

# TEN CLASSICS OF MARXISM

Karl Marx

Frederick Engels

V. I. Lenin

Joseph Stalin



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**THE  
TEACHINGS  
OF  
KARL MARX**

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**BY  
V. I. LENIN**



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# THE TEACHINGS OF KARL MARX

By V. I. LENIN

## KARL MARX

KARL MARX was born May 5, 1818, in the city of Trier, in the Rhine province of 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 first the University at Bonn, later Berlin University, where he studied jurisprudence, but devoted most of his time to history and philosophy. At the conclusion of his university course in 1841, he submitted his doctoral dissertation on Epicure's philosophy.\* Marx at that time was still an adherent of Hegel's idealism. 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 in the expectation of becoming a professor. However, the reactionary policy of the government,—that in 1832 had deprived Ludwig Feuerbach of his chair and in 1836 again refused to allow him to teach, while in 1842 it forbade the young professor, Bruno Bauer, to give lectures at the University—forced Marx to abandon the idea of pursuing an academic career. The development of the ideas of Left Hegelianism in Germany was very rapid at that time. Ludwig Feuerbach in particular, after 1836, began to criticise theology and to turn to materialism, which by 1841 had gained the upper hand in his conceptions (*Das Wesen des Christentums* [*The Essence of Christianity*]): in 1843 his *Grundsätze der Philosophie der Zukunft* [*Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*] appeared. Of these

\* *Differenz der demokritischen und epikureischen Naturphilosophie* [*The Difference between the Natural Philosophy of Democritus and Epicure*], published by Franz Mehring in *Aus dem literarischen, Nachlass von K. Marx, F. Engels, und F. Lassalle* [*From the Literary Heritage of K. Marx, F. Engels, and F. Lassalle*], 3 vols., Stuttgart, 1902, containing abridged reprints and selections from fugitive writings from 1841 to 1850. The doctoral dissertation was published in full in the *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe* [*Complete Works of Marx and Engels*], Part I, Vol. 1, Book I, Frankfurt a.M., 1927.—Ed.

works of Feuerbach, Engels subsequently wrote: "One must himself have experienced the liberating effect of these books." \* "We" (the Left Hegelians, including Marx) "at once became Feuerbachists." At that time the radical bourgeois of the Rhine province, who had certain points of contact with the Left Hegelians, founded, in Cologne, an opposition paper, the *Rheinische Zeitung* [*Rhenish Gazette*], which began to appear on January 1, 1842. Marx and Bruno Bauer were invited to be the chief contributors, and in October, 1842, Marx became the paper's editor-in-chief and moved from Bonn to Cologne. As the revolutionary-democratic tendency of the paper under Marx's editorship became more and more pronounced, the government first subjected the paper to double and triple censorship, then ordered its complete suppression by April 1, 1843.\*\* At this time Marx was compelled to resign his post as editor, but his resignation did not save the paper, which was forced to suspend publication in March, 1843. Of Marx's larger articles that were published in the *Rheinische Zeitung*, besides those indicated below \*\*\* Engels notes an article on the situation of the peasant wine-growers in the Moselle Valley.\*\*\*\* Marx's newspaper work revealed to him that he was not sufficiently acquainted with political economy, and he set out to study it diligently.

In 1843 Marx married, in Kreuznach, Jenny von Westphalen, a childhood friend to whom he had been engaged since his student years. His wife came from a reactionary family of the Prussian nobility. Her elder brother was Prussian Minister of the Interior in one of the most reactionary epochs, 1850-1858. In the autumn of 1843, Marx went to Paris in order to publish a radical magazine abroad, together with Arnold Ruge (1802-1880; a Left Hegelian; in prison, 1825-1830; a political exile after 1843; a Bismarckian, 1866-1870). Only one issue of this magazine, entitled *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* [*German-French Annals*] appeared. It was discontinued owing to the difficulties of distributing the magazine in

\* Literally "of this book." In his *Ludwig Feuerbach und der Ausgang der klassischen deutschen Philosophie* [English translation available under the title *Ludwig Feuerbach: The Roots of Socialist Philosophy*, Chicago, 1903] Engels speaks only of *Das Wesen des Christentums*.—Ed.

\*\* In the original Russian text erroneously January 1. The decree of the Board of Censors was issued at the end of January, 1843, and the order for suppression was given out on March 31. Marx resigned his post as editor on March 17 or 18.—Ed.

\*\*\* See Bibliography at the end of this pamphlet.—Ed.

\*\*\*\* See *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe*, loc. cit.—Ed.

Germany in a secret way, also due to disagreements with Ruge. In his articles published in that magazine,\* Marx already appears as a revolutionist, advocating "merciless criticism of everything in existence," particularly "criticism of the weapons," and appealing to the masses and to the *proletariat*.

In September, 1844, Friedrich Engels, who from then on was Marx's closest friend, came for a few days to Paris. Both of them took a very active part in the seething life of the revolutionary groups of Paris (where Proudhon's doctrine was then of particular importance; later Marx decisively parted ways with that doctrine in his *Poverty of Philosophy*, 1847). Waging a sharp struggle against the various doctrines of petty-bourgeois Socialism, they worked out the theory and tactics of revolutionary *proletarian Socialism*, otherwise known as Communism (Marxism). For this phase of Marx's activities, see Marx's works of 1844-1848.\*\* In 1845, at the insistence of the Prussian government, Marx was banished from Paris as a dangerous revolutionist. From Paris he moved to Brussels. In the spring of 1847 Marx and Engels joined a secret propaganda society bearing the name *Bund der Kommunisten* [*Communist League*], at whose second congress they took a prominent part (London, November, 1847), and at whose behest they composed the famous *Manifesto of the Communist Party* which appeared in February, 1848. With the clarity and brilliance of genius, this work outlines a new conception of the world; it represents consistent materialism extended also to the realm of social life; it proclaims dialectics as the most comprehensive and profound doctrine of development; it advances the theory of the class struggle and of the world-historic revolutionary role of the proletariat as the creator of a new Communist society.

When the February, 1848, Revolution broke out, Marx was banished from Belgium. He returned to Paris and from there, after the March Revolution, to Cologne, in Germany. From June 1, 1848, to May 19, 1849, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* [*New Rhenish Gazette*] was published in Cologne with Marx as editor-in-chief. The new doctrine found excellent corroboration in the course of the revolutionary events of 1848-1849, as it has subsequently been corroborated by all the proletarian and democratic movements of all the countries of the world. Victorious counter-revolution in Ger-

\* See *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe*, loc. cit.—Ed.

\*\* See Bibliography at the end of this pamphlet.—Ed.

many first instigated court proceedings against Marx (he was acquitted February 9, 1849), then banished him from Germany (May 16, 1849). He first went to Paris, from where he was also banished after the demonstration of June 13, 1849. He then went to London, where he lived to the end of his days.

The life of an emigrant, as revealed most clearly in the correspondence between Marx and Engels (published in 1913),\* was very hard. Poverty weighed heavily on Marx and his family. Were it not for Engels' self-sacrifice in rendering financial aid to Marx, he would not only have been unable to complete *Capital*, but would inevitably have perished under the pressure of want. Moreover, the prevailing theories and trends of petty-bourgeois and of non-proletarian Socialism in general forced Marx to wage a continuous and merciless struggle, sometimes to repel the most savage and monstrous personal attacks (*Herr Vogt [Mr. Vogt]*).\*\* Standing aloof from the emigrant circles, Marx developed his materialist doctrine in a number of historical works, giving most of his time to the study of political economy. This science was revolutionised by Marx (see below "Marx's Teaching") in his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859) and *Capital* (Vol. I, 1867).

The period of the revival of democratic movements at the end of the fifties and the beginning of the sixties again called Marx to political activity. On September 28, 1864, the International Workingmen's Association was founded in London—the famous First International. Marx was the soul of this organisation, the author of its first "appeal" and of a host of its resolutions, declarations, manifestoes. Uniting the labour movement of the various countries, striving to direct into the channel of united activities the various forms of the non-proletarian, pre-Marxian Socialism (Mazzini, Proudhon, Bakunin, liberal trade unionism in England, Lassalleian Right vacillations in Germany, etc.); fighting against the theories of all these sects and schools, Marx hammered out the common tactics of the proletarian struggle of the working class—one and the same in the various countries. After the fall of the Paris Commune

\* *Der Briefwechsel zwischen Friedrich Engels und Karl Marx [The Correspondence between Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx]*, 4 vols., Stuttgart, 1913, edited by Eduard Bernstein and August Bebel. Cf. *Selected Correspondence of Marx and Engels*, New York and London.—Ed.

\*\* Karl Vogt (1817-1895), a German democrat against whom Marx waged a merciless polemic, exposing his connection with Napoleon III.—Ed.



(1871)—which Marx analysed, as a man of *action*, a revolutionist, with so much penetration, pertinence and brilliance in his work *The Civil War in France*, 1871\*—and after the International had been split by the Bakuninists, it became impossible for that organisation to keep its headquarters in Europe. After the Hague Congress of the International (1872) Marx carried through the transfer of the General Council of the International to New York.\*\* The First International had accomplished its historic role, giving way to an epoch of an infinitely accelerated growth of the labour movement in all the countries of the world, precisely the epoch when this movement grew in *breadth* and *scope*, when *mass* Socialist labour parties were created on the basis of individual national states.

Strenuous work in the International and still more strenuous theoretical activities undermined Marx's health completely. He continued his work on political economy and the completion of *Capital*, collecting a mass of new material and studying a number of languages (for instance, Russian), but illness did not allow him to finish *Capital*.

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

\* The title later given to the Address written at the request of the General Council of the International Workingmen's Association, and delivered by Marx on May 30, 1871, immediately after the fall of the Paris Commune.—*Ed.*

\*\* The International was formally dissolved at its last congress in Philadelphia on July 15, 1876.—*Ed.*

## MARX'S TEACHING

MARXISM is the system of the views and teachings of Marx. Marx was the genius who continued and completed the three chief ideological currents of the nineteenth century, represented respectively by the three most advanced countries of humanity: classical German philosophy, classical English political economy, and French Socialism combined with French revolutionary doctrines. The remarkable consistency and unity of conception of Marx's views, acknowledged even by his opponents, which in their totality constitute modern materialism and modern scientific Socialism as the theory and programme of the labour movement in all the civilised countries of the world, make it necessary that we present a brief outline of his world conception in general before proceeding to the chief contents of Marxism, namely, the economic doctrine of Marx.

### PHILOSOPHIC MATERIALISM

Beginning with the years 1844-1845, when his views were definitely formed, Marx was a materialist, and especially a follower of Feuerbach; even in later times, he saw Feuerbach's weak side only in this, that his materialism was not sufficiently consistent and comprehensive. For Marx, Feuerbach's world-historic and "epoch-making" significance consisted in his having decisively broken away from the idealism of Hegel, and in his proclamation of materialism, which even in the eighteenth century, especially in France, had become "a struggle not only against the existing political institutions, and against . . . religion and theology, but also . . . against every form of metaphysics" (as "intoxicated speculation" in contradistinction to "sober philosophy"). [*Die Heilige Familie*\* in the *Literarischer Nachlass*.]

