20.6	41.5	9.5
	Rural 28.6	625.4	—	—	481.8	16.9
Consuming provinces	Urban 5.9	—	20.0	20.0	40.0	6.8
	Rural 13.8	114.0	12.1	27.8	151.4	11.0
Total—(26 provinces)	52.7	739.4	53.0	68.4	714.7	13.6

Thus, approximately half the amount of grain supplied to the cities is provided by the Commissariat of Food and the other half by profiteers. This same proportion is revealed by a careful survey, made in 1918, of the food consumed by city workers. It should be borne in mind that for bread supplied by the state the worker pays *one-ninth* of what he pays the profiteer. The profiteering price for bread is *ten times* greater than the state price. That is what is revealed by an accurate study of workers' budgets.

## 4

If one carefully reflects on the figures quoted, one finds that they present an exact picture of the fundamental features of Russia's present-day economy.

The working people have been emancipated from their age-old oppressors and exploiters, the landlords and capi-

talists. This step in the direction of real freedom and real equality, a step which for its extent, its size, its rapidity, is without parallel in the world, is ignored by the followers of the bourgeoisie (including the petty-bourgeois democrats), who when they talk of freedom and equality mean parliamentary bourgeois democracy, which they falsely declare to be "democracy" in general, or "pure democracy" (Kautsky).

But the working people are concerned only with real equality and real freedom (freedom from the landlords and capitalists), and that is why they stand so firmly for Soviet government.

In this peasant country, those who were the first to gain, to gain most and gain immediately from the dictatorship of the proletariat were the peasants as a whole. The peasant in Russia starved under the landlords and capitalists. Throughout the long centuries of our history, the peasant never had the opportunity of working for himself: he starved, while surrendering hundreds of millions of poods of grain to the capitalists, for the cities and for foreign delivery. The peasant *for the first time* worked for himself and *fed better than the city dweller* under the dictatorship of the proletariat. For the first time the peasant saw real freedom—freedom to eat his bread, freedom from starvation. In the distribution of the land, as we know, equality has been established to the maximum: in the vast majority of cases the peasants are dividing the land according to the number of "mouths" to feed.

Socialism means the abolition of classes.

In order to abolish classes it is necessary, firstly, to overthrow the landlords and capitalists. This part of our task has been accomplished, but it is only a part, and moreover, *not* the most difficult part. In order to abolish classes it is necessary, secondly, to abolish the difference



between workingman and peasant, *to make them all workers*. This cannot be done all at once. This task is incomparably more difficult and will of necessity be a protracted one. It is not a problem that can be solved by overthrowing a class. It can be solved only by the organizational reconstruction of the whole social economy, by a transition from individual, disunited, petty commodity production to large-scale social production. This transition must of necessity be extremely protracted. It may only be delayed and complicated by hasty and incautious administrative legislation. It can be accelerated only by affording such assistance to the peasant as will enable him immensely to improve his whole agricultural technique, to reform it radically.

In order to solve the second and most difficult part of the problem, the proletariat, after having defeated the bourgeoisie, must unswervingly conduct its policy towards the peasantry along the following fundamental lines: the proletariat must separate, demarcate the peasant toiler from the peasant owner, the peasant worker from the peasant huckster, the peasant who labours from the peasant who profiteers.

In this demarcation lies the *whole essence* of Socialism.

And it is not surprising that the Socialists who are socialists in word but petty-bourgeois democrats in deed (the Martovs, the Chernovs, the Kautskys, and so on) do not understand this essence of Socialism.

The demarcation we here refer to is extremely difficult, for in actual life all the features of the "peasant," however diverse they may be, however contradictory they may be, are fused into one whole. Nevertheless, demarcation is possible; and not only is it possible, it inevitably follows from the conditions of peasant economy and peasant life. The toiling peasant has for ages been op-

pressed by the landlords, the capitalists, the hucksters and profiteers and by *their* state, including even the most democratic bourgeois republics. Throughout the ages the toiling peasant has educated himself to hate and loathe these oppressors and exploiters, and this "education," engendered by the conditions of life, *compels* the peasant to seek for an alliance with the workers against the capitalist and against the profiteer and trader. Yet at the same time, economic conditions, the conditions of commodity production, inevitably turn the peasant (not always, but in the vast majority of cases) into a huckster and profiteer.

The statistics quoted above reveal a striking difference between the peasant toiler and the peasant profiteer. That peasant who during 1918-19 delivered to the hungry workers of the cities 40,000,000 poods of grain at fixed state prices, who delivered this grain to the state agencies in spite of all the shortcomings of the latter, shortcomings which are fully realized by the workers' government, but which are unavoidable in the first period of the transition to Socialism—that peasant is a toiling peasant, a comrade on an equal footing with the socialist worker, his faithful ally, his kin brother in the fight against the yoke of capital. Whereas that peasant who clandestinely sold 40,000,000 poods of grain at ten times the state price, taking advantage of the need and hunger of the city worker, deceiving the state, and everywhere increasing and creating deceit, robbery and fraud—that peasant is a profiteer, an ally of the capitalist, a class enemy of the worker, an exploiter. For whoever possesses a surplus of grain gathered from land belonging to the whole state with the help of implements in which in one way or another is embodied the labour not only of the peasant but also of the worker and so on, whoever possesses a surplus of grain and profiteers in that grain is an exploiter of the hungry worker.

You are violators of freedom, equality and democracy—they shout at us on all hands, pointing to the inequality of the worker and the peasant under our constitution, to the dispersal of the Constituent Assembly, to the forcible confiscation of surplus grain, and so forth. We reply: Never in the world has there been a state which has done so much to remove the actual inequality, the actual lack of freedom from which the toiling peasant has suffered for centuries. But we shall never recognize equality with the peasant profiteer, just as we do not recognize “equality” between the exploiter and the exploited, between the full and the hungry, nor the “freedom” of the former to rob the latter. And those educated people who refuse to recognize this difference we shall treat as Whiteguards, even though they may call themselves democrats, Socialists, internationalists, Kautskys, Chernovs or Martovs.

## 5

Socialism means the abolition of classes. The dictatorship of the proletariat has done all it could to abolish classes. But classes cannot be abolished all at once.

And classes *remain* and *will remain* in the era of the dictatorship of the proletariat. When classes disappear the dictatorship will become unnecessary. Without the dictatorship of the proletariat they will not disappear.

Classes have remained, but in the era of the dictatorship of the proletariat *every* class has undergone a change, and the relations between the classes have also changed. The class struggle does not disappear under the dictatorship of the proletariat; it merely assumes different forms.

Under capitalism the proletariat was an oppressed class, a class bereft of all ownership in the means of production, the only class which stood directly and complete-

ly opposed to the bourgeoisie, and therefore the only one capable of being revolutionary to the very end. Having overthrown the bourgeoisie and conquered political power, the proletariat has become the *ruling* class; it holds the power of state, it has the disposal of the means of production that have already been socialized; it guides the wavering and intermediary elements and classes; it crushes the enhanced energy of resistance of the exploiters. All these are *specific* tasks of the class struggle, tasks which the proletariat formerly did not set itself, and could not have set itself.

The class of exploiters, the landlords and capitalists, has not disappeared and cannot disappear all at once under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The exploiters have been smashed, but not destroyed. They still have an international base in the form of international capital, a branch of which they represent. They still retain a part of certain means of production, they still have money, they still have vast social connections. Just because they have been defeated, their energy of resistance has increased a hundred- and thousandfold. The "art" of state, military and economic administration gives them a superiority, and a very great superiority, so that their importance is incomparably greater than their numerical strength among the population would warrant. The class struggle waged by the overthrown exploiters against the victorious vanguard of the exploited, i.e., the proletariat, has become incomparably more bitter. And it cannot be otherwise in the case of a revolution, if this concept is not replaced (as it is by all the heroes of the Second International) by reformist illusions.

Lastly, the peasantry, like the petty bourgeoisie in general, occupies a halfway, intermediary position even under the dictatorship of the proletariat: on the one hand, it consists of a fairly large (and in backward Russia, a

vast) mass of toilers, united by the common interest of the toilers to emancipate themselves from the landlord and the capitalist; on the other hand, it consists of disunited small masters, property owners and traders. Such an economic position inevitably gives rise to vacillation between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. And in view of the acute form which the struggle between these latter has assumed, in view of the incredibly severe break-up of all social relations, and in view of the great attachment of the peasants and the petty bourgeoisie generally to the old, the routine and the unchangeable, it is only natural that we should inevitably find them swinging from one side to the other, that we should find them wavering, changeable, uncertain, and so on.