For Hegel—wrote Marx, in the preface to the second edition of the first volume of *Capital*—the thought process (which he actually transforms into an independent subject, giving to it the name of "idea") is the demiurge [creator]

\* *Die Heilige Familie, Gegen Bruno Bauer und Konsorten* [*The Holy Family, Against Bruno Bauer and Co.*], Frankfurt a.M., 1845, in the *Literarischer Nachlass*, Vol. II, pp. 65-326.—Ed.

of the real. . . . In my view, on the other hand, the ideal is nothing other than the material when it has been transposed and translated inside the human head. [*Capital*, Vol. I.]\*

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

The unity of the world does not consist in its existence. . . . The real unity of the world consists in its materiality, and this is proved . . . by the long and laborious development of philosophy and natural science. . . .\*\*\* Motion is the form of existence of matter. Never and nowhere has there been or can there be matter without motion. . . . Matter without motion is just as unthinkable as motion without matter. . . .\*\*\*\* If we enquire . . . what thought and consciousness are, whence they come we find that they are products of the human brain, and that man himself is a product of nature, developing in and along with his environment. Obviously, therefore, the products of the human brain, being in the last analysis likewise products of nature, do not contradict the rest of nature, but correspond to it.\*\*\*\*\*

Again: "Hegel was an idealist; that is to say, for him the thoughts in his head were not more or less abstract reflections [in the original: *Abbilder*, images, copies; sometimes Engels speaks of "imprints"] of real things and processes; but, on the contrary, things and their evolution were, for Hegel, only reflections in reality of the Idea that existed somewhere even prior to the world." \*\*\*\*\*

In his *Ludwig Feuerbach*—in which Engels expounds his own and Marx's views on Feuerbach's philosophy, and which Engels sent to the press after re-reading an old manuscript, written by Marx and himself in 1844-1845, on Hegel, Feuerbach, and the materialist conception of history \*\*\*\*\*—Engels writes:

The great basic question of all, and especially of recent, philosophy, is the question of the relationship between thought and existence, between spirit and nature. . . . Which is prior to the other: spirit or nature? Philosophers are

\* Preface to second German edition, Eden and Cedar Paul translation, London and New York, 1929, p. 873.—*Ed.*

\*\* The abridged title of Engels' celebrated work: *Herrn Eugen Dührings Umwälzung der Wissenschaft* [Mr. Eugen Dühring's *Transformation of Science*], published first as a series of articles in the Berlin *Vorwärts* during 1877-1878 and issued in book form in 1878.—*Ed.*

\*\*\* *Anti-Dühring*, Stuttgart, 1909, p. 31.—*Ed.*

\*\*\*\* *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50.—*Ed.*

\*\*\*\*\* *Ibid.*, p. 22.—*Ed.*

\*\*\*\*\* *Ibid.*, p. 9.—*Ed.*

\*\*\*\*\* See "Marx und Engels über Feuerbach—der erste Teil der deutschen Ideologie," in *Marx-Engels Archiv*, Vol. I, Frankfurt a.M., pp. 205-306.—*Ed.*

divided into two great camps, according to the way in which they have answered this question. Those who declare that spirit existed before nature, and who, in the last analysis, therefore, assume in one way or another that the world was created . . . have formed the idealist camp. The others, who regard nature as primary, belong to the various schools of materialism.\*

Any other use (in a philosophic sense) of the terms idealism and materialism is only confusing. Marx decidedly rejected not only idealism, always connected in one way or another with religion, but also the views of Hume and Kant, that are especially widespread in our day, as well as agnosticism, criticism, positivism in various forms; he considered such philosophy as a "reactionary" concession to idealism, at best as a "shamefaced manner of admitting materialism through the back door while denying it before the world." \*\* (On this question see, besides the above-mentioned works of Engels and Marx, a letter of Marx to Engels, dated December 12, 1866, in which Marx, taking cognisance of an utterance of the well-known naturalist, T. Huxley, who "in a more materialistic spirit than he has manifested in recent years" declared that "as long as we actually observe and think, we cannot get away from materialism," reproaches him for once more leaving a new "back door" open to agnosticism and Humeism.) It is especially important that we should note Marx's opinion concerning the relation between freedom and necessity: "Freedom is the recognition of necessity. Necessity is blind only in so far as it is not understood" (Engels, *Anti-Dühring*).\*\*\* This means acknowledgment of the objective reign of law in nature and of the dialectical transformation of necessity into freedom (at the same time, an acknowledgment of 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 pointed out the following major shortcomings of the "old" materialism, including Feuerbach's (and, *a fortiori*, the "vulgar" materialism of Büchner, Vogt and Moleschott): (1) it was "predominantly mechanical," not taking into account the latest developments of chemistry and biology (in our day it would be necessary to add the electric theory of matter); (2) it was non-historical, non-dialectical (was metaphysical, in the sense of being anti-dialectical), and did not apply the standpoint of evolution consistently and all-sidedly; (3) it regarded "human nature" abstractly,

\* Ludwig Feuerbach, Berlin, 1927, p. 27 ff.—Ed.

\*\* *Ibid.*, p. 30.—Ed.

\*\*\* P. 112.—Ed.

and not as a "synthesis" of (definite, concrete-historical) "social relationships"—and thus only "interpreted" the world, whereas it was a question of "changing" it, that is, it did not grasp the significance of "practical revolutionary activity."

## DIALECTICS

Marx and Engels regarded Hegelian dialectics, the theory of evolution most comprehensive, rich in content and profound, as the greatest achievement of classical German philosophy. All other formulations of the principle of development, of evolution, they considered to be one-sided, poor in content, distorting and mutilating the actual course of development of nature and society (a course often consummated in leaps and bounds, catastrophes, revolutions).

Marx and I were almost the only persons who rescued conscious dialectics . . . [from the swamp of idealism, including Hegelianism] by transforming it into the materialist conception of nature. . . .<sup>\*</sup> Nature is the test of dialectics, and we must say that science has supplied a vast and daily increasing mass of material for this test, thereby proving that, in the last analysis, nature proceeds dialectically and not metaphysically<sup>\*\*</sup> [this was written before the discovery of radium, electrons, the transmutation of elements, etc.].

Again, Engels writes:

The great basic idea that the world is not to be viewed as a complex of fully fashioned objects, but as a complex of processes, in which apparently stable objects, no less than the images of them inside our heads (our concepts), are undergoing incessant changes, arising here and disappearing there, and which with all apparent accident and in spite of all momentary retrogression, ultimately constitutes a progressive development—this great basic idea has, particularly since the time of Hegel, so deeply penetrated the general consciousness that hardly any one will now venture to dispute it in its general form. But it is one thing to accept it in words, quite another thing to put it in practice on every occasion and in every field of investigation.<sup>\*\*\*</sup>

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

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

<sup>\*</sup> *Anti-Dühring*, p. xiv.—Ed.

<sup>\*\*</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.—Ed.

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> *Ludwig Feuerbach*, p. 52.—Ed.

<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.—Ed.

<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.—Ed.

This revolutionary side of Hegel's philosophy was adopted and developed by Marx. Dialectical materialism "does not need any philosophy towering above the other sciences." \* Of former philosophies there remain "the science of thinking and its laws—formal logic and dialectics." \*\* Dialectics, as the term is used by Marx in conformity with Hegel, includes what is now called the theory of cognition, or epistemology, or gnoseology, a science that must contemplate its subject matter in the same way—historically, studying and generalising the origin and development of cognition, the transition from *non-consciousness* to consciousness. In our times, the idea of development, of evolution, has almost fully penetrated social consciousness, but it has done so in other ways, not through Hegel's philosophy. Still, the same idea, as formulated by Marx and Engels on the basis of Hegel's philosophy, is much more comprehensive, much more abundant in content than the current theory of evolution. A development that repeats, as it were, the stages already passed, but repeats them in a different way, on a higher plane ("negation of negation"); a development, so to speak, in spirals, not in a straight line; a development in leaps and bounds, catastrophes, revolutions; "intervals of gradualness"; transformation of quantity into quality; inner impulses for development, imparted by the contradiction, the conflict of different forces and tendencies reacting on a given body or inside a given phenomenon or within a given society; interdependence, and the closest, indissoluble connection between *all* sides of every phenomenon (history disclosing ever new sides), a connection that provides the one world-process of motion proceeding according to law—such are some of the features of dialectics as a doctrine of evolution more full of meaning than the current one. (See letter of Marx to Engels, dated January 8, 1868, in which he ridicules Stein's "wooden trichotomies," which it is absurd to confuse with materialist dialectics.)

#### MATERIALIST CONCEPTION OF HISTORY

Realising the inconsistency, the incompleteness, and the one-sidedness of the old materialism, Marx became convinced that it was necessary "to harmonise the science of society with the materialist basis, and to reconstruct it in accordance with this basis." \*\*\* If,

\* *Anti-Dühring*, p. 11.—Ed.

\*\* *Ibid.*—Ed.

\*\*\* *Ludwig Feuerbach*, p. 36.—Ed.

speaking generally, materialism explains consciousness as the outcome of existence, and not conversely, then, applied to the social life of mankind, materialism must explain *social* consciousness as the outcome of *social* existence. "Technology," writes Marx in the first volume of *Capital*, "reveals man's dealings with nature, discloses the direct productive activities of his life, thus throwing light upon social relations and the resultant mental conceptions." \* In the preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* \*\* Marx gives an integral formulation of the fundamental principles of materialism as applied to human society and its history, in the following words:

In the social production of the means of life, human beings enter into definite and necessary relations which are independent of their will—production relations which correspond to a definite stage of the development of their productive forces. The totality of these production relations constitutes the economic structure of society, the real basis upon which a legal and political superstructure arises and to which definite forms of social consciousness correspond. The mode of production of the material means of life determines, in general, the social, political, and intellectual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of human beings that determines their existence, but, conversely, it is their social existence that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing production relationships, or, what is but a legal expression for the same thing, with the property relationships within which they have hitherto moved. From forms of development of the productive forces, these relationships turn into their fetters. A period of social revolution then begins. With the change in the economic foundation, the whole gigantic superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations we must always distinguish between the material changes in the economic conditions of production, changes which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic, or philosophic, in short, ideological forms, in which human beings become conscious of this conflict and fight it out to an issue.

Just as little as we judge an individual by what he thinks of himself, just so little can we appraise such a revolutionary epoch in accordance with its own consciousness of itself. On the contrary, we have to explain this consciousness as the outcome of the contradictions of material life, of the conflict existing between social productive forces and production relationships. . . . In broad outline we can designate the Asiatic, the classical, the feudal, and the modern bourgeois forms of production as progressive epochs in the economic formation of society.\*\*\* [Compare Marx's brief formulation in a letter to Engels, dated July 7, 1866: "Our theory about the organisation of labour being determined by the means of production."]

\* *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 393.—Ed.

\*\* Chicago, 1901.—Ed.

\*\*\* Pp. 11-13.—Ed.

The discovery of the materialist conception of history, or, more correctly, the consistent extension of materialism to the domain of social phenomena, obviated the two chief defects in earlier historical theories. For, in the first place, those theories, at best, examined only the ideological motives of the historical activity of human beings without investigating the origin of these ideological motives, or grasping the objective conformity to law in the development of the system of social relationships, or discerning the roots of these social relationships in the degree of development of material production. In the second place, the earlier historical theories ignored the activities of the *masses*, whereas historical materialism first made it possible to study with scientific accuracy the social conditions of the life of the masses and the changes in these conditions. At best, pre-Marxist "sociology" and historiography gave an accumulation of raw facts collected at random, and a description of separate sides of the historic process. Examining the *totality* of all the opposing tendencies, reducing them to precisely definable conditions in the mode of life and the method of production of the various *classes* of society, discarding subjectivism and free will in the choice of various "leading" ideas or in their interpretation, showing how all the 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 a comprehensive, an all-embracing study of the rise, development, and decay of socio-economic structures. People make their own history; but what determines their motives, that is, the motives of people in the mass; what gives rise to the clash of conflicting ideas and endeavours; what is the sum total of all these clashes among the whole mass of human societies; what are the objective conditions for the production of the material means of life that form the basis of all the historical activity of man; what is the law of the development of these conditions—to all these matters Marx directed attention, pointing out the way to a scientific study of history as a unified and true-to-law process despite its being extremely variegated and contradictory.

#### CLASS STRUGGLE

That in any given society the strivings of some of the members conflict with the strivings of others; that social life is full of contradictions; that history discloses to us a struggle among peoples and



societies, and also within each nation and each society, manifesting in addition an alternation between periods of revolution and reaction, peace and war, stagnation and rapid progress or decline—these facts are generally known. Marxism provides a clue which enables us to discover the reign of law in this seeming labyrinth and chaos: the theory of the class struggle. Nothing but the study of the totality of the strivings of all the members of a given society, or group of societies, can lead to the scientific definition of the result of these strivings. Now, the conflict of strivings arises from differences in the situation and modes of life of the *classes* into which society is divided.

The history of all human society, past and present [wrote Marx in 1848, in the *Communist Manifesto*; except the history of the primitive community, Engels added], has been the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, baron and serf, guild-burgess and journeyman—in a word, oppressor and oppressed—stood in sharp opposition each to the other. They carried on perpetual warfare, sometimes masked, sometimes open and acknowledged; a warfare that invariably ended either in a revolutionary change in the whole structure of society or else in the common ruin of the contending classes. . . . Modern bourgeois society, rising out of the ruins of feudal society, did not make an end of class antagonisms. It merely set up new classes in place of the old; new conditions of oppression; new embodiments of struggle. Our own age, the bourgeois age, is distinguished by this—that it has simplified class antagonisms. More and more, society is splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great and directly contraposed classes: bourgeoisie and proletariat.

Since the time of the great French Revolution, the class struggle as the actual motive force of events has been most clearly manifest in all European history. During the Restoration period in France, there were already a number of historians (Thierry, Guizot, Mignet, Thiers) who, generalising events, could not but recognise in the class struggle the key to the understanding of all the history of France. In the modern age—the epoch of the complete victory of the bourgeoisie, of representative institutions, of extended (if not universal) suffrage, of cheap daily newspapers widely circulated among the masses, etc., of powerful and ever-expanding organisations of workers and employers, etc.—the class struggle (though sometimes in a highly one-sided, “peaceful,” “constitutional” form), has shown itself still more obviously to be the mainspring of events. The following passage from Marx’s *Communist Manifesto* will show us what Marx demanded of social sciences as regards an objective

analysis of the situation of every class in modern society as well as an analysis of the conditions of development of every class.