The task of the proletariat in relation to this class—or to these social elements—is to guide it, to strive to establish its influence over it. The proletariat must lead the vacillating and unstable along with it.

If we compare all the basic forces and classes and their interrelations, as modified by the dictatorship of the proletariat, we shall realize how unutterably nonsensical and theoretically stupid is the common petty-bourgeois idea, shared by all representatives of the Second International, that the transition to Socialism is possible “by means of democracy” in general. The fundamental source of this error lies in the prejudice inherited from the bourgeoisie that “democracy” is something absolute and not concerned with classes. As a matter of fact, democracy itself passes into an entirely new phase under the dictatorship of the proletariat, while the class struggle rises to a higher level and dominates over each and every form.

General talk about freedom, equality and democracy is in fact but a stereotyped repetition of concepts which are only a cast from the relations of commodity produc-

tion. To attempt to solve the concrete problems of the dictatorship of the proletariat by means of such general talk is to accept the theories and principles of the bourgeoisie all along the line. From the point of view of the proletariat, the question can be put only in the following way: freedom from the oppression of which class? equality of which class with which? democracy based on private property, or on a struggle for the abolition of private property?—and so forth.

Long ago Engels in his *Anti-Dühring* explained that the concept equality is a cast from the relations of commodity production and becomes a prejudice if equality is not understood to mean the *abolition of classes*. This elementary truth regarding the distinction between the bourgeois democratic and the socialist conception of equality is constantly being forgotten. But if it is not forgotten, it becomes obvious that by overthrowing the bourgeoisie the proletariat takes the most decisive step towards the abolition of classes, and that in order to complete the process the proletariat must continue its class struggle, making use of the apparatus of state power and employing various methods of combating, influencing and bringing pressure to bear on the overthrown bourgeoisie and the vacillating petty bourgeoisie.

(To be continued)\*

October 30, 1919

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\* The article was not completed.—Ed.

## THE TASKS OF THE YOUTH LEAGUES

(SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE THIRD ALL-RUSSIAN CONGRESS  
OF THE RUSSIAN YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE)  
OCTOBER 2, 1920

*(The Congress greets Lenin with a stormy ovation.)*

Comrades, I would like to discuss today the fundamental tasks of the Young Communist League and, in this connection, what the youth organizations in a socialist republic should be like in general.

It is all the more necessary to deal with this question because in a certain sense it may be said that it is precisely the youth that will be faced with the real task of creating a communist society. For it is clear that the generation of workers that was brought up in capitalist society can, at best, accomplish the task of destroying the foundations of the old, capitalist social life, which was built on exploitation. At best it can accomplish the task of creating a social system that would help the proletariat and the toiling classes to retain power and to lay a firm foundation, on which only the generation that is starting to work under the new conditions, in a situation in which exploiting relations between men no longer exist, can build.

And so, in approaching the tasks of the youth from this angle, I must say that the tasks of the youth in general, and of the Young Communist League and all other organizations in particular, may be summed up in one word: learn.

Of course, this is only "one word." It does not answer the principal and most essential questions: what to learn, and how to learn? And the whole point here is that with the transformation of the old capitalist society, the teaching, training and education of the new generations that will create the communist society cannot be conducted on the old lines. The teaching, training and education of the youth must proceed from the material that has been left to us by the old society. We can build Communism only from the sum of knowledge, organizations and institutions, only with the stock of human forces and means that have been left to us by the old society. Only by radically remoulding the teaching, organization and training of the youth shall we be able to ensure that the efforts of the younger generation will result in the creation of a society that will be unlike the old society, i.e., in the creation of a communist society. That is why we must deal in detail with the question of what we should teach the youth and how the youth should learn if it really wants to justify the name of communist youth, and how it should be trained so as to be able to complete and consummate what we have started.

I must say that the first and most natural reply would seem to be that the Youth League, and the youth in general that wants to pass to Communism, should learn Communism.

But this reply—"learn Communism"—is too general. What do we need in order to learn Communism? What must be singled out from the sum of general knowledge to acquire a knowledge of Communism? Here a number of dangers arise, which often manifest themselves whenever the task of learning Communism is presented incorrectly, or when it is interpreted too one-sidedly.

Naturally, the first thought that enters one's mind is that learning Communism means imbibing the sum of



knowledge that is contained in communist textbooks, pamphlets and books. But such a definition of the study of Communism would be too crude and inadequate. If the study of Communism consisted solely in imbibing what is contained in communist books and pamphlets, we might all too easily obtain communist text-jugglers or brag-garts, and this would very often cause us harm and damage, because such people, having learned by rote what is contained in communist books and pamphlets, would prove incapable of combining this knowledge, and would be unable to act in the way Communism really demands.

One of the greatest evils and misfortunes left to us by the old capitalist society is the complete divorcement of books from practical life; for we have had books in which everything was described in the best possible manner, yet these books in the majority of cases were most disgusting and hypocritical lies that described capitalist society falsely.

That is why it would be extremely wrong merely to absorb what is written in books about Communism. In our speeches and articles we do not now merely repeat what was formerly said about Communism, because our speeches and articles are connected with our daily work in every branch. Without work, without struggle, an abstract knowledge of Communism obtained from communist pamphlets and books would be absolutely worthless, for it would continue the old divorcement of theory from practice, that old divorcement which constituted the most disgusting feature of the old bourgeois society.

It would be still more dangerous to start to imbibe only communist slogans. If we did not realize this danger in time, and if we did not direct all our efforts to avert this danger, the half million or million young men and women who called themselves Communists after studying Com-

munism in this way would only occasion great damage to the cause of Communism.

Here the question arises: how should we combine all this for the study of Communism? What must we take from the old school, from the old science? The old school declared that its aim was to produce men with an all-round education, to teach the sciences in general. We know that this was utterly false, for the whole of society was based and maintained on the division of men into classes, into exploiters and oppressed. Naturally, the whole of the old school, being thoroughly imbued with the class spirit, imparted knowledge only to the children of the bourgeoisie. Every word was falsified in the interests of the bourgeoisie. In these schools the younger generation of workers and peasants were not so much educated as drilled in the interests of this bourgeoisie. They were trained in such a way as to be useful servants of the bourgeoisie, able to create profits for it without disturbing its peace and leisure. That is why, while rejecting the old school, we have made it our task to take from it only what we require for real communist education.

This brings me to the reproaches and accusations which we constantly hear levelled at the old school, and which often lead to totally wrong conclusions. It is said that the old school was a school of cramming, grinding, learning by rote. That is true, but we must distinguish between what was bad in the old school and what is useful for us, and we must be able to choose from it what is necessary for Communism.

The old school was a school of cramming; it compelled pupils to imbibe a mass of useless, superfluous, barren knowledge, which clogged the brain and transformed the younger generation into bureaucrats regimented according to one single pattern. But you would

be committing a great mistake if you attempted to draw the conclusion that one can become a Communist without acquiring what human knowledge has accumulated. It would be a mistake to think that it is enough to learn communist slogans, the conclusions of communist science, without acquiring the sum of knowledge of which Communism itself is a consequence. Marxism is an example of how Communism arose out of the sum of human knowledge.

You have read and heard that communist theory, the science of Communism, mainly created by Marx, that this doctrine of Marxism has ceased to be the product of a single Socialist of the nineteenth century, even though he was a genius, and that it has become the teaching of millions and tens of millions of proletarians all over the world, who are applying this teaching in their struggle against capitalism. And if you were to ask why the teachings of Marx were able to capture the hearts of millions and tens of millions of the most revolutionary class, you would receive only one answer: it was because Marx took his stand on the firm foundation of the human knowledge acquired under capitalism. Having studied the laws of development of human society, Marx realized the inevitability of the development of capitalism, which was leading to Communism. And the principal thing is that he proved this only on the basis of the most exact, most detailed and most profound study of this capitalist society, by fully assimilating all that earlier science had produced. He critically reshaped everything that had been created by human society, not ignoring a single point. Everything that had been created by human thought he reshaped, criticized, tested on the working-class movement, and drew conclusions which people restricted by bourgeois limits or bound by bourgeois prejudices could not draw.

We must bear this in mind when, for example, we talk about proletarian culture. Unless we clearly understand that only by an exact knowledge of the culture created by the whole development of mankind and that only by reshaping this culture can we build proletarian culture—unless we understand that we shall not be able to solve this problem. Proletarian culture is not something that has sprung nobody knows whence, it is not an invention of people who call themselves experts in proletarian culture. That is all nonsense. Proletarian culture must be the result of a natural development of the stores of knowledge which mankind has accumulated under the yoke of capitalist society, landlord society, bureaucratic society. All these roads and paths have led, are leading, and continue to lead to proletarian culture, in the same way as political economy, reshaped by Marx, showed us what human society must come to, showed us the transition to the class struggle, to the beginning of the proletarian revolution.

When we so often hear representatives of the youth and certain advocates of a new system of education attacking the old school and saying that it was a school of cramming, we say to them that we must take what was good from the old school. We must not take from the old school the system of loading young people's minds with an immense amount of knowledge, nine-tenths of which was useless and one-tenth distorted. But this does not mean that we can confine ourselves to communist conclusions and learn only communist slogans. You will not create Communism that way. You can become a Communist only when you enrich your mind with the knowledge of all the treasures created by mankind.

We do not need cramming; but we do need to develop and perfect the mind of every student by a knowledge of the fundamental facts. For Communism would become a void, a mere signboard, and a Communist would become

a mere braggart, if all the knowledge he has obtained were not digested in his mind. You must not only assimilate this knowledge, you must assimilate it critically, so as not to cram your mind with useless lumber, but enrich it with all those facts that are indispensable to the modern man of education. If a Communist took it into his head to boast about his Communism because of the ready-made conclusions he had acquired, without putting in a great deal of serious and hard work, without understanding the facts which he must examine critically, he would be a very deplorable Communist. Such superficiality would be decidedly fatal. If I know that I know little, I shall strive to learn more; but if a man says that he is a Communist and that he need know nothing thoroughly, he will never be anything like a Communist.

The old school turned out servants needed by the capitalists; the old school transformed men of science into men who had to write and say what pleased the capitalists. Therefore we must abolish it. But does the fact that we must abolish it, destroy it, mean that we must not take from it all that mankind has accumulated that is essential for man? Does it mean that we do not have to distinguish between what was necessary for capitalism and what is necessary for Communism?

We are replacing the old drill-sergeant methods that were employed in bourgeois society in opposition to the will of the majority by the class-conscious discipline of the workers and peasants, who combine hatred of the old society with the determination, ability and readiness to unite and organize their forces for this fight, in order to transform the wills of millions and hundreds of millions of people, disunited, dispersed and scattered over the territory of a huge country, into a single will; for without this single will defeat is inevitable. Without this solidarity, without this conscious discipline of the workers and

peasants, our cause will be hopeless. Without this we shall not be able to beat the capitalists and landlords of the whole world. We shall not even consolidate the foundation, let alone build a new, communist society on that foundation. Similarly, while rejecting the old school, while cherishing an absolutely legitimate and essential hatred for the old school, while prizing the readiness to destroy the old school, we must realize that in place of the old system of tuition, the old cramming, the old drill, we must put the ability to acquire the sum of human knowledge, and to acquire it in such a way that Communism shall not be something learned by rote, but something that you yourselves have thought over, that it shall embody the conclusions which are inevitable from the standpoint of modern education.

That is the way we must present the main tasks when speaking of the task of learning Communism.

In order to explain this to you, and as an approach to the question of how to learn, I shall take a practical example. You all know that following immediately on the military tasks, the tasks of defending the republic, we are now being confronted with economic tasks. We know that communist society cannot be built unless we regenerate industry and agriculture, and they must not be regenerated in the old way. They must be regenerated on a modern basis, in accordance with the last word in science. You know that this basis is electricity, and that only when the whole country, all branches of industry and agriculture have been electrified, only when you have mastered this task will you be able to build for yourselves the communist society which the older generation cannot build up. Confronting you is the task of economically reviving the whole country, of reorganizing and restoring both agriculture and industry on a modern technical basis which rests on modern science and technology,

on electricity. You realize perfectly well that illiterate people cannot tackle electrification, and that mere literacy is not enough either. It is not enough to understand what electricity is; it is necessary to know how to apply it technically to industry and to agriculture, and to the various branches of industry and agriculture. We must learn this ourselves, and must teach it to the whole of the growing generation of toilers. This is the task that confronts every class-conscious Communist, every young person who regards himself a Communist and who clearly understands that by joining the Young Communist League he has pledged himself to help the Party build Communism and to help the whole younger generation create a communist society. He must realize that he can create it only on the basis of modern education; and if he does not acquire this education Communism will remain only a pious wish.

The task of the old generation was to overthrow the bourgeoisie. The main task then was to criticize the bourgeoisie, to arouse hatred of the bourgeoisie among the masses, to develop class consciousness and the ability to unite their forces. The new generation is confronted with a much more complicated task. Not only have you to combine all your forces to uphold the power of the workers and peasants against the attacks of the capitalists. That you must do. That you have clearly understood; that the Communist distinctly perceives. But it is not enough. You must build a communist society. In many respects the first half of the work has been done. The old order has been destroyed, as it deserved to be, it has been transformed into a heap of ruins, as it deserved to be. The ground has been cleared, and on this ground the young communist generation must build a communist society. You are faced with the task of construction, and you can cope with it only by mastering all modern knowledge, on-

ly if you are able to transform Communism from ready-made, memorized formulas, counsels, recipes, prescriptions and programs into that living thing which unites your immediate work, and only if you are able to transform Communism into a guide for your practical work.

This is the task by which you should be guided in educating, training and rousing the whole of the younger generation. You must be the foremost among the millions of builders of communist society, which every young man and young woman should be. Unless you enlist the whole mass of young workers and peasants in the work of building Communism, you will not build a communist society.

This naturally brings me to the question how we should teach Communism and what the specific features of our methods should be.

Here, first of all, I will deal with the question of communist ethics.

You must train yourselves to be Communists. The task of the Youth League is to organize its practical activities in such a way that, by learning, organizing, unifying and fighting, its members should train themselves and all who look to it as a leader; it should train Communists. The whole object of training, educating and teaching the youth of today should be to imbue them with communist ethics.

But is there such a thing as communist ethics? Is there such a thing as communist morality? Of course, there is. It is often made to appear that we have no ethics of our own; and very often the bourgeoisie accuse us Communists of repudiating all ethics. This is a method of shuffling concepts, of throwing dust in the eyes of the workers and peasants.

In what sense do we repudiate ethics and morality?

In the sense in which it is preached by the bourgeoisie, who derived ethics from God's commandments. We, of course, say that we do not believe in God, and that we



know perfectly well that the clergy, the landlords and the bourgeoisie spoke in the name of God in pursuit of their own interests as exploiters. Or instead of deriving ethics from the commandments of morality, from the commandments of God, they derived them from idealist or semi-idealist phrases, which always amounted to something very similar to God's commandments.

We repudiate all morality taken apart from human society and classes. We say that it is a deception, a fraud, a befogging of the minds of the workers and peasants in the interests of the landlords and capitalists.

We say that our morality is entirely subordinated to the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat. Our morality is derived from the interests 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, we had to overthrow them; but for this we had to create unity. God would not create such unity.

This unity could be provided only by factories and workshops, only by the proletariat, trained and roused from its long slumber. Only when that class was formed did the mass movement begin which led to what we see now—the victory of the proletarian revolution in one of the weakest of countries, which for three years has been repelling the onslaught of the bourgeoisie of the whole world. And we see how the proletarian revolution is growing all over the world. We now say, on the basis of experience, that only the proletariat could have created that compact force which the disunited and scattered peasantry are following and which has withstood all the onslaughts of the exploiters. Only this class can help the toiling masses to unite, rally their ranks and finally defend, finally consolidate and finally build up communist society.

That is why we say that for us there is no such thing as morality apart from human society; it is a fraud. Morality for us is subordinated to the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat.

What does this class struggle mean? It means overthrowing the tsar, overthrowing the capitalists, abolishing the capitalist class.

And what are classes in general? Classes are what permits one section of society to appropriate the labour of the other section. If one section of society appropriates all the land, we have a landlord class and a peasant class. If one section of society possesses the mills and factories, shares and capital, while another section works in these factories, we have a capitalist class and a proletarian class.