Among all the classes that confront the bourgeoisie to-day, the proletariat alone is really revolutionary. Other classes decay and perish with the rise of large-scale industry, but the proletariat is the most characteristic product of that industry. The lower middle class—small manufacturers, small traders, handicraftsmen, peasant proprietors—one and all fight the bourgeoisie in the hope of safeguarding their existence as sections of the middle class. They are, therefore, not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay, more, they are reactionary, for they are trying to make the wheels of history turn backwards. If they ever become revolutionary, it is only because they are afraid of slipping down into the ranks of the proletariat; they are not defending their present interests, but their future interests; they are forsaking their own standpoint, in order to adopt that of the proletariat.

In a number of historical works (see Bibliography), Marx gave brilliant and profound examples of materialist historiography, an analysis of the position of *each* separate class, and sometimes of that 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, between the past and the future, Marx analyses in order to arrive at the resultant of the whole historical development.

Marx’s economic doctrine is the most profound, the most many-sided, and the most detailed confirmation and application of his teaching.

#### MARX’S ECONOMIC DOCTRINE

“It is the ultimate aim of this work to reveal the economic law of motion of modern society” (that is to say, capitalist, bourgeois society), writes Marx in the preface to the first volume of *Capital*. The study of the production relationships in a given, historically determinate society, in their genesis, their development, and their decay—such is the content of Marx’s economic teaching. In capitalist society the dominant feature is the production of *commodities*, and Marx’s analysis therefore begins with an analysis of a commodity.

#### VALUE

A commodity is, firstly, something that satisfies a human need; and, secondly, it is something that is exchanged for something else. The utility of a thing gives it *use-value*. Exchange-value (or simply, value) presents itself first of all as the proportion, the

ratio, in which a certain number of use-values of one kind are exchanged for a certain number of use-values of another kind. Daily experience shows us that by millions upon millions of such exchanges, all and sundry use-values, in themselves very different and not comparable one with another, are equated to one another. Now, what is common in these various things which are constantly weighed one against another in a definite system of social relationships? That which is common to them is that they are *products of labour*. In exchanging products, people equate to one another most diverse kinds of labour. The production of commodities is a system of social relationships in which different producers produce various products (the social division of labour), and in which all these products are equated to one another in exchange. Consequently, the element common to all commodities is not concrete labour in 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, represented in the sum total of values of all commodities, is one and the same human labour power. Millions upon millions of acts of exchange prove this. Consequently, each particular commodity represents only a certain part of *socially necessary* labour time. The magnitude of the value is determined by the amount of socially necessary labour, or by the labour time that is socially requisite for the production of the given commodity, of the given use-value. “. . . Exchanging labour products of different kinds one for another, they equate the values of the exchanged products; and in doing so they equate the different kinds of labour expended in production, treating them as homogeneous human labour. They do not know that they are doing this, but they do it.” \* As one of the earlier economists said, value is a relationship between two persons, only he should have added that it is a relationship hidden beneath a material wrapping.\*\* We can only understand what value is when we consider it from the point of view of a system of social production relationships in one particular historical type of society; and, moreover, of relationships which present themselves in a mass form, the phenomenon of exchange repeating itself millions upon millions of times. “As values, all commodities are only definite

\* *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 47.—Ed.

\*\* *Ibid.*—Ed.

quantities of congealed labour time.” \* Having made a detailed analysis of the twofold character of the labour incorporated in commodities, Marx goes on to analyse the *form of value and of money*. His main task, then, is to study the *origin* of the money form of value, to study the *historical process* of the development of exchange, beginning with isolated and casual acts of exchange (“simple, isolated, or casual value form,” in which a given quantity of one commodity is exchanged for a given quantity of another), passing on to the universal form of value, in which a number of different commodities are exchanged for one and the same particular commodity, and ending with the money form of value, when gold becomes this particular commodity, the universal equivalent. Being the highest product of the development of exchange and of commodity production, money masks the social character of individual labour, and hides the social tie between the various producers who come together in the market. Marx analyses in great detail the various functions of money; and it is essential to note that here (as generally in the opening chapters of *Capital*) what appears to be an abstract and at times purely deductive mode of exposition in reality reproduces a gigantic collection of facts concerning the history of the development of exchange and commodity production.

Money . . . presupposes a definite level of commodity exchange. The various forms of money (simple commodity equivalent or means of circulation, or means of payment, treasure, or international money) indicate, according to the different extent to which this or that function is put into application, and according to the comparative predominance of one or other of them, very different grades of the social process of production. [*Capital*, Vol. I.] \*\*

#### SURPLUS VALUE

At a particular stage in the development of commodity production, money becomes transformed into capital. The formula of commodity circulation was C-M-C (commodity—money—commodity); the sale of one commodity for the purpose of buying another. But the general formula of capital, on the contrary, is M-C-M (money—commodity—money); purchase for the purpose of selling—at a profit. The designation “surplus value” is given by Marx to the

\* *Critique of Political Economy*, p. 24.—Ed.

\*\* P. 157.—Ed.

increase over the original value of money that is put into circulation. The fact of this "growth" of money in capitalist society is well known. Indeed, it is this "growth" which transforms money into *capital*, as a special, historically defined, social relationship of production. Surplus value cannot arise out of the circulation of commodities, for this represents nothing more than the exchange of equivalents; it cannot arise out of an advance in prices, for the mutual losses and gains of buyers and sellers would equalise one another; and we are concerned here, not with what happens to individuals, but with a mass or average or social phenomenon. In order that he may be able to receive surplus value, "Moneybags must . . . find in the market a commodity whose use-value has the peculiar quality of being a source of value" \*—a commodity, the actual process of whose use is at the same time the process of the creation of value. Such a commodity exists. It is human labour power. Its use is labour, and labour creates value. The owner of money buys labour power at its value, which is determined, like the value of every other commodity, by the socially necessary labour time requisite for its production (that is to say, 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. Meanwhile, in the course of six hours ("necessary" labour time) the labourer produces sufficient to pay back the cost of his own maintenance; and in the course of the next six hours ("surplus" labour time), he produces a "surplus" product for which the capitalist does not pay him—surplus product or surplus value. In capital, therefore, from the viewpoint of the process of production, we have to distinguish between two parts: first, constant capital, expended for the means of production (machinery, tools, raw materials, etc.), the value of this being (all at once or part by part) transferred, unchanged, to the finished product; and, secondly, variable capital, expended for labour power. The value of this latter capital is not constant, but grows in the labour process, creating surplus value. To express the degree of exploitation of labour power by capital, we must therefore compare the surplus value, not with the whole capital, but only with the variable capital. Thus, in the example just given, the rate of surplus value, as Marx calls this relationship, will be 6:6, *i.e.*, 100%.

\* *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 154.—*Ed.*

There are two historical prerequisites to the genesis of capital: first, accumulation of a considerable sum of money in the hands of individuals living under conditions in which there is a comparatively high development of commodity production. Second, the existence of workers who are "free" in a double sense of the term: free from any constraint or restriction as regards the sale of their labour power; free from any bondage to the soil or to the means of production in general—i.e., of propertyless workers, of "proletarians" who cannot maintain their existence except by the sale of their labour power.

There are two fundamental ways in which surplus value can be increased: by an increase in the working day ("absolute surplus value"); and by a reduction in the necessary working day ("relative surplus value"). Analysing the former method, Marx gives an impressive picture of the struggle of the working class for shorter hours and of government interference, first (from the fourteenth century to the seventeenth) in order to lengthen the working day, and subsequently (factory legislation of the nineteenth century) to shorten it. Since the appearance of *Capital*, the history of the working-class movement in all lands provides a wealth of new facts to amplify this picture.

Analysing the production of relative surplus value, Marx investigates the three fundamental historical stages of the process whereby capitalism has increased the productivity of labour; (1) simple co-operation; (2) division of labour, and manufacture; (3) machinery and large-scale industry. How profoundly Marx has here revealed the basic and typical features of capitalist development is shown by the fact that investigations of the so-called "kustar" industry \* of Russia furnish abundant material for the illustration of the first two of these stages. The revolutionising effect of large-scale machine industry, described by Marx in 1867, has become evident in a number of "new" countries, such as Russia, Japan, etc., in the course of the last fifty years.

But to continue. Of extreme importance and originality is Marx's analysis of the *accumulation of capital*, that is to say, the transformation of a portion of surplus value into capital and the applying of this portion to additional production, instead of using it to supply the personal needs or to gratify the whims of the capitalist.

\* Small-scale home industry of a predominantly handicraft nature.—Ed.

Marx pointed out the mistake made by earlier classical political economy (from Adam Smith on), which assumed that all the surplus value which was transformed into capital became variable capital. In actual fact, it is divided into *means of production* plus variable capital. The more rapid growth of constant capital as compared with variable capital in the sum total of capital is of immense importance in the process of development of capitalism and in that of the transformation of capitalism into Socialism.

The accumulation of capital, accelerating the replacement of workers by machinery, creating wealth at the one pole and poverty at the other, gives birth to the so-called "reserve army of labour," to a "relative overabundance" of workers or to "capitalist overpopulation." This assumes the most diversified forms, and gives capital the possibility of expanding production at an exceptionally rapid rate. This possibility, in conjunction with enhanced facilities for credit and with the accumulation of capital in the means of production, furnishes, among other things, the key to the understanding of the *crises* of overproduction that occur periodically in capitalist countries—first about every ten years, on an average, but subsequently in a more continuous form and with a less definite periodicity. From accumulation of capital upon a capitalist foundation we must distinguish the so-called "primitive accumulation": the forcible severance of the worker from the means of production, the driving of the peasants off the land, the stealing of the communal lands, the system of colonies and national debts, of protective tariffs, and the like. "Primitive accumulation" creates, at one pole, the "free" proletariat: at the other, the owner of money, the capitalist.

The "*historical tendency of capitalist accumulation*" is described by Marx in the following well-known terms:

The expropriation of the immediate producers is effected with ruthless vandalism, and under the stimulus of the most infamous, the basest, the meanest, and the most odious of passions. Self-earned private property [of the peasant and the handicraftsman], the private property that may be looked upon as grounded on a coalescence of the isolated, individual, and independent worker with his working conditions, is supplemented by capitalist private property, which is maintained by the exploitation of others' labour, but of labour which in a formal sense is free. . . . What has now to be expropriated is no longer the labourer working on his own account, but the capitalist who exploits many labourers. This expropriation is brought about by the operation of the immanent laws of capitalist production, by the centralisation of capital. One capitalist lays a number of his fellow capitalists low. Hand in hand with this

centralisation, concomitantly with the expropriation of many capitalists by a few, the co-operative form of the labour process develops to an ever-increasing degree; therewith we find a growing tendency towards the purposive application of science to the improvement of technique; the land is more methodically cultivated; the instruments of labour tend to assume forms which are only utilisable by combined effort; the means of production are economised through being turned to account only by joint, by social labour; all the peoples of the world are enmeshed in the net of the world market, and therefore the capitalist régime tends more and more to assume an international character. While there is thus a progressive diminution in the number of the capitalist magnates (who usurp and monopolise all the advantages of this transformative process), there occurs a corresponding increase in the mass of poverty, oppression, enslavement, degeneration, and exploitation; but at the same time there is a steady intensification of the wrath of the working class—a class which grows ever more numerous, and is disciplined, unified, and organised by the very mechanism of the capitalist method of production. Capitalist monopoly becomes a fetter upon the method of production which has flourished with it and under it. The centralisation of the means of production and the socialisation of labour reach a point where they prove incompatible with their capitalist husk. This bursts asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated. [*Capital*, Vol. I.] \*

Of great importance and quite new is Marx's analysis, in the second volume of *Capital*, of the reproduction of social capital, taken as a whole. Here, too, Marx is dealing, not with an individual phenomenon, but with a mass phenomenon; not with a fractional part of the economy of society, but with economy as a whole. Having corrected the above-mentioned mistake of the classical economists, Marx divides the whole of social production into two great sections: production of the means of production, and production of articles for consumption. Using figures for an example, he makes a detailed examination of the circulation of all social capital taken as a whole—both when it is reproduced in its previous proportions and when accumulation takes place. The third volume of *Capital* solves the problem of how the average rate of profit is formed on the basis of the law of value. An immense advance in economic science is this, that Marx conducts his analysis from the point of view of mass economic phenomena, of the aggregate of social economy, and not from the point of view of individual cases or upon the purely superficial aspects of competition—a limitation of view so often met with in vulgar political economy and in the contemporary "theory of marginal utility." First, Marx analyses the origin of surplus value, and then he goes on to consider its division into profit, interest, and ground-rent. Profit is the ratio between

\*Pp. 845-846.—Ed.



the surplus value and all the capital invested in an undertaking. Capital with a "high organic composition" (*i.e.*, with a preponderance of constant capital over variable capital to an extent above the social average) yields a below-average rate of profit; capital with a "low organic composition" yields an above-average rate of profit. Competition among the capitalists, who are free to transfer their capital from one branch of production to another, reduces the rate of profit in both cases to the average. The sum total of the values of all the commodities in a given society coincides with the sum total of the prices of all the commodities; but in separate undertakings, and in separate branches of production, as a result of competition, commodities are sold, not in accordance with their values, but in accordance with the *prices of production*, which are equal to the expended capital plus the average profit.