It was not difficult to drive out the tsar—that required only a few days. It was not very difficult to drive out the landlords—that was done in a few months. Nor was it very difficult to drive out the capitalists. But it is incomparably more difficult to abolish classes; we still have the division into workers and peasants. If the peasant is settled on his separate plot of land and appropriates superfluous grain, that is, grain that he does not need for himself or for his cattle, while the rest of the people have to go without bread, then the peasant becomes an exploiter. The more grain he clings to, the more profitable he finds it; as for the rest, let them starve: "The more they starve the dearer I can sell this grain." Everybody must work according to a common plan, on common land, in common mills and factories and under common management. Is it easy to attain this? You see that it is not as easy as driving out the tsar, the landlords and the capitalists. What is required is that the proletariat re-educate, re-train a section of the peasantry; it must win over those who are toiling peasants in order to crush the resistance

of those peasants who are rich and are profiting by the poverty and want of the rest. Hence the task of the proletarian struggle is not completed by the fact that we have overthrown the tsar and have driven out the landlords and capitalists, and to complete it is the task of the system we call the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The class struggle is still continuing; it has merely changed its forms. It is the class struggle of the proletariat to prevent the return of the old exploiters, to unite the scattered masses of unenlightened peasants into one union. The class struggle is continuing and it is our task to subordinate all interests to this struggle. And we subordinate our communist morality to this task. We say: morality is what serves to destroy the old exploiting society and to unite all the toilers around the proletariat, which is building up a new, communist society.

Communist morality is the morality which serves this struggle, which unites the toilers against all exploitation, against all small property; for small property puts into the hands of one person what has been created by the labour of the whole of society. In our country the land is common property.

But suppose I take a piece of this common property and grow on it twice as much grain as I need and profiteer in the surplus? Suppose I argue that the more starving people there are the more they will pay? Would I then be behaving like a Communist? No, I would be behaving like an exploiter, like a proprietor. This must be combated. If this is allowed to go on things will slide back to the rule of the capitalists, to the rule of the bourgeoisie, as has more than once happened in previous revolutions. And in order to prevent the restoration of the rule of the capitalists and the bourgeoisie we must not allow profiteering, we must not allow individuals to enrich themselves at the expense of the rest, and the toilers must unite with the

proletariat and form a communist society. This is the principal feature of the fundamental task of the League and of the organization of the communist youth.

The old society was based on the principle: rob or be robbed, work for others or make others work for you, be a slaveowner or a slave. Naturally, people brought up in such a society imbibe with their mother's milk, so to speak, the psychology, the habit, the concept: you are either a slaveowner or a slave or else, a small owner, a small employee, a small official, an intellectual—in short, a man who thinks only of himself, and doesn't give a hang for anybody else.

If I work this plot of land, I don't give a hang for anybody else; if others starve, all the better, the more I will get for my grain. If I have a job as a doctor, engineer, teacher, or clerk, I don't give a hang for anybody else. Perhaps if I toady to and please the powers that be I shall keep my job, and even get on in life and become a bourgeois. A Communist cannot have such a psychology and such sentiments. When the workers and peasants proved that they are able by their own efforts to defend themselves and create a new society—that was the beginning of the new communist training, training in the struggle against the exploiters, training in alliance with the proletariat against the self-seekers and small owners, against the psychology and habits which say: I seek my own profit and I don't give a hang for anything else.

This is the reply to the question how the young and rising generation should learn Communism.

It can learn Communism only by linking up every step in its studies, training and education with the continuous struggle the proletarians and the toilers are waging against the old exploiting society. When people talk to us about morality, we say: for the Communist, morality lies entirely in this solid, united discipline and conscious mass

struggle against the exploiters. We do not believe in an eternal morality, and we expose the deceit of all the fables about morality. Morality serves the purpose of helping human society to rise to a higher level and to get rid of the exploitation of labour.

To achieve this we need the younger generation which began to awaken to conscious life in the midst of the disciplined and desperate struggle against the bourgeoisie. In this struggle it is training genuine Communists, it must subordinate to this struggle and link with it every step in its studies, education and training. The training of the communist youth must consist not in giving them sentimental speeches and moral precepts. This is not what training consists in. When people saw how their fathers and mothers lived under the yoke of the landlords and capitalists, when they themselves experienced the sufferings that befell those who started the struggle against the exploiters, when they saw what sacrifices the continuation of this struggle entailed in order to defend what had been won, and when they saw what frenzied foes the landlords and capitalists are—they were trained in this environment to become Communists. The basis of communist morality is the struggle for the consolidation and completion of Communism. That too is the basis of communist training, education, and teaching. That is the reply to the question how Communism should be learnt.

We would not believe in teaching, training and education if they were confined only to the school and were divorced from the storm of life. As long as the workers and peasants continue to be oppressed by the landlords and capitalists, and as long as the schools remain in the hands of the landlords and capitalists, the young generation will remain blind and ignorant. But our school must impart to the youth the fundamentals of knowledge, the abil-

ity to work out communist views independently; it must make educated people of them. In the time during which people attend school, it must train them to be participants in the struggle for emancipation from the exploiters. The Young Communist League will justify its name as the League of the young communist generation only when it links up every step of its teaching, training and education with participation in the general struggle of all the toilers against the exploiters. For you know perfectly well that as long as Russia remains the only workers' republic, while the old bourgeois system exists in the rest of the world, we shall be weaker than they, we shall be under the constant menace of a new attack; and that only if we learn to be solid and united shall we win in the further struggle and—having gained strength—become really invincible. Thus, to be a Communist means that you must organize and unite the whole rising generation and set an example of training and discipline in this struggle. Then you will be able to start building the edifice of communist society and bring it to completion.

In order to make this clearer to you I will quote an example. We call ourselves Communists. What is a Communist? Communist is a Latin word. Communis is the Latin for "common." Communist society is a society in which all things—the land, the factories—are owned in common and the people work in common. That is Communism.

Is it possible to work in common if each one works separately on his own plot of land? Work in common cannot be brought about all at once. That is impossible. It does not drop from the skies. It comes by toil and suffering, it is created in the course of struggle. Old books are of no use here; no one will believe them. One's own living experience is required. When Kolchak and Denikin advanced from Siberia and the South the peas-

ants were on their side. They did not like Bolshevism because the Bolsheviks took their grain at a fixed price. But when the peasants in Siberia and the Ukraine experienced the rule of Kolchak and Denikin, they realized that they had only one alternative: either to go to the capitalist, and he would at once hand them over into slavery to the landlord; or to follow the worker, who, it is true, did not promise a land flowing with milk and honey, who demanded iron discipline and firmness in an arduous struggle, but who would lead them out of enslavement to the capitalists and landlords. When even the ignorant peasants realized and saw this from their own experience they became conscious adherents of Communism, who had passed through a stern school. It is such experience that must form the basis of all the activities of the Young Communist League.

I have replied to the questions what we must learn, what we must take from the old school and from the old science. I will now try to answer the question how this must be learnt. The answer is: only by inseparably linking every step in the activities of the school, every step in training, education and teaching, with the struggle of all the toilers against the exploiters.

I will quote a few examples from the experience of the work of some of the youth organizations to illustrate how this training in Communism should proceed. Everybody is talking about abolishing illiteracy. You know that a communist society cannot be built in a illiterate country. It is not enough for the Soviet government to issue an order, or for the Party to issue a particular slogan, or to assign a certain number of the best workers to this task. The younger generation itself must take up this work. Communism means that the youth, the young men and women who belong to the Youth League, would say: this is our job; we shall unite and go into

the rural districts to abolish illiteracy, so that there shall be no illiterates among our rising generation. We are trying to get the rising generation to devote its activities to this work. You know that we cannot quickly transform ignorant, illiterate Russia into a literate country. But if the Youth League sets to work on this job, if all the young people work for the benefit of all, the League, which unites 400,000 young men and women, will be entitled to call itself a Young Communist League. Another task of the League is, after having acquired any particular knowledge, to help those young people who cannot liberate themselves from the darkness of illiteracy by their own efforts. Being a member of the Youth League means devoting one's labour and efforts to the common cause. That is what communist training means. Only in the course of such work does a young man or woman become a real Communist. Only if they achieve practical results in this work will they become Communists.

Take, for example, work on the suburban vegetable gardens. Isn't this a task? This is one of the tasks of the Young Communist League. The people are starving; there is starvation in the mills and factories. In order to save ourselves from starvation, vegetable gardens must be developed. But agriculture is being carried on in the old way. Therefore, more class-conscious elements must undertake this work, and you would then find that the number of vegetable gardens would increase, their area grow, and the results improve. The Young Communist League must take an active part in this work. Every League and every branch of the League should regard this as its job.