In this way the well-known and indisputable fact of the divergence between prices and values and of the equalisation of profits is fully explained by Marx in conformity with the law of value; for the sum total of the values of all the commodities coincides with the sum total of all the prices. But the adjustment of value (a social matter) to price (an individual matter) does not proceed by a simple and direct way. It is an exceedingly complex affair. Naturally, therefore, in a society made up of separate producers of commodities, linked solely through the market, conformity to law can only be an average, a general manifestation, a mass phenomenon, with individual and mutually compensating deviations to one side and the other.

An increase in the productivity of labour means a more rapid growth of constant capital as compared with variable capital. Inasmuch as 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) has a tendency to fall. Marx makes a detailed analysis of this tendency and of the circumstances that incline to favour it or to counteract it. Without pausing to give an account of the extraordinarily interesting parts of the third volume of *Capital* that are devoted to the consideration of usurer's capital, commercial capital, and money capital, I shall turn to the most important subject of that volume, the theory of *ground-rent*. Due to the fact that the land area is limited, and that in capitalist countries it is all occupied by private owners, the production price of agricultural products is determined by the cost of production, not on soil of average quality,

but on the worst soil, and by the cost of bringing goods to the market, not under average conditions, but under the worst conditions. The difference between this price and the price of production on better soil (or under better conditions) constitutes *differential rent*. Analysing this in detail, and showing how it arises out of variations in the fertility of the individual plots of land and in the extent to which capital is applied to the land, Marx fully exposes (see also the *Theorien über den Mehrwert* [*Theories of Surplus Value*],\* in which the criticism of Rodbertus' theory deserves particular attention) the error of Ricardo, who considered that differential rent is only obtained when there is a continual transition from better to worse lands. Advances in agricultural technique, the growth of towns, and so on, may, on the contrary, act inversely, may transfer land from one category into the other; and the famous "law of diminishing returns," charging nature with the insufficiencies, limitations, and contradictions of capitalism, is a great mistake. Moreover, the equalisation of profit in all branches of industry and national economy in general, presupposes complete freedom of competition, the free mobility of capital from one branch to another. But the private ownership of land, creating monopoly, hinders this free mobility. Thanks to this monopoly, the products of agriculture, where a low organic composition of capital prevails, and, consequently, individually, a higher rate of profit can be secured, are not exposed to a perfectly free process of equalisation of the rate of profit. The landowner, being a monopolist, can keep the price of his produce above the average, and this monopoly price is the source of *absolute rent*. Differential rent cannot be done away with so long as capitalism exists; but absolute rent *can* be abolished even under capitalism—for instance, by rationalism of the land, by making all the land state property. Nationalisation of the land would put an end to the monopoly of private landowners, with the result that free competition would be more consistently and fully applied in the domain of agriculture. That is why, as Marx states, in the course of history the radical bourgeois have again and again come out with this progressive bourgeois demand of land nationalisation, which, however, frightens away the majority of the bourgeoisie, for it touches upon another monopoly that is highly important and "touchy" in our days—the monopoly of the means of

\* Edited by Karl Kautsky, 3 vols., Stuttgart, 1905.—Ed.

production in general. (In a letter to Engels, dated August 2, 1862, Marx gives a remarkably popular, concise, and clear exposition of his theory of average rate of profit and of absolute ground-rent. See *Briefwechsel*, Vol. III, pp. 77-81; also the letter of August 9, 1862, Vol. III, pp. 86-87.) For the history of ground-rent it is also important to note Marx's analysis which shows how rent paid in labour service (when the peasant creates a surplus product by labouring on the lord's land) is transformed into rent paid in produce or rent in kind (the peasant creating a surplus product on his own land and handing this over to the lord of the soil under stress of "non-economic constraint"); then into monetary rent (which is the monetary equivalent of rent in kind, the *obrok* of old Russia, money having replaced produce thanks to the development of commodity production), and finally into capitalist rent, when the place of the peasant has been taken by the agricultural entrepreneur cultivating the soil with the help of wage labour. In connection with this analysis of the "genesis of capitalist ground-rent" must be noted Marx's profound ideas concerning the *evolution of capitalism in agriculture* (this is of especial importance in its bearing on backward countries, such as Russia).

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 gave 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.] \*

The expropriation of part of the country folk, and the hunting of them off the land, does not merely "set free" the workers for the uses of industrial capital, together with their means of subsistence and the materials of their labour; in addition it creates the home market. [*Capital*, Vol. I.] \*\*

The impoverishment and the 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 rural population is continually on the move, in course of transference to join the urban proletariat, the manufacturing proletariat. . . . (In this con-

\* Chicago, 1909, p. 928.—*Ed.*

\*\* P. 828.—*Ed.*

nection, the term "manufacture" is used to include all non-agricultural industry.) This source of a relative surplus population is, therefore, continually flowing. . . . The agricultural labourer, therefore, has his wages kept down to the minimum, and always has one foot in the swamp of pauperism" (*Capital*, Vol. I).<sup>\*</sup> The peasant's private ownership of the land he tills constitutes the basis of small-scale production and causes the latter to flourish and attain its classical form. But such petty production is only compatible with a narrow and primitive type of production, with a narrow and primitive framework of society. Under capitalism, the exploitation of the peasant "differs from the exploitation of the industrial proletariat only in point of form. The exploiter is the same: capital. The individual capitalists exploit the individual peasants through mortgages and usury, and the capitalist class exploits the peasant class through state taxation" (*Class Struggles in France*).<sup>\*\*</sup> "Peasant agriculture, the smallholding system, is merely an expedient whereby the capitalist is enabled to extract profit, interest, and rent from the land, while leaving the peasant proprietor to pay himself his own wages as best he may." As a rule, the peasant hands over to the capitalist society, *i.e.*, to the capitalist class, part of the wages of his own labour, sinking "down to the level of the Irish tenant—all this on the pretext of being the owner of private property." <sup>\*\*\*</sup> Why is it that "the price of cereals is lower in countries with a predominance of small farmers than in countries with a capitalist method of production"? (*Capital*, Vol. III).<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup> The answer is that the peasant presents part of his surplus product as a free gift to society (*i.e.*, to the capitalist class). "This lower price [of bread and other agricultural products] is also a result of the poverty of the producers and by no means of the productivity of their labour" (*Capital*, Vol. III).<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup> Peasant proprietorship, the smallholding system, which is the normal form of petty production, degenerates, withers, 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 capital, cattle raising on a large scale, and a progressive application of science. Usury and a system of taxation must impoverish it

<sup>\*</sup> P. 710.—*Ed.*

<sup>\*\*</sup> New York, 1924, pp. 164-165.—*Ed.*

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 163.—*Ed.*

<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup> P. 937.—*Ed.*

<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup> P. 937.—*Ed.*

everywhere. The expenditure of capital in the price of the land withdraws this capital from cultivation. An infinite dissipation of means of production and an isolation of the producers themselves go with it. [Co-operatives, *i. e.*, associations of small peasants, while playing an unusually progressive bourgeois role, only weaken this tendency without eliminating it; one must not forget besides, that these co-operatives do much for the well-to-do peasants and very little, almost nothing, for the mass of the poor peasants, also that 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. [*Capital*, Vol. III.] \*

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

The dispersion of the rural workers over large areas breaks down their powers of resistance at the very time when concentration is increasing the powers of the urban operatives in this respect. In modern agriculture, as in urban industry, the increased productivity and the greater mobility of labour are purchased at the cost of devastating labour power and making it a prey to disease. Moreover, every advance in capitalist agriculture is an advance in the art, not only of robbing the worker, but also of robbing the soil. . . . Capitalist production, therefore, is only able to develop the technique and the combination of the social process of production by simultaneously undermining the foundations of all wealth—the land and the workers. [*Capital*, Vol. I.] \*\*

### SOCIALISM

From the foregoing it is manifest that Marx deduces the inevitability of the transformation of capitalist society into Socialist society wholly and exclusively from the economic law of the movement of contemporary society. The chief material foundation of the inevitability of the coming of Socialism is the socialisation of labour in its myriad forms, advancing ever more rapidly, and conspicuously so, throughout the half century that has elapsed since the death of Marx—being especially plain in the growth of large-scale production, of capitalist cartels, syndicates, and trusts; but also in the gigantic increase in the dimensions and the power of finance capital. The intellectual and moral driving force of this transformation is the proletariat, the physical carrier trained by capitalism itself. The contest of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie, assuming various forms which grow continually richer in content, inevitably becomes a political struggle aiming at the conquest of political power by the proletariat ("the dictatorship of the proletariat"). The socialisation of production cannot fail to lead to the transfer of the means of

\* Pp. 938-939.—*Ed.*

\*\* Pp. 547-548.—*Ed.*

production into the possession of society, to the "expropriation of the expropriators." An immense increase in the productivity of labour; a reduction in working hours; replacement of the remnants, the ruins of petty, primitive, individual production by collective and perfected labour—such will be the direct consequences of this transformation. Capitalism breaks all ties between agriculture and industry; but at the same time, in the course of its highest development, it prepares new elements for the establishment of a connection between the two, uniting industry and agriculture upon the basis of the conscious use of science and the combination of collective labour, the redistribution of population (putting an end at one and the same time to rural seclusion and unsociability and savagery, and to the unnatural concentration of enormous masses of population in huge cities). A new kind of family life, changes in the position of women and in the upbringing of the younger generation, are being prepared by the highest forms of modern capitalism; the labour of women and children, the break-up of the patriarchal family by capitalism, necessarily assume in contemporary society the most terrible, disastrous, and repulsive forms. Nevertheless,

. . . large-scale industry, by assigning to women and to young persons and children of both sexes a decisive role in the socially organised process of production, and a role which has to be fulfilled outside the home, is building the new economic foundation for a higher form of the family and of the relations between the sexes. I need hardly say that it is just as stupid to regard the Christo-Teutonic form of the family as absolute, as it is to take the same view of the classical Roman form or of the classical Greek form, or of the Oriental form—which, by the by, constitute an historically interconnected developmental series. It is plain, moreover, that the composition of the combined labour personnel out of individuals of both sexes and various ages—although in its spontaneously developed and brutal capitalist form (wherein the worker exists for the process of production instead of the process of production existing for the worker) it is a pestilential source of corruption and slavery—under suitable conditions cannot fail to be transformed into a source of human progress. [*Capital*, Vol. I.] \*

In the factory system are to be found "the germs of the education of the future. . . . This will be an education which, in the case of every child over a certain age, will combine productive labour with instruction and physical culture, not only as a means for increasing social production, but as the only way of producing fully developed human beings" (*ibid.*, p. 522). Upon the same historical foundation, not with the sole idea of throwing light on the past, but with the idea of boldly foreseeing the future and boldly working to bring

\*P. 529.—*Ed.*

about its realisation, the Socialism of Marx propounds the problems of nationality and the state. The nation is a necessary product, an inevitable form, in the bourgeois epoch of social development. The working class cannot grow strong, cannot mature, cannot consolidate its forces, except by "establishing itself as the nation," except by being "national" ("though by no means in the bourgeois sense of the term").\* But the development of capitalism tends more and more to break down the partitions that separate the nations one from another, does away with national isolation, substitutes class antagonisms for national antagonisms. In the more developed capitalist countries, therefore, it is perfectly true that "the workers have no fatherland," and that "united action" of the workers, in the civilised countries at least, "is one of the first conditions requisite for the emancipation of the workers" (*Communist Manifesto*). The state, which is organised oppression, came into being inevitably at a certain stage in the development of society, when this society had split into irreconcilable classes, and when it could not exist without an "authority" supposed to be standing above society and to some extent separated from it. Arising out of class contradictions, the state becomes

... the state of the most powerful economic class that by force of its economic supremacy becomes also the ruling political class, and thus acquires new means of subduing and exploiting the oppressed masses. The ancient state was therefore the state of the slave-owners for the purpose of holding the slaves in check. The feudal state was the organ of the nobility for the oppression of the serfs and dependent farmers. The modern representative state is the tool of the capitalist exploiters of wage labour. [Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*,\*\* a work in which the writer expounds his own views and Marx's.]

This condition of affairs persists even in the democratic republic, the freest and most progressive kind of bourgeois state; there is merely a change of form (the government becoming linked up with the stock exchange, and the officialdom and the press being corrupted by direct or indirect means). Socialism, putting an end to classes, will thereby put an end to the state.

The first act, writes Engels in *Anti-Dühring*, whereby the state really becomes the representative of society as a whole, namely, the expropriation of the means of production for the benefit of society as a whole, will likewise be its last independent act as a state. The interference of the state authority

\* *Communist Manifesto*.—Ed.