The Young Communist League must be a shock group, helping in every job and displaying initiative and enterprise. The League should be such that any worker may see that it consists of people whose teachings he may



not understand, whose teachings he perhaps may not immediately believe, but from whose practical work and activity he could see that they are really the people who are showing him the right road.

If the Young Communist League fails to organize its work in this way in all fields, it will mean that it is slipping into the old, bourgeois path. We must combine our training with the struggle of the toilers against the exploiters in order to help the former to perform the tasks that follow from the teachings of Communism.

The members of the League should use every spare hour to improve the vegetable gardens, or to organize the education of young people in some mill or factory, and so forth. We want to transform Russia from a poverty-stricken and wretched country into a wealthy country. And the Young Communist League must combine its education, teaching and training with the labour of the workers and peasants, so as not to shut itself up in its schools and not to confine itself to reading communist books and pamphlets. Only by working side by side with the workers and peasants can one become a genuine Communist. And everyone must be made to see that all those who belong to the Youth League are literate and at the same time know how to work. When everyone sees that we have driven the old drill methods from the old school and have replaced them by conscious discipline, that all young men and women are taking part in subbotniks, that they are utilizing every suburban farm to help the population—the people will cease to look upon labour as they looked upon it before.

It is the task of the Young Communist League to organize assistance in the village or in the city block in such a matter as—I take a small example—cleanliness or the distribution of food. How was this done in the old capitalist society? Everybody worked for himself alone, and

nobody cared whether there were aged or sick, or whether all the housework fell on the shoulders of the women, who, as a result, were in a state of oppression and slavery. Whose business is it to combat this? It is the business of the Youth Leagues, which must say: we shall change all this; we shall organize detachments of young people who will help to maintain cleanliness or to distribute food, who will make systematic house-to-house inspections, who will work in an organized way for the benefit of the whole of society, properly distributing their forces and demonstrating that labour must be organized labour.

The generation which is now about fifty years old cannot expect to see the communist society. This generation will die out before then. But the generation which is now fifteen years old will see the communist society, and will itself build this society. And it must know that the whole purpose of its life is to build this society. In the old society work was carried on by separate families, and nobody united their labour except the landlords and capitalists, who oppressed the masses of the people. We must organize all labour, no matter how dirty and arduous it may be, in such a way that every worker and peasant may say: I am part of the great army of free labour, and I can build my life without the landlords and capitalists, I can establish the communist system. The Young Communist League must train everybody to conscious and disciplined labour from an early age. In this way we shall be sure that the problems that are now confronting us will be solved. We must assume that no less than ten years will be required for the electrification of the country, so that our impoverished land may be served by the latest achievements of technology. And so, the generation which is now fifteen years old, and which in ten or twenty years' time will be living in communist so-

ciety, must approach all their tasks in education in such a way that every day, in every village and in every town, the young people shall engage in the practical solution of some problem of common labour, even though the smallest, even though the simplest. To the extent that this is done in every village, to the extent that communist emulation develops, to the extent that the youth prove that they can unite their labour, to that extent will the success of communist construction be ensured. Only by regarding our every step from the standpoint of the success of this construction, only by asking ourselves whether we have done all we can to be united, conscious toilers, will the Young Communist League succeed in uniting its half a million members into a single army of labour and win universal respect. (*Stormy applause.*)

## OUR REVOLUTION

APROPOS OF THE NOTES OF N. SUKHANOV

### I

I have lately been glancing through Sukhanov's *Notes on the Revolution*. What strikes one particularly is the pedantry of all our petty-bourgeois democrats, as of all the heroes of the Second International. Apart from the fact that they are all extraordinarily fainthearted, that when it comes to the minutest deviation from the German model even the best of them fortify themselves with reservations—apart from this characteristic, which is common to all petty-bourgeois democrats and has been abundantly manifested by them during the whole course of the revolution, what strikes one is their slavish imitation of the past.

They all call themselves Marxists, but their conception of Marxism is impossibly pedantic. They have completely failed to understand what is decisive in Marxism, namely, its revolutionary dialectics. They have absolutely failed to understand Marx's plain statements to the effect that in times of revolution the utmost flexibility is demanded, and have even failed to notice, for instance, the statement Marx made in one of his letters—I think it was in 1856—expressing the hope of a union in Germany of a peasant war, which might create a revolutionary situation, with the working-class movement—even this plain statement they avoid and prowl around it like a cat around a bowl of hot porridge.

Their whole conduct betrays them as cowardly reformists, who are afraid to take the smallest step away from the bourgeoisie, let alone break with it, and at the same time mask their cowardice by the wildest rhetoric and braggadocio. But even from the purely theoretical point of view, what strikes one in the case of all of them is their utter failure to grasp the following Marxist considerations. Up to now they have seen capitalism and bourgeois democracy in Western Europe follow a definite path of development, and they cannot conceive that this path can be taken as a model only *mutatis mutandis*, only with certain amendments (quite insignificant from the standpoint of the general development of world history).

*Firstly*—the case of a revolution connected with the first imperialist world war. Such a revolution was bound to reveal new features, or variations, resulting from the war itself; for the world has never seen such a war, and in such a situation. We find that to this day the bourgeoisie of the wealthiest countries have been unable since the war to restore “normal” bourgeois relations. Yet our reformists, petty bourgeois who pretend to be revolutionaries, believed, and still believe that normal bourgeois relations are the limit (thus far and no further shalt thou go). And even their conception of “normal” is utterly commonplace and narrow.

*Secondly*, they are complete strangers to the thought that, while the development of world history as a whole follows general laws, it is by no means precluded, but, on the contrary, to be presumed, that certain periods of development may display peculiarities either in form or in order of development. For instance, it does not even occur to them that Russia—standing as she does on the borderline between the civilized countries and the countries which this war had for the first time definitely brought into the orbit of civilization, that is, all the Orien-

tal, non-European countries—might therefore and was indeed bound to reveal certain peculiar features which, while of course in keeping with the general line of world development, distinguish her revolution from all previous revolutions in West-European countries, and which introduce certain partial innovations in passing to the Oriental countries.

Infinitely commonplace, for instance, is the argument they learned by rote during the development of West-European Social-Democracy, namely, that we are not yet ripe for Socialism, that, as certain “learned” gentlemen among them express it, the objective economic premises for Socialism do not exist in our country. It does not occur to any of them to ask: But what about a people that found itself in a revolutionary situation such as that created during the first imperialist war? Might it not, under the influence of the hopelessness of its situation, fling itself into a struggle that offered it at least some chance of securing conditions for the further development of its civilization, even if those conditions were somewhat out of the ordinary?

“Russia has not attained the level of development of productive forces that makes Socialism possible.” Of this proposition, all the heroes of the Second International, including, of course, Sukhanov, are as proud as a peacock. They keep repeating this incontrovertible proposition over and over again in a thousand different keys, and imagine that it is the decisive criterion of our revolution.

But what if peculiar circumstances drew Russia, first, into the world imperialist war in which every more or less influential West-European country was involved, and brought her development to the verge of the revolutions that were maturing and had partly already begun in the East, in conditions which enabled us to achieve precisely

that union of a "peasant war" with the working-class movement which no less a "Marxist" than Marx himself had in 1856 suggested as a possible prospect for Prussia?

What if the complete hopelessness of the situation, by stimulating the efforts of the workers and peasants tenfold, offered us the possibility of creating the fundamental requisites of civilization in a different way from that of the West-European countries? Has that altered the general line of development of world history? Has that altered the basic relations between the basic classes of all the countries that are, or have been, drawn into the general course of world history?

If a definite level of culture is required for the building of Socialism (although nobody can say just what that definite "level of culture" is, for it differs in every West-European country), why cannot we begin by first achieving the prerequisites for that definite level of culture in a revolutionary way, and *then*, with the aid of the workers' and peasants' government and the Soviet system, proceed to overtake the other nations?

January 16, 1923

## II

You say that civilization is necessary for the building of Socialism. Very good. But why could we not first create such prerequisites of civilization in our country as the expulsion of the landlords and the Russian capitalists, and then start moving towards Socialism? Where, in what books, have you read that such variations of the customary historical order of events are impermissible or impossible?

Napoleon, one recalls, wrote: *On s'engage et puis . . . on voit*. Rendered freely this means: One must first join

a serious battle and then see what happens. Well, we did first join serious battle in October 1917, and then we saw such details of development (from the standpoint of world history they were certainly details) as the Brest-Litovsk Peace, the New Economic Policy, and so forth. And now there can be no doubt that in the main we have been victorious.