\*\* Chicago, 1902, pp. 208-209.—Ed.

in social relationships will become superfluous, and will be discontinued in one domain after another. The government over persons will be transformed into the administration of things and the management of the process of production. The state will not be "abolished"; it will "die out." \*

The society that is to reorganise production on the basis of a free and equal association of the producers, will transfer the machinery of state where it will then belong: into the museum of antiquities, by the side of the spinning-wheel and the bronze axe. [Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State.*] \*\*

If, finally, we wish to understand 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 turn to a declaration by Engels expressing Marx's views. In an article on "The Peasant Problem in France and Germany," which appeared in the *Neue Zeit*, \*\*\* he says:

When we are in possession of the powers of the state, we shall not even dream of forcibly expropriating the poorer peasants, the smallholders (with or without compensation), as we shall have to do in relation to the large landowners. Our task as regards the smallholders will first of all consist in transforming their individual production and individual ownership into co-operative production and co-operative ownership, not forcibly, but by way of example, and by offering social aid for this purpose. We shall then have the means of showing the peasant all the advantages of this change—advantages which even now should be obvious to him.

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

Having discovered as early as 1844-1845 that one of the chief defects of the earlier materialism was its failure to understand the conditions or recognize the importance of practical revolutionary activity, Marx, during all his life, alongside of theoretical work, gave unremitting attention to the tactical problems of the class struggle of the proletariat. An immense amount of material bearing upon this is contained in all the works of Marx and in the four volumes of his correspondence with Engels (*Briefwechsel*), published in 1913. This material is still far from having been collected, organised, studied, and elaborated. This is why we shall have to confine ourselves to the most general and brief remarks, emphasising the point that Marx justly considered materialism without *this* side to be incomplete, one-sided, and devoid of vitality. The fundamental

\* P. 302.—*Ed.*

\*\* Pp. 211-212.—*Ed.*

\*\*\* Vol. XIII, 1, 1894, pp. 301-302. Lenin's reference is to p. 17 of the Russian translation of this article published by Alexeyeva. To this Lenin added the note: "Russian translation with errors."—*Ed.*



task of proletarian tactics was defined by Marx in strict conformity with the general principles of his materialist-dialectical outlook. Nothing but an objective account of the sum total of all the mutual relationships of all the classes of a given society without exception, and consequently an account of the objective stage of development of this society as well as an account of the mutual relationship between it and other societies, can serve as the basis for the correct tactics of the class that forms the vanguard. All classes and all countries are at the same time looked upon not statically, but dynamically; i.e., not as motionless, but as in motion (the laws of their motion being determined by the economic conditions of existence of each class). The motion, in its turn, is looked upon not only from the point of view of the past, but also from the point of view of the future; and, moreover, not in accordance with the vulgar conception of the "evolutionists," who see only slow changes—but dialectically: "In such great developments, twenty years are but as one day—and then may come days which are the concentrated essence of twenty years," wrote Marx to Engels (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. III, p. 127). At each stage of development, at each moment, proletarian tactics must take account of these objectively unavoidable dialectics of human history, utilising, on the one hand, the phases of political stagnation, when things are moving at a snail's pace along the road of the so-called "peaceful" development, to increase the class consciousness, strength, and fighting capacity of the most advanced class; on the other hand, conducting this work in the direction of the "final aims" of the movement of this class, cultivating in it the faculty for the practical performance of great tasks in great days that are the "concentrated essence of twenty years." Two of Marx's arguments are of especial importance in this connection: one of these is in the *Poverty of Philosophy*, and relates to the industrial struggle and to the industrial organisations of the proletariat; the other is in the *Communist Manifesto*, and relates to the proletariat's political tasks. The former runs as follows:

The great industry masses together in a single place a crowd of people unknown to each other. Competition divides their interests. But the maintenance of their wages, this common interest which they have against their employer, unites them in the same idea of resistance—combination. . . . The combinations, at first isolated, . . . [form into] groups, and, in face of constantly united capital, the maintenance of the association becomes more important and necessary for them than the maintenance of wages. . . . In this struggle—a veritable civil war—are united and developed all the elements

necessary for a future battle. Once arrived at that point, association takes a political character.\*

Here we have the programme and the tactics of the economic struggle and the trade union movement for several decades to come, for the whole long period in which the workers are preparing for "a future battle." We must place side by side with this a number of Marx's references, in his correspondence with Engels, to the example of the British labour movement; here Marx shows how, industry being in a flourishing condition, attempts are made "to buy the workers" (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. I, p. 136), to distract them from the struggle; how, generally speaking, prolonged prosperity "demoralises the workers" (Vol. II, p. 218); how the British proletariat is becoming "bourgeoisified"; how "the ultimate aim of this most bourgeois of all nations seems to be to establish a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat side by side with the bourgeoisie" (Vol. II, p. 290); how the "revolutionary energy" of the British proletariat oozes away (Vol. III, p. 124); how it will be necessary to wait for a considerable time "before the British workers can rid themselves of seeming bourgeois contamination" (Vol. III, p. 127); how the British movement "lacks the mettle of the old Chartists" (1866: Vol. III, p. 305); how the English workers are developing leaders of "a type that is half way between the radical bourgeoisie and the worker" (Vol. IV, p. 209, on Holyoake); how, due to British monopoly, and as long as that monopoly lasts, "the British worker will not budge" (Vol. IV, p. 433). The tactics of the economic struggle, in connection with the general course (and *the outcome*) of the labor movement, are here considered from a remarkably broad, many-sided, dialectical, and genuinely revolutionary outlook.

On the tactics of the political struggle, the *Communist Manifesto* advanced this fundamental Marxian thesis: "Communists fight on behalf of the immediate aims and interests of the working class, but in their present movement they are also defending the future of that movement." That was why in 1848 Marx supported the Polish party of the "agrarian revolution"—"the party which initiated the Cracow insurrection in the year 1846." In Germany during 1848 and 1849 he supported the radical revolutionary democracy, nor subsequently did he retract what he had then said about tactics. He looked upon the German bourgeoisie as "inclined from the very beginning to betray the people" (only an alliance with the

\* *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Chicago, p. 188.—Ed.

peasantry would have enabled the bourgeoisie completely to fulfil its tasks) "and to compromise with the crowned representatives of the old order of society." Here is Marx's summary account of the class position of the German bourgeoisie in the epoch of the bourgeois-democratic revolution—an analysis which, among other things, is an example of materialism, contemplating society in motion, and not looking only at that part of the motion which is directed *backwards*.

Lacking faith in themselves, lacking faith in the people; grumbling at those above, and trembling in face of those below . . . dreading a world-wide storm . . . nowhere with energy, everywhere with plagiarism . . . ; without initiative . . . —a miserable old man, doomed to guide in his own senile interests the first youthful impulses of a young and vigorous people. . . . [*Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, 1848; see *Literarischer Nachlass*, Vol. III, p. 213.]

About twenty years afterwards, writing to Engels under the date of February 11, 1865 (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. III, p. 224), Marx said 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 having to fight for freedom. When the revolutionary epoch of 1848-1849 was over, Marx was strongly opposed to any playing at revolution (Schapper and Willich, and the contest with them), insisting on the need for knowing how to work under the new conditions, when new revolutions were in the making—quasi—"peacefully." The spirit in which Marx wanted the work to be carried on is plainly shown by his estimate of the situation in Germany during the period of blackest reaction. In 1856 he wrote (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. II, p. 108): "The whole thing in Germany depends on whether it is possible to back the proletarian revolution by some second edition of the peasants' war." \* As long as the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Germany was in progress, Marx directed his whole attention, in the matter of tactics of the Socialist proletariat, to developing the democratic energy of the peasantry. He held that Lassalle's action was "objectively a betrayal of the whole working-class movement to the Prussians" (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. III, p. 210), among other things, because he "was rendering assistance to the junkers and to Prussian nationalism." On February 5, 1865, exchanging views with Marx regarding a forthcoming joint declaration of theirs in the press, Engels wrote (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. III, p. 217): "In a predominantly agricultural country it is base to confine oneself to attacks on

\* This passage with the exception of the words "depends on whether it is possible" was written originally by Marx in English.—Ed.

the bourgeoisie exclusively in the name of the industrial proletariat, while forgetting to say even a word about the patriarchal 'whipping rod exploitation' of the rural proletariat by the big feudal nobility." During the period from 1864 to 1870, in which the epoch of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Germany was being completed, in which the exploiting classes of Prussia and Austria were fighting for this or that method of completing the revolution *from above*, Marx not only condemned Lassalle for coquetting with Bismarck, but also corrected Wilhelm Liebknecht who had lapsed into "Austrophilism" and defended particularism. Marx insisted upon revolutionary tactics that would fight against both Bismarck and "Austrophilism" with equal ruthlessness, tactics which would not only suit the "conqueror," the Prussian junker, but would forthwith renew the struggle with him *upon the very basis* created by the Prussian military successes (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. III, pp. 134, 136, 147, 179, 204, 210, 215, 418, 437, 440-441). In the famous Address issued by the International Workingmen's Association, dated September 9, 1870, Marx warned the French proletariat against an untimely uprising; but when, in 1871, the uprising actually took place, Marx hailed the revolutionary initiative of the masses with the utmost enthusiasm, saying that they were "storming the heavens" (Letter of Marx to Kugelmann).<sup>\*</sup> In this situation, as in so many others, the defeat of a revolutionary onslaught was, from the Marxian standpoint of dialectical materialism, from the point of view of the general course and *the outcome* of the proletarian struggle, a lesser evil than would have been a retreat from a position hitherto occupied, a surrender without striking a blow, as such a surrender would have demoralised the proletariat and undermined its readiness for struggle. Fully recognising the importance of using legal means of struggle during periods of political stagnation, and when bourgeois legality prevails, Marx, in 1877 and 1878, when the Exception Law against the Socialists had been passed in Germany, strongly condemned the "revolutionary phrase-making" of Most; but he attacked no less and perhaps even more sharply, the opportunism that, for a time, prevailed in the official Social-Democratic Party, which failed to manifest a spontaneous readiness to resist, to be firm, a revolutionary spirit, a readiness to resort to illegal struggle in reply to the Exception Law (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. IV, pp. 397, 404, 418, 422, and 424; also letters to Sorge).

<sup>\*</sup> *Briefe an Kugelmann*, Berlin, Viva, 1927, letter dated April 12, 1871.—Ed.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY OF MARXISM \*

No complete collection of Marx's works and letters has yet been published.\*\* More of Marx's works have been translated into Russian than into any other language. The following enumeration of Marx's writings is arranged chronologically. In 1841 Marx wrote his dissertation on Epicurus's philosophy. (It was included in the *Literarischer Nachlass*, of which more will be said later.) In this dissertation, Marx still completely followed the Hegelian idealist school. In 1842 were written Marx's articles in the *Rheinische Zeitung* (Cologne), among them a criticism of the free press debate in the Sixth Rhenish Diet, an article on the laws concerning the stealing of timber, another in defence of divorcing politics from theology, etc. (partly included in the *Literarischer Nachlass*). Here we observe signs of Marx's transition from idealism to materialism and from revolutionary democracy to Communism. In 1844, under the editorship of Marx and Arnold Ruge, there appeared in Paris the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, in which this transition was definitely consummated. Among Marx's articles published in that magazine the most noteworthy are *A Criticism of the Hegelian Philosophy of Right* \*\*\* (published both in the *Literarischer Nachlass* and as a special pamphlet) and *On the Jewish Question* \*\*\*\* [likewise in the *Literarischer Nachlass*; issued as a pamphlet in Russian translation]. In 1845, Marx and Engels jointly published a pamphlet in Frankfurt a.M., entitled *Die Heilige Familie: Gegen Bruno Bauer und Konsorten* (included in the *Literarischer Nachlass*; two Russian editions as pamphlets, St. Petersburg, 1906 and 1907). In the spring of 1845 Marx wrote his theses on Feuerbach (published as an appendix to Friedrich Engels' pamphlet entitled *Ludwig Feuerbach*. [Rus-

\* In this bibliography, Lenin's references to various Russian editions of Marxian writings have been summarised and placed in brackets.—Ed.

\*\* The Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow has begun to issue the definitive edition of the complete works of Marx and Engels.—Ed.

\*\*\* Reprinted in English in *Selected Essays* by Karl Marx, 1926.—Ed.

\*\*\*\* *Ibid.*—Ed.

sian translation available.] In 1845-1847 Marx wrote a number of articles (most of which were not collected, republished, or translated into Russian) in the papers *Deutsche Brüsseler Zeitung* [German Brussels Gazette], Brussels, 1847; *Westphälisches Dampfboot* [Westphalian Steamship], Bielefeld, 1845-1848; *Gesellschaftsspiegel* [Mirror of Society], Elberfeld, 1846; and *La Réforme* [Reform], Paris, etc. In 1847 Marx wrote his fundamental work against Proudhon, *The Poverty of Philosophy*,\* a reply to Proudhon's work *The Philosophy of Poverty*.\*\* The book was published in Brussels and Paris (three Russian translations, 1905 and 1906). In 1848 there was published in Brussels the *Speech on Free Trade*\*\*\* (Russian translation available), then in London, in collaboration with Friedrich Engels, the famous *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, translated into nearly all the European languages and into a number of other languages (about eight Russian translations, 1905 and 1906; these editions, most of which were confiscated, appeared under various titles: *Communist Manifesto*, *On Communism*, *Social Classes and Communism*, *Capitalism and Communism*, *Philosophy of History*; a complete and the most accurate translation of this as well as of other works of Marx will be found in the editions of the Liberation of Labour group issued abroad). From June 1, 1848, to May 19, 1849, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* was published in Cologne with Marx as the actual editor-in-chief. His numerous articles published in that paper, which to this very day remains the best and unsurpassed organ of the revolutionary proletariat, have not been fully collected and reprinted. The most important of them were included in the *Literarischer Nachlass*. *Wage-Labour and Capital*, published in that paper, has been repeatedly issued as a pamphlet [four Russian translations, 1905 and 1906]; also from the same paper *Die Liberalen am Ruder* [The Liberals at the Helm] [St. Petersburg, 1906]. In 1849 Marx published in Cologne *Zwei Politische Prozesse* [Two Political Trials]—the text of two speeches delivered by Marx when facing trial on the charge of having violated the press law and having appealed to armed resistance against the government [Russian translations available in five editions, 1905 and 1906]. In 1850 Marx published in

\* Written originally in French under the title *Misère de la Philosophie*.—Ed.

\*\* *Philosophie de la Misère*.—Ed.

\*\*\* An address delivered before the Democratic Association of Brussels, January 9, 1848. New York, 1917.—Ed.

Hamburg six issues of the magazine *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*; the most important articles published in that magazine were later included in the *Literarischer Nachlass*. Especially noteworthy are Marx's articles republished by Engels in 1895 in a pamphlet entitled *Class Struggles in France, 1848-1850* [three Russian translations, two of which were issued in St. Petersburg, 1906 and 1912]. In 1852 a pamphlet by Marx was published in New York under the title, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* \* [Russian translation available]. In the same year a pamphlet of Marx was published in London under the title *Enthüllungen über den Kommunistenprozess in Köln* [Revelations about the Cologne Communist Trial] [in Russian translation, St. Petersburg, 1906]. From August, 1851, until 1862, Marx was a steady contributor to the *New York Tribune*, where many of his articles appeared without signature, as editorials. \*\* Most outstanding among these articles are those which were republished after the death of Marx and Engels in a German translation under the title, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany* \*\*\* [two Russian translations available in collected works and five as pamphlets, 1905 and 1906]. Some of Marx's articles in the *Tribune* were later published in London as separate pamphlets, as, for instance, the one about Palmerston, published in 1856; *Revelations Concerning the Diplomatic History of the Eighteenth Century* (revealing the continuous slavish dependence of the English Liberal Ministers upon Russia); and others. After Marx's death, his daughter, Eleanor Aveling, published a number of his *Tribune* articles on the Oriental question as a separate book entitled *The Eastern Question*, \*\*\*\* London, 1897 [partly translated into Russian, Kharkov, 1919]. \*\*\*\*\* From the end of 1854 and during

\* Published first by Joseph Weydemeyer in his magazine, *Die Revolution*, New York, 1852.—Ed.

\*\* Engels in his article on Marx in the *Handwörterbuch der Staatswissenschaften*, Vol. VI, p. 603, and Bernstein in his article on Marx in the Eleventh Edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 1911, erroneously give the dates 1853-1860. See *Briefwechsel* of Marx and Engels.

\*\*\* The publication of the correspondence between Marx and Engels in 1913 revealed that these articles were written by Engels with Marx's co-operation.—Ed.

\*\*\*\* Many of the articles reproduced in this volume are not by Marx, having been erroneously attributed to him by his daughter.—Ed.

\*\*\*\*\* In the article as originally published, Lenin stated that this work was "not translated into Russian." In revising the article at a later date, he called attention to the above partial translation. Similar references to later editions will be found elsewhere in this bibliography.—Ed.

1855 Marx contributed to the paper *Neue Oder-Zeitung* [*New Oder Gazette*], and in 1861-1862 to the Viennese paper, *Presse* [*Press*]. Those articles have not been collected, and only a few of them were reprinted in the *Neue Zeit*, as was also the case with Marx's numerous letters. The same is true about Marx's articles from *Das Volk* [*People*]. (London, 1859) concerning the diplomatic history of the Italian War of 1859. In 1859, a book by Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, appeared in Berlin [Russian translations, Moscow, 1896; St. Petersburg, 1907]. In 1860 a book by Marx entitled *Herr Vogt* appeared in London.

In 1864 the *Address of the International Workingmen's Association*,\* written by Marx, appeared in London (Russian translation available). Marx was the author of numerous manifestoes, appeals and resolutions of the General Council of the International. This material is far from having been analysed or even collected. The first approach to this work is G. Jaechk's book, *Die Internationale* [*The International*] \*\* [in Russian translation, St. Petersburg, 1906], where, among others, several of Marx's letters and draft resolutions are reproduced. Among the documents of the International that were written by Marx is the Address of the General Council concerning the Paris Commune. The document appeared in 1871 in London in pamphlet form under the title *The Civil War in France* [Russian translations, one edited by Lenin, available]. Between 1862 and 1874 Marx exchanged letters with a member of the International, Kugelmann; this correspondence was later published in a separate edition [two Russian translations, one edited by Lenin]. In 1867 Marx's main work, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Vol. I, appeared in Hamburg. The second and third volumes were published by Engels in 1885 and 1894, after the death of Marx [Russian translations: Vol. I, in five editions; Vols. II and III each in two editions]. In 1876 Marx participated in the writing of Engels' *Herrn Eugen Dührings Umwälzung der Wissenschaft* (*Anti-Dühring*); \*\*\* he went over the manuscript of the whole work

\* Generally known as the *Inaugural Address*, since it was delivered at the formal establishment of the First International.—Ed.

\*\* Leipzig, 1904.—Ed.

\*\*\* An abridged edition of *Anti-Dühring* was published in English under the title *Landmarks of Scientific Socialism*, Chicago, 1907. Marx's chapter on the history of political economy was excluded from this edition. Part of *Anti-Dühring* was published in an enlarged form as a separate pamphlet in English under the title *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*, Chicago, 1900.—Ed.



and wrote an entire chapter dealing with the history of political economy.

After Marx's death, the following works of his were published: *The Gotha Program* \* (published in the *Neue Zeit*, 1890-1891, No. 18; in Russian translation, St. Petersburg, 1906); *Value, Price and Profit*—a lecture delivered \*\* on June 26, 1865 (republished in the *Neue Zeit*, XVI, 2, 1897-1898; Russian translations, 1905 and 1906); *Aus dem Literarischen Nachlass von Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels und Ferdinand Lassalle*, three volumes, Stuttgart, 1902 [in Russian translation, St. Petersburg, 1907 and 1908; the letters of Lassalle to Marx, published separately, are included in the *Literarischer Nachlass*]; *Briefe und Auszüge aus Briefen von J. Ph. Becker, J. Dietzgen, K. Marx, F. Engels, u. A., an F. A. Sorge und Andere* [Letters and Excerpts from Letters from J. Ph. Becker, J. Dietzgen, K. Marx, F. Engels and Others to F. A. Sorge and Others] \*\*\* [two Russian editions; one translation with a foreword by Lenin]; *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, three volumes in four parts, Stuttgart, 1905-1910, representing the manuscript of the fourth volume of *Capital* and published by Kautsky [only the first volume translated into Russian; in three editions; St. Petersburg, 1906; Kiev, 1906 and 1907]. In 1913 four large volumes of the *Briefwechsel zwischen Friedrich Engels und Karl Marx* appeared in Stuttgart, with 1,386 letters written during the period from September, 1844, to January 10, 1883, and offering a mass of material that is highly valuable for the study of Marx's biography and views. In 1917, two volumes of Marx's and Engels' articles of 1852-1862 appeared in German.\*\*\*\* This list of Marx's works must be concluded with the remark that many of Marx's smaller articles and letters published, for the most part, in the *Neue Zeit*, the *Vorwärts* [Forward], and other Social-Democratic periodicals in the German language, have not been enumerated here. Neither can the list of Russian translations pretend to be complete.

The literature on Marx and Marxism is very extensive. Only the most outstanding will be noted here, the authors being divided into

\* New York, 1922.—Ed.

\*\* In English.—Ed.

\*\*\* Stuttgart, 1906.—Ed.

\*\*\*\* *Gesammelte Schriften von K. Marx und F. Engels, 1852 bis 1862* [Collected Writings of K. Marx and F. Engels, 1852 to 1862], Berlin, 1917.—Ed.

three main groups: Marxists, in the main assuming the point of view of Marx; bourgeois writers, in the main hostile to Marxism; and revisionists, who, claiming to accept some fundamentals of Marxism, in reality substitute for it bourgeois conceptions. As a peculiar Russian species of revisionism, the Narodnik attitude toward Marx must be mentioned. Werner Sombart, in his "Ein Beitrag zur Bibliographie des Marxismus" ["A Contribution to the Bibliography of Marxism"] (published in the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* [*Archive for Social Science and Social Politics*], XX, Book 2, 1905, pp. 413-430), gives some three hundred titles in a list that is far from complete. More can be found in the indices to the *Neue Zeit*, 1883-1907 and the following years, also in Joseph Stammer's *Bibliographie des Sozialismus und Kommunismus* [*Bibliography of Socialism and Communism*], Vols. I-III, Jena, 1893-1909. For a detailed bibliography of Marxism see also *Bibliographie der Sozialwissenschaften* [*Bibliography of the Social Sciences*], Berlin, 1905, and the following years. See also N. A. Rubakin, *Among Books* [in Russian], Vol. II. We mention here only the most essential bibliographies. On the subject of Marx's biography, attention must be called first of all to Friedrich Engels' articles in the *Volkskalender* [*People's Calendar*] published by Bracke in Braunschweig in 1878 and in the *Handwörterbuch der Staatswissenschaften* [*Dictionary of the Political Sciences*], Vol. VI, pp. 600-603. Other works on this subject are: Wilhelm Liebknecht, *Karl Marx: Biographical Memoirs*, Nuremberg, 1896; [in Russian translation], St. Petersburg, 1906; \* Lafargue, *Personal Recollections of Karl Marx* (*Neue Zeit*, IX, 1) [in Russian translation], Odessa, 1905; \*\* *Karl Marx: In Memoriam*, St. Petersburg, 1908 (Russian collection of articles by J. Nevzorov, N. Rozhkov, V. Bazarov, J. Steklov, A. Finn-Yenotayevsky, P. Rumyantsev, K. Renner, H. Roland-Holst, V. Ilyin, R. Luxemburg, G. Zinoviev, G. Kamenev, P. Orlovsky, M. Tagansky); Franz Mehring, *Karl Marx*. A large biography of Marx written in English by the American Socialist, Spargo (John Spargo, *Karl Marx, His Life and Work*, London, 1911),\*\*\* is not satisfactory. For a general review of Marx's activities, see Karl Kautsky, *Die historische Leistung von Karl Marx. Zum 25. Todestag des*

\* Chicago, 1901.—Ed.

\*\* Reprinted in English in *Karl Marx: Man, Thinker and Revolutionist*. New York and London, 1927.—Ed.

\*\*\* The original American edition was published in New York, 1909.—Ed.

*Meisters [The Historical Contribution of Karl Marx. On the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Master's Death]*, Berlin, 1908 [Russian translation, St. Petersburg, 1908]; also a popular pamphlet by Clara Zetkin, *Karl Marx und sein Lebenswerk [Karl Marx and His Life Work]*, 1913. Reminiscences of Marx: those by Annenkov in the *Vestnik Evropy [European Messenger]*, 1880, No. 4; (also in his *Reminiscences*, Vol. III; *A Remarkable Decade [in Russian]*, St. Petersburg, 1882); those by Carl Schurz in the *Russkoye Bogatstvo [Russian Wealth]*, 1906, No. 12; those by M. Kovalevsky in the *Vestnik Evropy*, 1909, No. 6, etc.