Our Sukhanovs, not to speak of Social-Democrats still further to the Right, never even dream that otherwise revolutions could not be made at all. Our European philistines never even dream that the subsequent revolutions in Oriental countries, which possess much vaster populations and a much vaster diversity of social conditions, will undoubtedly display even greater peculiarities than the Russian revolution.

It need hardly be said that a textbook written on Kautskyite lines was a very useful thing in its day. But it is really time to abandon the idea that this textbook foresaw all forms of development of subsequent world history. It is high time to say that those who think so are simply fools.

January 17, 1923



## ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MILITANT MATERIALISM

...I should like to dwell on certain questions that more closely define the content and program of the work set forth by the editors of the magazine in the introductory announcement to No. 1-2.

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

This likewise refers to the work of defending materialism and Marxism which has been undertaken by the magazine *Pod Znamenem Marxisma*. Fortunately, the main trends of advanced social thought in Russia have a solid materialist tradition. To say nothing of G. V. Plekhanov, it is enough to mention Chernyshevsky, from whom the modern Narodniks (the Populist Socialists, Socialist-Revolutionaries, etc.) have frequently retreated in a quest for fashionable reactionary philosophical doctrines, captivated by the tinsel of the so-called "last word" in European science and unable to discern beneath this tinsel one or another variety of servility to the bourgeoisie, to bourgeois prejudice and bourgeois reaction.

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

Our Russian intellectuals who are fond of thinking themselves advanced; as indeed their brethren in all other countries, are very much averse to shifting the question to the plane of the opinion expressed in Dietzgen's words. But they are averse to it because they cannot look the truth in the face. One has only to reflect ever so little on the governmental, general economic, social and every

other kind of dependence of modern educated people on the ruling bourgeoisie to realize that Dietzgen's mordant description was absolutely true. One has only to recall the vast majority of the fashionable philosophical trends that arise so frequently in European countries, beginning for example with those connected with the discovery of radium and ending with those which are now seeking to clutch at the skirts of Einstein, to gain an idea of the connection between the class interests and the class position of the bourgeoisie and its support of all forms of religion on the one hand, and the ideological content of the fashionable philosophical trends on the other.

It will be seen from the above that a magazine that sets out to be an organ of militant materialism must be a fighting organ in the first place, in the sense of unflinchingly exposing and indicting all modern "graduated flunkies of clericalism," irrespective of whether they appear as the representatives of official science or as free lances calling themselves "democratic left or ideologically socialist" publicists.

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

Engels long ago advised the leaders of the modern

proletariat to translate for mass distribution among the people the militant atheist literature of the end of the eighteenth century. To our shame be it said, we have not done this up to the present (one of the numerous proofs that it is easier to conquer power in a revolutionary epoch than to know how to use this power properly). Our apathy, inactivity and incompetence are sometimes excused on all sorts of "lofty" grounds, as, for example, that the old atheist literature of the eighteenth century is antiquated, unscientific, naive, etc. There is nothing worse than such pseudoscientific sophistries, which serve as a screen either for pedantry or for a complete misunderstanding of Marxism. There is, of course, much that is unscientific and naive in the atheist writings of the eighteenth-century revolutionaries. But nobody prevents the publishers of these writings from abridging them and providing them with brief postscripts pointing out the progress made by mankind since the end of the eighteenth century in the scientific criticism of religions, mentioning the latest writings on the subject, and so forth. It would be the biggest and most grievous mistake a Marxist could make to think that the millions, the masses (especially the peasants and artisans), who have been condemned by all modern society to darkness, ignorance and superstition, can extricate themselves from this darkness only along the straight line of a purely Marxist education. These masses should be supplied with the most diverse atheist propaganda material, they should be made acquainted with facts from the most diverse spheres of life, they should be approached in this way and in that way, so as to interest them, rouse them from their religious torpor, stir them from the most varied angles and by the most varied methods, and so forth.

The keen, vivacious and talented writings of the old eighteenth-century atheists, which wittily and openly attacked the prevailing clericalism, will very often prove

to be a thousand times more suitable for arousing people from their religious torpor than the dull and dry paraphrases of Marxism, almost completely unillustrated by skilfully selected facts, which predominate in our literature and which (it is no use hiding the fact) frequently distort Marxism. We have translations of all the major works of Marx and Engels. There are absolutely no grounds for fearing that the old atheism and old materialism may remain unsupplemented by the corrections introduced by Marx and Engels. The most important thing—and it is this that is most frequently overlooked by our Communists who are supposedly Marxists, but who in fact mutilate Marxism—is to know how to awaken in the still quite undeveloped masses an intelligent attitude towards religious questions and intelligent criticism of religion.

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

Two examples. Professor R. Y. Wipper published in 1918 a little book entitled *The Origin of Christianity* (Pharos Publishing House, Moscow). In his account of the principal results of modern science, the author not only refrains from combating the superstitions and deception which are the weapons of the church as a political organization, not only evades these questions, but makes the simply ridiculous and most reactionary claim that he rises superior to both “extremes”—the idealist and the materialist. This is toadying to the ruling bourgeoisie, which all over the world devotes hundreds of millions of rubles from the profits squeezed out of the toilers to the support of religion.

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

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

*Pod Znamenem Marxisma*, which sets out to be an organ of militant materialism, should devote much of its space to atheist propaganda, to reviews of the literature on the subject and to correcting the immense shortcomings of our governmental work in this field. It is particularly important to utilize books and pamphlets which contain many concrete facts and comparisons showing how the class interests and class organizations of the modern bourgeoisie are connected with the organizations of religious institutions and religious propaganda.

Extremely important is all material relating to the United States of America, where the official, state connec-

tion between religion and capital is less manifest. But, on the other hand, it makes it clearer to us that so-called "modern democracy" (which the Mensheviks, the Socialist-Revolutionaries, partly also the Anarchists, etc., so unreasonably worship) is nothing but the freedom to preach that which is to the advantage of the bourgeoisie to preach, namely, the most reactionary ideas, religion, obscurantism, defence of the exploiters, etc.

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

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

The article by A. Timiryazev on Einstein's theory of relativity published in *Pod Znamenem Marxizma*, No. 1-2, permits us to hope that the magazine will succeed in effecting this second alliance too. Greater attention should be paid to it. It should be remembered that it is precisely the sharp upheaval which modern natural science is undergoing that very often gives rise to reactionary phil-

osophical schools and minor schools, trends and minor trends. Therefore, unless the problems raised by the recent revolution in natural science are followed, and unless natural scientists are enlisted in this work of a philosophical magazine, militant materialism can be neither militant nor materialism. If Timiryazev was obliged to observe in the first number of the magazine that the theory of Einstein, who, according to Timiryazev, is himself not making any active attack on the foundations of materialism, has already been seized upon by a vast number of representatives of the bourgeois intelligentsia of all countries, it should be noted that this applies not only to Einstein, but to a number, if not to the majority, of the great reformers of natural science since the end of the nineteenth century.

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



and historical torpor have hitherto been conditions responsible for stagnation and decay in many advanced European countries—every day of the awakening to life of new peoples and new classes serves as a fresh confirmation of Marxism.

Of course, this study, this interpretation, this propaganda of Hegelian dialectics is an extremely difficult work, and the first experiments in this direction will undoubtedly be accompanied by errors. But only he who never does anything never commits errors. Taking as our basis Marx's method of applying the Hegelian dialectics materialistically conceived, we can and should elaborate this dialectics from all aspects, print in the magazine excerpts from Hegel's principal works, interpret them materialistically and comment on them with the help of examples of the way Marx applied dialectics, as well as of examples of dialectics in the sphere of economic and political relations, which recent history, especially modern imperialist war and revolution, is providing in unusual abundance. In my opinion, the group of editors and contributors of *Pod Znamenem Marxisma* should be a kind of "Society of Materialist Friends of Hegelian Dialectics." Modern natural scientists (if they know how to seek, and if we learn to help them) will find in the Hegelian dialectics materialistically interpreted a series of answers to the philosophical problems which are being raised by the revolution in natural science and which make the intellectual admirers of bourgeois fashion "stumble" into reaction.