The best exposition of the philosophy of Marxism and of historical materialism is given by G. V. Plekhanov in his works [all in Russian]: *For Twenty Years*, St. Petersburg, 1909; *From Defence to Attack*, St. Petersburg, 1910; *Fundamental Problems of Marxism*, St. Petersburg, 1908; \* *Critique of Our Critics*, St. Petersburg, 1906; *On the Question of Developing a Monistic Conception of History*, St. Petersburg, 1908; and others. [In Russian translation]: Antonio Labriola, *Essais sur la conception matérialiste de l'histoire*, St. Petersburg, 1898; \*\* also his *Historical Materialism and Philosophy*, St. Petersburg, 1906; Franz Mehring, *Ueber historischen Materialismus [On Historical Materialism]* [two editions, St. Petersburg, 1906], and *Die Lessinglegende [The Lessing Legend]* [St. Petersburg, 1908]; Charles Andler (non-Marxist), *Le manifeste communiste de Karl Marx et F. Engels*, St. Petersburg, 1906. See also *Historical Materialism*, St. Petersburg, 1908, a collection of articles by Engels, Kautsky, Lafargue, and many others [in Russian translation]; L. Axelrod, *Philosophical Sketches. A Reply to Philosophic Critics of Historical Materialism* [in Russian translation], St. Petersburg, 1906. A special defence of Dietzgen's unsuccessful deviations from Marxism is contained in E. Untermann's book, *Die logischen Mängel des engeren Marxismus [The Logical Defects of Narrow Marxism]*, Munich, 1910, 753 pages (a large but none too earnest book); Hugo Riekes, "Die philosophische Wurzel des Marxismus" [The Philosophical Roots of Marxism], in the *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Staatswissenschaft [Journal of All Political Sciences]*, 1906, Book III, pp. 407-432 (an interest-

\* English translation published in New York and London, 1929.—Ed.

\*\* *Essays on the Materialistic Conception of History*, Chicago, 1904.—Ed.

ing piece of work of an opponent of the Marxian views showing their philosophical unity from the point of view of materialism); Benno Erdmann, "De philosophischen Voraussetzungen der materialistischen Geschichtsauffassung" ["The Philosophic Assumptions of the Materialist Conception of History"], in the *Jahrbuch für Gesetzgebung, Verwaltung und Volkswirtschaft* (*Schmoller's Jahrbuch*) [*Yearbook for Legislation, Administration and National Economy* (*Schmoller's Yearbook*)], 1907, Book III, pp. 1-56 (a compilation of the philosophical arguments against Marxism; a very useful formulation of some of the basic principles of Marx's philosophic materialism, and a compilation of the arguments against it from the current point of view of Kantianism and agnosticism in general); Rudolph Stammler (Kantian), *Wirtschaft und Recht nach der materialistischen Geschichtsauffassung* [*Economy and Law According to the Materialist Conception of History*], Leipzig, 1906, Woltmann (also Kantian), *Historischer Materialismus* [*Historical Materialism*] (in Russian translation, 1901): Vorländer, *Kant und Marx* [*Kant and Marx*] [in Russian translation], St. Petersburg, 1909. See also polemics between A. Bogdanov, V. Bazarov and others, on the one hand and V. Ilyin \* on the other (the views of the former being contained in *Outline of Marxian Philosophy*, St. Petersburg, 1908), A. Bogdanov, *The Fall of the Great Fetishism*, Moscow, 1909, and other works; the views of the latter in his book, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, St. Petersburg, 1909\*\* [all in Russian]. On the question of historical materialism and ethics, the outstanding books are: Karl Kautsky, *Ethics and the Materialist Conception of History*, \*\*\* [in Russian translation], St. Petersburg, 1906, and numerous other works by Kautsky; Louis Boudin, *The Theoretical System of Karl Marx in the Light of Recent Criticism*, \*\*\*\* [in Russian translation], St. Petersburg, 1908; Hermann Gorter, *Der historische Materialismus* [*Historical Materialism*], 1909. Of the works of the opponents of Marxism, we wish to point out Tugan-Baranovsky, *Theoretical Foundations of Marxism* [in Russian], St. Petersburg, 1907; S. Prokopovich, *Critique of Marx* [in Russian], St. Petersburg, 1901; Hammacher, *Das philosophisch-ökonomische System des Marxismus* [*The Philosophic-Economic*

\* One of Lenin's pen names.—Ed.

\*\* Published in English as Volume XIII of Lenin's *Collected Works*.—Ed.

\*\*\* Chicago, 1913.—Ed.

\*\*\*\* Chicago, 1907.—Ed.

*System of Marxism*], Leipzig, 1910 (730 pp., collection of quotations); Werner Sombart, *Sozialismus und soziale Bewegung im XIX. Jahrhundert* [*Socialism and the Social Movement in the Nineteenth Century*] [in Russian translation], St. Petersburg; Max Adler (Kantian), *Kausalität und Teleologie* [*Causality and Teleology*], Vienna, 1909, in *Marx-Studien* [*Marx Studies*], also *Marx als Denker* [*Marx as a Thinker*] by the same author.

The book of an Hegelian idealist, Giovanni Gentile, *La filosofia di Marx* [*The Philosophy of Marx*], Pisa, 1899, deserves attention. The author points out some important aspects of Marx's materialistic dialectics which ordinarily escape the attention of the Kantians, positivists, etc. Likewise: Levy, *Feuerbach*—a work about one of the main philosophic predecessors of Marx. A useful collection of quotations from a number of Marx's works is contained in Chernyshev's *Notebook of a Marxist* [in Russian], St. Petersburg, 1908. On Marx's economic doctrine, the outstanding books are the following: Karl Kautsky, *The Economic Doctrines of Karl Marx* \* (many Russian editions), *Die Agrarfrage* [*The Agrarian Question*], *Das Erfurter Programm*, and numerous pamphlets [all in Russian translation]; Eduard Bernstein, *Die ökonomische Lehre von Marx. Der III. Band des Kapital* [*The Economic Doctrine of Marx. The Third Volume of Capital*] (in Russian translation, 1905); Gabriel Deville, *Le Capital*, exposition of the first volume of *Capital* (in Russian translation, 1907). A representative of so-called Revisionism among the Marxists, as regards the agrarian question, is E. David, *Sozialismus und Landwirtschaft* [*Socialism and Agriculture*] (in Russian translation, St. Petersburg, 1906). For a critique of Revisionism see V. Ilyin, *The Agrarian Question*, Part I [in Russian], St. Petersburg, 1908. See also books [all in Russian] by V. Ilyin: *Development of Capitalism in Russia*, second edition, St. Petersburg, 1908; *Economic Studies and Articles*, St. Petersburg, 1899; *New Data Concerning the Laws of Development of Capitalism and Agriculture*, Book I, 1917. An adaptation of Marx's views, with some deviations, to the latest data concerning agrarian relations in France, we find in Compère-Morel, *La question agraire et le socialisme en France* [*The Agrarian Question and Socialism in France*], Paris, 1912. Marx's economic views have been further developed by application to the latest phenomena in economic life

\* London and New York, 1925.—Ed.

in Hilferding's *Finanzkapital* [*Finance Capital*] [in Russian translation], St. Petersburg, 1911 (essential inaccuracies of the author's views on the theory of value have been corrected by Kautsky in an article "Gold, Papier und Ware" ["Gold, Paper and Commodities"] in the *Neue Zeit*, XXX, 1; 1912, pp. 837 and 886); and V. Ilyin's *Imperialism as the Final Stage of Capitalism* [in Russian], 1917. Deviating from Marxism in essential points are: Peter Maslov's *Agrarian Question*, two volumes, and *Theory of Economic Development*, St. Petersburg, 1910 (both in Russian). A criticism of some of Maslov's deviations may be found in Kautsky's article "Malthusianismus und Socialismus" ["Malthusianism and Socialism"] in the *Neue Zeit*, XXIX, 1, 1911.

Criticism of the economic doctrine of Marx, from the point of view of the so-called marginal utility theory that is widespread among bourgeois professors, is contained in the following works: Böhm-Bawerk, *Karl Marx and the Close of His System* \* [in Russian translation, St. Petersburg, 1897], and *Kapital und Kapitalzins* [*Capital and Capital Interest*], two volumes, Innsbruck, 1900-1902 [in Russian translation], St. Petersburg, 1909; Riekes, *Wert und Tauschwert* [*Value and Exchange Value*], 1899; von Bortkiewicz, "Wertrechnung und Preisrechnung im Marxschen System" ["Calculation of Value and Calculation of Price in the Marxian System"] (*Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft*, 1906-1907); Leo von Buch, *Ueber die Elemente der politischen Oekonomie. Die Intensität der Arbeit, Wert und Preis* [*On the Elements of Political Economy. Intensity of Labour, Value and Price*]. Böhm-Bawerk's critique, analysed from a Marxian point of view by Hilferding in his *Böhm-Bawerks Marx-Kritik* [*Böhm-Bawerk's Criticism of Marx*] (in *Marx-Studien*, Vol. I., Vienna, 1909), and in smaller articles published in the *Neue Zeit*.

On the question of the two main currents in the interpretation and development of Marxism—the so-called revisionism versus radical ("orthodox") Marxism, see Eduard Bernstein's *Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus und die Aufgaben der Sozialdemokratie*,\*\* Stuttgart, 1899 [two Russian translations, St. Petersburg, 1901, and Moscow, 1901] and *Aus der Geschichte und Theorie des Sozialismus* [*From the History and Theory of Socialism*] [in Russian translation], St. Petersburg, 1902. A reply to Bernstein is contained in Karl Kaut-

\* London, 1898.—Ed.

\*\* Published in English as *Evolutionary Socialism*, New York, 1909.—Ed.

sky's *Bernstein und das sozialdemokratische Programm* [*Bernstein and the Social-Democratic Programme*], Stuttgart, 1899 (four Russian editions, 1905 and 1906). Of the French Marxian literature see Jules Guesde's book: *Quatre ans de lutte des classes* [*Four Years of Class Struggle*], *En Garde* [*On Guard*], and *Questions d'aujourd'hui* [*Questions of To-day*], Paris, 1911; Paul Lafargue, *Le déterminisme économique. La méthode historique de Karl Marx* [*Economic Determinism. The Historical Method of Karl Marx*], Paris, 1909; Anton Pannekoek, *Zwei Tendenzen in der Arbeiterbewegung* [*Two Tendencies in the Labour Movement*].

On the question of the Marxian theory of capital accumulation, there is a new work by Rosa Luxemburg, *Die Akkumulation des Kapitals* [*The Accumulation of Capital*], Berlin, 1913, and an analysis of her incorrect interpretation of Marx's theory by Otto Bauer, "Die Akkumulation des Kapitals" ["The Accumulation of Capital"] (*Neue Zeit*, XXXI, 1, 1913, pp. 831 and 862); also by Eckstein in the *Vorwärts* and by Pannekoek in the *Bremer Bürger-Zeitung* [*Bremen Citizen's Gazette*] for 1913.

Of the old Russian literature on Marxism let us note the following: B. Chicherin, "The German Socialists," in Bezobrazov's *Collection of Political Science*, St. Petersburg, 1888, and *History of Political Doctrines*, part V, Moscow, 1902, p. 156; a reply to the above by Ziber, *The German Economists Through Mr. Chicherin's Glasses*, in his *Collected Works*, Vol. II, St. Petersburg, 1900; G. Slonimsky, *The Economic Doctrine of Karl Marx*, St. Petersburg, 1898; N. Ziber, *David Ricardo and Karl Marx in Their Socio-economic Investigations*, St. Petersburg, 1885, and Vol. II of his *Collected Works*, St. Petersburg, 1900. Also J. Kaufmann's (J. K.—n) review of *Capital* in the *Vestnik Evropy* for 1872, No. 5—an article distinguished by the fact that, in his addendum to the second edition of *Capital*, Marx quoted J. K.—n's arguments, recognising them as a correct exposition of his dialectic-materialist method.

The Russian Narodniks on Marxism: N. K. Mikhailovsky—in the *Russkoye Bogatstvo*, 1894, No. 10, and 1895, Nos. 1 and 2; also reprinted in his collected works—remarks concerning P. Struve's *Critical Notes*, St. Petersburg, 1894. Mikhailovsky's views analysed from a Marxian point of view by K. Tulin (V. Ilyin) in his *Data Characterising Our Economic Development*, printed in St. Petersburg, 1895, but destroyed by the censor, later reprinted in V. Ilyin's *For Twelve Years*, St. Petersburg, 1908. Other Narodnik works: V.

V., *Our Lines of Policy*, St. Petersburg, 1892, and *From the Seventies to the Twentieth Century*, St. Petersburg, 1907; Nikolai—on, *Outline of Our Post-Reform Social Economy*, St. Petersburg, 1893; V. Chernov, *Marxism and the Agrarian Problem*, St. Petersburg, 1906, and *Philosophical and Sociological Sketches*, St. Petersburg, 1907.

Besides the Narodniks, let us note further the following: N. Kareyev, *Old and New Sketches on Historical Materialism* [in Russian], St. Petersburg, 1896; (second edition in 1913 under the title *Critique of Economic Materialism*); Masaryk, *Das philosophischen und soziologischen Grundlagen des Marxismus* [in Russian translation], Moscow, 1900; Croce, *Historical Materialism and Marxian Economy*\* [in Russian translation], St. Petersburg, 1902.