Unless it sets itself such a task, and systematically fulfils it, materialism cannot be militant materialism. It will be not so much the fighter as the fought, to use an expression of Shchedrin's. Without this, eminent natural scientists will as often as hitherto be helpless in making their philosophical deductions and generalizations. For

natural science is progressing so fast and is undergoing such a profound revolutionary upheaval in all spheres that it cannot possibly dispense with philosophical deductions.

In conclusion, I will cite an example which, while not pertaining to the domain of philosophy, does at any rate pertain to the domain of social questions, to which *Pod Znamenem Marxisma* also desires to devote attention.

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

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

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

On page 83, I read:

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

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

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

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

If 92 divorces for every 10,000 marriages seem to Mr. Sorokin a fantastic figure, one can only suppose either that the author lived and was brought up in a monastery so entirely walled-off from life that hardly anyone will believe such a monastery ever existed, or that the author

is distorting the truth in the interest of reaction and the bourgeoisie. Anybody in the least acquainted with social conditions in bourgeois countries knows that the actual number of actual divorces (of course, not sanctioned by church and law) is everywhere immeasurably greater. The only difference between Russia and other countries in this respect is that our laws do not sanctify hypocrisy and the debasement of woman and her child, but openly and in the name of the government declare systematic war on all hypocrisy and all debasement.

The Marxist magazine will have to wage war also on these modern "educated" feudalists. Not a few of them, very likely, are in receipt of government money and are employed by our government to educate our youth, although they are no more fitted for this than notorious perverts are fitted for the post of superintendents of educational establishments for the young.

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

But it will learn, given the will to learn.

March 12, 1922

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> The survey of the literature of Marxism and on Marxism which Lenin appended to the article when he wrote it in 1914 for the *Granat Encyclopedia*, but which is omitted in the present edition. p. 16
- <sup>2</sup> *The Communist League*—the first international organization of the revolutionary proletariat, formed in London in the summer of 1847 at a congress of delegates from revolutionary proletarian organizations. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels were the directing figures of the Communist League. At its instructions they wrote the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. The League existed until 1852. See Frederick Engels' article "On the History of the Communist League" (K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Two-Vol. ed., Vol. II, Moscow 1949, pp. 306-23). p. 17
- <sup>3</sup> The epigraph is from Nekrasov's poem, "In Memory of Dobrolyubov." p. 56
- <sup>4</sup> *Arakcheyev*, A. A.—a reactionary statesman of the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries who greatly influenced domestic and foreign policy during the reigns of Paul I and Alexander I. His name is associated with a long period of unbridled police tyranny and military despotism (hence, "Arakcheyevism"). p. 94
- <sup>5</sup> *Narodovoltsi*—from *Narodnaya Volya* (People's Freedom), a secret Narodnik society founded in 1879 to wage a revolutionary struggle against the tsarist autocracy.

The *Narodnaya Volya* was smashed by the tsarist government soon after the assassination of Alexander II by members of the society on March 1 (13), 1881. Following this the majority of the Narodniks abandoned the revolutionary struggle against tsardom, began to advocate reconciliation and agreement with the autocracy. These degenerate offspring of Narodism, the liberal Narodniks of the 1880's and 1890's, voiced the interests of the kulaks.

An appraisal of the activities of the Narodnaya Volya will be found in the *History of the C.P.S.U.(B.), Short Course*, Chapter 1. p. 97

- 6 "*Emancipation of Labour*" group—the first Russian Marxist group, organized by G. V. Plekhanov in Geneva in 1883. It did a great deal to disseminate Marxism in Russia. An appraisal of its activities and of its historical role will be found in Chapter 1 of the *History of the C.P.S.U.(B.), Short Course*, Moscow 1950, pp. 10-19, 30. p. 110
- 7 *Bernsteinism*—a trend in international Social-Democracy hostile to Marxism that arose in Germany at the end of the nineteenth century and derived its name from the German Social-Democrat Eduard Bernstein. Bernstein set out to revise the teachings of Marx on bourgeois liberal lines.  
The adherents of Bernstein in Russia were the "legal Marxists," the "Economists," the Bundists and the Mensheviks. p. 116
- 8 Lenin is here criticizing the Lassallean thesis that in contrast to the working class all other classes are one reactionary mass—the thesis which was included in the program of the German Social-Democrats adopted at the Gotha Congress in 1875, at which the two previously separate German Socialist parties—the Eisenachers and the Lassalleans—united.  
The antirevolutionary character of this thesis was exposed by Marx in his *Critique of the Gotha Program*. (See K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Two-Vol. ed., Vol. II, Moscow 1949, pp. 24-25.) p. 118
- 9 *Millerand*—French reformist Socialist who in 1899 entered the reactionary bourgeois government, where he collaborated with General Galliffet, the butcher of the Paris Commune. p. 131
- 10 *Zarya (Dawn)*—a Russian Social-Democratic theoretical journal founded by Lenin and published in Stuttgart. It was a contemporary of the *Iskra* and had the same editors. It existed from April 1901 to August 1902. p. 136
- 11 The St. Petersburg *League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class* was formed by Lenin in the autumn of 1895 and united all the Marxist workers' circles in St. Petersburg. It was headed by a Central Group that was directed by Lenin. The League of Struggle was the first organization in Russia to link

Socialism with the working-class movement and to pass over from the propaganda of Marxism among a small circle of advanced workers to political agitation among the broad masses of the working class.

"The importance of the St. Petersburg League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class consisted in the fact that, as Lenin said, it was the first real *rudiment of a revolutionary party which was backed by the working-class movement.*" (*History of the C.P.S.U.[B.]*, *Short Course*, Moscow 1950, p. 22.)

p. 144

- 12 The *private meeting* referred to by Lenin was held in St. Petersburg between February 14 and 17 (February 26-March 1, new style), 1897. It was attended by V. I. Lenin, A. A. Vaneyev, G. M. Krzhizhanovsky and other members of the St. Petersburg League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class, that is, by the "veterans" (who had been released from prison for three days, before being sent to exile in Siberia) and the "young" leaders of the League of Struggle who took over after Lenin's arrest. p. 147
- 13 The tsarist gendarmes wore blue uniforms. p. 149
- 14 V. V.—pseudonym of V. P. Vorontsov, one of the ideologists of liberal Narodism in the 1880's and 1890's. Lenin's words "the V.V.'s of Russian Social-Democracy" are an allusion to the "Economists," who represented the opportunist trend in the Russian Social-Democratic movement. p. 150
- 15 *Zubatov*—chief of the Moscow secret police, the moving spirit of "police Socialism" in Russia. Zubatov set up workers' organizations under the aegis of the gendarmes and police, in an effort to deflect the workers from the revolutionary movement. p. 155
- 16 *The Hirsch-Duncker unions*—founded by the bourgeois liberals Hirsch and Duncker in 1868 in Germany. Hirsch and Duncker advocated "class harmony," drew the workers away from the revolutionary class struggle against the bourgeoisie, and confined the tasks of the trade union movement to running mutual benefit societies and educational clubs. p. 156
- 17 *Iskra (Spark)*—the first political all-Russian underground Marxist newspaper. It was founded by Lenin in 1900. After the Second Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party it

- became the Party's central organ. By the "old *Iskra*" Lenin means the 1st to the 51st issues of the paper. From the 52nd issue on the Mensheviks turned *Iskra* into their fractional organ. p. 163
- 18 *Osvobozhdeniye-ism*—a bourgeois-liberal trend, from *Osvobozhdeniye (Emancipation)*, a fortnightly journal published abroad in 1902-05 under the editorship of P. B. Struve. In January 1904 it became the organ of the liberal-monarchist Emancipation League. Later, the *Osvobozhdentsi* constituted the core of the Cadet (Constitutional-Democratic) party. p. 174
- 19 *January 9*—for the events of January 9, 1905, see *History of the C.P.S.U.(B.), Short Course*, Moscow 1950, pp. 68-70. p. 176
- 20 *Khlestakov*—the chief personage in Gogol's comedy *The Inspector-General*—an unrestrained braggart and liar. p. 185
- 21 *Cadets—the Constitutional-Democratic Party*, the principal bourgeois party in Russia, representing the liberal-monarchist bourgeoisie. It was formed in October 1905. Parading as democrats and calling themselves the party of "people's freedom," the Cadets tried to win the following of the peasantry. Their aim was to preserve tsarism in the form of a constitutional monarchy, and they subsequently became the party of the imperialist bourgeoisie. After the victory of the October Socialist Revolution, the Cadets organized counterrevolutionary conspiracies and revolts against the Soviet Republic.
- Bezzaglavtsi*—from *Bez Zaglavia (Without Title)*, a journal published in St. Petersburg in 1906 by a group of semi-Cadets (S. Prokopovich, E. Kuskova, V. Bogucharsky and others). Avowed followers of the revisionist wing of West-European Social-Democracy (Bernstein, etc.), they were opposed to the proletariat pursuing an independent class policy. Lenin called the *Bezzaglavtsi* pro-Menshevik Cadets or pro-Cadet Mensheviks. p. 188
- 22 *The Man in the Muffler*—the chief personage in a story by Chekhov bearing this title, typifying the narrow-minded philistine, who fears all innovations or initiative. p. 207
- 23 *The wisdom of gudgeons*—the reference is to the "wise gudgeon" in one of the fables of the Russian satirist Saltykov-Shchedrin, typifying the timid, overcautious individual who leads a vegetating existence. p. 207



- 24 *Labour congress*—for an appraisal of the Menshevik idea of a “labour congress,” see *History of the C.P.S.U.(B.), Short Course*, Moscow 1950, pp. 110-11. p. 214
- 25 *Octobrists*, or Union of October Seventeenth—a counterrevolutionary party of the big industrial bourgeoisie and of the big landlords who ran their estates on capitalist lines; formed in November 1905. While professing to welcome the Manifesto of October 17, in which the tsar, frightened by the revolution, promised the people “civil liberties” and a constitution, the Octobrists unreservedly supported the tsarist government’s home and foreign policy. The Octobrist leaders were Guchkov, a big industrialist, and Rodzyanko, owner of huge estates. p. 235
- 26 *Stolypin*—Chairman of the Council of Ministers, 1906-11; an ultrareactionary, representing the interests of the big landowners. His name is associated with the suppression of the Russian revolution of 1905-07 and the period of brutal reaction that followed it. p. 235
- 27 *The coup d’état of June 3, 1907*—on June 3, 1907, the Second State Duma was dissolved and a new law issued on the elections to the Third State Duma. It was so drafted as to ensure a majority in the Duma to the landlords and capitalists. The tsarist government perfidiously violated its own Manifesto of October 17, 1905, abolished constitutional rights, and committed for trial and condemned to penal servitude the Social-Democratic group in the Second Duma. The coup d’état of June the third signified a temporary victory for the counterrevolution. p. 235
- 28 *Molchalin* is a character in Griboyedov’s play *Wit Works Woe*—a careerist and lickspittle. p. 236
- 29 *Dubasov*—the governor-general of Moscow who directed the suppression of the armed uprising of the Moscow workers in December 1905.  
*Stolypin*—see Note 26. p. 240
- 30 *Balalaikin*—a character in one of Saltykov-Shchedrin’s satires; a liberal windbag, unscrupulous adventurer and liar.  
*Molchalin*—see Note 28. p. 240
- 31 Lenin soon after this wrote his *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* (published May 1909), in which he gave a devastating criticism

of Bogdanov and other revisionists and their philosophical masters, Avenarius and Mach. *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* is a defence of the theoretical foundations of Marxism—dialectical and historical materialism—and a materialist generalization of everything important and essential acquired by science, and especially the natural sciences, in the period from Engels' death to the appearance of Lenin's book—it is a guide for the theoretical training of the Bolshevik Party. p. 251

- 32 *"God-building"*—a religious-philosophical literary trend, hostile to Marxism, which in the period of Stolypin reaction arose among a section of the Party intellectuals who had broken with Marxism after the defeat of the 1905-07 revolution.

The "god-builders" (Lunacharsky, Bazarov, etc.) preached the foundation of a new, "socialist" religion, tried to reconcile Marxism with religion. Maxim Gorky at one time associated himself with them. A conference of the enlarged editorial board of *Proletary* (1909) condemned the "god-building" trend and declared in a special resolution that the Bolshevik faction disavowed "such distortions of scientific Socialism."

Lenin exposed the reactionary character of "god-building" in his *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* and in letters he wrote to Gorky in February-April 1908 and November-December 1913.

p. 282

- 33 *Vekhi*—a collection of articles by N. Berdyaev, S. Bulgakov, P. Struve, M. Gershenzon and other representatives of the counter-revolutionary liberal bourgeoisie published in Moscow in the spring of 1909. In articles on the Russian intelligentsia these writers tried to discredit the revolutionary-democratic traditions of the best representatives of the Russian people, including V. G. Belinsky and N. G. Chernyshevsky, vilified the revolutionary movement of 1905, and thanked the tsarist government for having, "with its bayonets and jails," saved the bourgeoisie from "the ire of the people." The writers called upon the intelligentsia to serve the autocracy. p. 283

- 34 *Otzovism*—for an account of this trend and the Party's fight against it, see *History of the C.P.S.U.(B.), Short Course*, Moscow 1950, pp. 162-78. p. 299

- 35 *Zemsky Nachalnik*—a rural official in tsarist Russia appointed from the landed nobility and exercising administrative and magisterial functions. p. 304

- 36 *Liquidators*—for an account of this trend and the Party's fight against it, see *History of the C.P.S.U.(B.), Short Course*, Moscow 1950, pp. 162-96. p. 305
- 37 *The Zimmerwald Left group* was formed by Lenin at the first conference of internationalist Socialists held in Zimmerwald, Switzerland, in the beginning of September 1915. Lenin described this conference as the "first step" in the development of the international movement against the war. The only correct and thoroughly consistent stand in the Zimmerwald Left group was taken by the Bolsheviks, headed by Lenin. There were also inconsistent internationalists in the group. For a criticism of their mistakes, see Lenin's article "The Junius Pamphlet" (*Collected Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 22, pp. 291-305) and J. V. Stalin's letter on "Some Questions Concerning the History of Bolshevism" (*Problems of Leninism*, Moscow 1947, pp. 378-89). p. 349
- 38 *Chkheidze fraction*—the Menshevik group in the Fourth Duma. p. 369
- 39 *Junius*—pseudonym of Rosa Luxemburg. p. 373
- 40 *Pomyalovsky's stories*—the reference is to N. Pomyalovsky's *Sketches of Seminary Life* in which this Russian writer exposed the absurd system of education and brutal customs which held sway in the Russian theological schools. p. 411
- 41 *The Kornilov affair*—General Kornilov's counterrevolutionary conspiracy in August-September 1917 (see *History of the C.P.S.U.[B.]*, *Short Course*, Moscow 1950, pp. 245-51). p. 422
- 42 The All-Russian *Democratic Conference*, convened by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries for the purpose of stemming the rising tide of revolution, was held in Petrograd on September 14 to 22 (September 27 to October 5), 1917. It was attended by representatives of the petty-bourgeois parties, the compromising Soviets, trade unions, zemstvos, commercial and industrial circles and military units.

The conference set up a Preparliament (Provisional Council of the Republic), with the aid of which the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries hoped to divert the country from the path of a Soviet revolution to the path of bourgeois constitutional development. The Central Committee of the Party of the Bol-

sheviks decided to boycott the Preparliament. Only capitulators—Kamenev and Zinoviev—who were striving to divert the proletariat from preparation for uprising, insisted on participation in the Preparliament. The Bolsheviks exposed the treacherous activities of the Preparliament and prepared the masses for the armed uprising. p. 424

- 43 *It was rejected by parties*—see V. I. Lenin, “Compromises” (*Collected Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 25, pp. 282-87). p. 424
- 44 *Alexandrinsky Theatre*—where the Democratic Conference was sitting.  
*Peter and Paul Fortress*—opposite the Winter Palace. In tsarist days it was a place of detention for revolutionaries. p. 427
- 45 *Novaya Zhizn* and *Vperyod*—Menshevik periodicals, *Dyelo Naroda*—a Socialist-Revolutionary paper. p. 436
- 46 *Another article*—this article was “The Heroes of the Berne International” (*Collected Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 29, pp. 362-70). p. 463
- 47 *Petrograd Soviet of Deputies*—see V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 29, pp. 1-7. p. 471
- 48 *The Berne yellow International of social-chauvinist and centrist parties* was formed at a conference in Berne in February 1919 with a view to resurrecting the Second International. Lenin criticizes the Berne International in “Tasks of the Third International” (*Collected Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 29, pp. 456-73) and other writings. p. 472
- 49 *The Battle of Sadowa* (Bohemia) on July 3, 1866, decided the outcome of the Austro-Prussian War in favour of Prussia. p. 476

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