In order correctly to evaluate Marx's views, it is necessary to be acquainted with the works of his closest brother-in-ideas and collaborator, Friedrich Engels. It is impossible to understand Marxism and to propound it fully without taking into account *all* the works of Engels.

For a critique of Marx from the point of view of Anarchism, see V. Cherkov, *The Doctrines of Marxism*, two parts [in Russian], St. Petersburg, 1905; B. Tucker, *Instead of a Book* [in Russian], Moscow, 1907; Sorel (syndicalist), *Insegnamenti sociali della economia contemporanea* [in Russian translation], Moscow, 1908.

\* New York, 1914.—Ed.

THE END



# SOCIALISM

## Utopian and Scientific

*by Frederick Engels*

WITH THE ESSAY ON "THE MARK"

*Translated by Edward Aveling*



INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHERS

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

FREDERICK ENGELS was born in Barmen, Rhenish Prussia, on November 28, 1820, and died in London on August 5, 1895. From the time he first met Karl Marx in Paris in 1844, until Marx's death in 1883, Engels was his intimate friend and close collaborator. The names of Marx and Engels are linked as the founders of scientific socialism.

*Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, a part of the larger work *Anti-Dühring*, has been translated into as many languages as the *Communist Manifesto* and has served the world over as an introduction to the principles of scientific socialism. The present edition includes Engels' essay on "The Mark," omitted in previous English editions of this work in the United States, as well as a goodly number of additional explanatory notes.

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## INTRODUCTION TO FIRST GERMAN EDITION, 1882

THE FOLLOWING work is taken from three chapters of my book: *Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science*, Leipzig, 1878. I put it together for my friend Paul Lafargue for translation into French and added a few extra remarks. The French translation revised by me appeared first in the *Revue socialiste* and then independently under the title: *Socialisme utopique et socialisme scientifique*, Paris, 1880. A rendering into Polish made from the French translation has just appeared in Geneva and bears the title: *Socjalizm utopijny a naukowy*, Imprimerie de l'Aurore, Geneva, 1882.

The surprising success of the Lafargue translation in the French-speaking countries, and especially in France itself, forced me to consider whether a separate German edition of these three chapters would not likewise be of value. Then the editors of the *Zurich Socialdemokrat*<sup>1</sup> informed me that a demand was generally being raised within the German Social-Democratic Party for the publication of new propaganda pamphlets, and they asked me whether I would not apply those three chapters to this purpose. Naturally, I agreed.

It was, however, not originally written for immediate popular propaganda. How could a purely scientific work be suitable for that? What changes in form and content were required?

So far as form is concerned, only the many foreign words could arouse doubts. But even Lassalle in his speeches and propaganda writings was not at all sparing of foreign words and to my knowledge there has been no complaint about it. Since that time our workers have read newspapers to a far greater extent and far more regularly and they have thereby become more familiar with foreign words. I removed all unnecessary foreign words. Regarding those that were unavoidable I refrained from adding so-called explanatory translations. The unavoidable foreign words, usually generally accepted scientific-technical expressions, would not have been used if they had been translatable. Translation distorts the sense; it confuses instead of explains. Oral information is of much more assistance.

## 6 INTRODUCTION TO FIRST GERMAN EDITION

The content, on the other hand, I think I can assert, will cause German workers few difficulties. In general, only the third section is difficult, but far less so for workers whose general conditions of life it concerns than for the "educated" bourgeois. In the many explanatory additions that I have made here, I have had in mind not so much the workers as the "educated" readers—persons of the type of the Deputy von Eynern, the *Geheimrat* Heinrich von Sybel and other Treitschkes,<sup>2</sup> governed by the irresistible impulse to demonstrate again and again in black and white their frightful ignorance and, as a consequence, their understandable, colossal misconception of socialism.

If Don Quixote tilts his lance at windmills, that is in accordance with his duty, his role; but it would be impossible for us to permit Sancho Panza anything of the sort.

Such readers will also be surprised that in a sketch of the history of the development of socialism they encounter the Kant-Laplace cosmogony,<sup>3</sup> modern natural science and Darwin, classical German philosophy and Hegel. But scientific socialism is indeed an essentially German product and could arise only in that nation whose classical philosophy had kept alive the tradition of conscious dialectics: in Germany.<sup>4</sup> The materialist conception of history and its special application to the modern class struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie was only possible by means of dialectics. And if the schoolmasters of the German bourgeoisie have drowned the memory of the great German philosophers and of the dialectics pursued by them in a swamp of empty eclecticism, so much so that we are compelled to appeal to modern natural science as a witness for the preservation of dialectics in reality—we German Socialists are proud of the fact that we are derived not only from Saint-Simon, Fourier, and Owen, but also from Kant, Fichte, and Hegel.

*London, September 21, 1882*

FREDERICK ENGELS

## INTRODUCTION TO FIRST ENGLISH EDITION, 1892

THE PRESENT little book is, originally, a part of a larger whole. About 1875, Dr. E. Dühring, *privatdocent* at Berlin University, suddenly and rather clamorously announced his conversion to socialism, and presented the German public not only with an elaborate socialist theory, but also with a complete practical plan for the reorganisation of society. As a matter of course, he fell foul of his predecessors; above all, he honoured Marx by pouring out upon him the full vials of his wrath.

This took place about the time when the two sections of the Socialist Party in Germany—Eisenachers and Lassalleans—had just effected their fusion, and thus obtained not only an immense increase of strength, but, what was more, the faculty of employing the whole of this strength against the common enemy. The Socialist Party in Germany was fast becoming a power. But to make it a power, the first condition was that the newly-conquered unity should not be imperilled. And Dr. Dühring openly proceeded to form around himself a sect, the nucleus of a future separate party. It thus became necessary to take up the gauntlet thrown down to us, and to fight out the struggle whether we liked it or not.

This, however, though it might not be an over-difficult, was evidently a long-winded, business. As is well known, we Germans are of a terribly ponderous *Gründlichkeit*, radical profundity or profound radicality, whatever you may like to call it. Whenever any one of us expounds what he considers a new doctrine, he has first to elaborate it into an all-comprising system. He has to prove that both the first principles of logic and the fundamental laws of the universe had existed from all eternity for no other purpose than to ultimately lead to this newly-discovered, crowning theory. And Dr. Dühring, in this respect, was quite up to the national mark. Nothing less than a complete *System of Philosophy*, mental, moral, natural and

historical; a complete *System of Political Economy and Socialism*; and, finally, a *Critical History of Political Economy*—three big volumes in octavo, heavy extrinsically and intrinsically, three army corps of arguments mobilised against all previous philosophers and economists in general, and against Marx in particular—in fact, an attempt at a complete “revolution in science”—these were what I should have to tackle. I had to treat of all and every possible subject from the concepts of time and space to bimetallism; from the eternity of matter and motion to the perishable nature of moral ideas; from Darwin’s natural selection to the education of youth in a future society. Anyhow, the systematic comprehensiveness of my opponent gave me the opportunity of developing, in opposition to him, and in a more connected form than had previously been done, the views held by Marx and myself on this great variety of subjects. And that was the principal reason which made me undertake this otherwise ungrateful task.

My reply was first published in a series of articles in the Leipzig *Vorwärts*, the chief organ of the Socialist Party, and later on as a book: *Herrn Eugen Dühring’s Umwälzung der Wissenschaft*,\* a second edition of which appeared in Zürich, 1886.

At the request of my friend, Paul Lafargue, now representative of Lille in the French Chamber of Deputies, I arranged three chapters of this book as a pamphlet, which he translated and published in 1880, under the title: *Socialisme utopique et Socialisme scientifique*. From this French text a Polish and a Spanish edition were prepared. In 1883 our German friends brought out the pamphlet in the original language. Italian, Russian, Danish, Dutch and Rumanian translations, based upon the German text, have since been published. Thus, with the present English edition, this little book circulates in ten languages. I am not aware that any other socialist work, not even our *Communist Manifesto* of 1848 or Marx’s *Capital*, has been so often translated. In Germany it has had four editions of about 20,000 copies in all.

The appendix, *The Mark*, was written with the intention of

\* *Herr Eugen Dühring’s Revolution in Science* (International Publishers).—Ed.

spreading among the German Socialist Party some elementary knowledge of the history and development of landed property in Germany. This seemed all the more necessary at a time when the assimilation by that party of the working people of the towns was in a fair way of completion, and when the agricultural labourers and peasants had to be taken in hand. This appendix has been included in the translation, as the original forms of tenure of land common to all Teutonic tribes, and the history of their decay, are even less known in England than in Germany. I have left the text as it stands in the original, without alluding to the hypothesis recently started by Maxim Kovalevsky, according to which the partition of the arable and meadow lands among the members of the mark was preceded by their being cultivated for joint account by a large patriarchal family community embracing several generations (as exemplified by the still existing South Slavonian Zadruga), and that the partition, later on, took place when the community had increased, so as to become too unwieldy for joint-account management. Kovalevsky is probably quite right, but the matter is still *sub judice*.

The economic terms used in this work, as far as they are new, agree with those used in the English edition of Marx's *Capital*. We call "production of commodities" that economic phase where articles are produced not only for the use of the producers, but also for purposes of exchange; that is, *as commodities*, not as use values. This phase extends from the first beginnings of production for exchange down to our present time; it attains its full development under capitalist production only, that is, under conditions where the capitalist, the owner of the means of production, employs, for wages, labourers, people deprived of all means of production except their own labour power, and pockets the excess of the selling price of the products over his outlay. We divide the history of industrial production since the Middle Ages into three periods: 1) handicraft, small master craftsmen with a few journeymen and apprentices, where each labourer produces the complete article; 2) manufacture, where greater numbers of workmen, grouped in one large establishment, produce the complete article on the principle of division of labour, each workman performing only

one partial operation, so that the product is complete only after having passed successively through the hands of all; 3) modern industry, where the product is produced by machinery driven by power, and where the work of the labourer is limited to superintending and correcting the performances of the mechanical agent.

I am perfectly aware that the contents of this work will meet with objection from a considerable portion of the British public. But if we Continentals had taken the slightest notice of the prejudices of British "respectability," we should be even worse off than we are. This book defends what we call "historical materialism," and the word materialism grates upon the ears of the immense majority of British readers. "Agnosticism" might be tolerated, but materialism is utterly inadmissible.

And yet the original home of all modern materialism, from the seventeenth century onwards, is England.

Materialism is the natural-born son of Great Britain. Already the British schoolman, Duns Scotus, asked, "whether it was impossible for matter to think?"

In order to effect this miracle, he took refuge in God's omnipotence, *i.e.*, he made theology preach materialism. Moreover, he was a nominalist. Nominalism,<sup>5</sup> the first form of materialism, is chiefly found among the English schoolmen.

The real progenitor of English materialism is Bacon. To him natural philosophy is the only true philosophy, and physics based upon the experience of the senses is the chiefest part of natural philosophy. Anaxagoras and his homœomeriæ, Democritus and his atoms, he often quotes as his authorities. According to him the senses are infallible and the source of all knowledge. All science is based on experience, and consists in subjecting the data furnished by the senses to a rational method of investigation. Induction, analysis, comparison, observation, experiment, are the principal forms of such a rational method. Among the qualities inherent in matter, motion is the first and foremost, not only in the form of mechanical and mathematical motion, but chiefly in the form of an impulse, a vital spirit, a tension—or a "qual," to use a term of Jacob Böhme's\*—of matter.

\* "Qual" is a philosophical play upon words. Qual literally means torture, a pain which drives to action of some kind; at the same time the mystic Böhme puts into the German word something of the meaning of



In Bacon, its first creator, materialism still occludes within itself the germs of a many-sided development. On the one hand, matter, surrounded by a sensuous, poetic glamour, seems to attract man's whole entity by winning smiles. On the other, the aphoristically formulated doctrine pullulates with inconsistencies imported from theology.

In its further evolution, materialism becomes one-sided. Hobbes is the man who systematises Baconian materialism. Knowledge based upon the senses loses its poetic blossom, it passes into the abstract experience of the mathematician; geometry is proclaimed as the queen of sciences. Materialism takes to misanthropy. If it is to overcome its opponent, misanthropic, fleshless spiritualism, and that on the latter's own ground, materialism has to chastise its own flesh and turn ascetic. Thus, from a sensual, it passes into an intellectual entity; but thus, too, it evolves all the consistency, regardless of consequences, characteristic of the intellect.

Hobbes, as Bacon's continuator, argues thus: If all human knowledge is furnished by the senses, then our concepts and ideas are but the phantoms, divested of their sensual forms, of the real world. Philosophy can but give names to these phantoms. One name may be applied to more than one of them. There may even be names of names. It would imply a contradiction if, on the one hand, we maintained that all ideas had their origin in the world of sensation, and, on the other, that a word was more than a word; that besides the beings known to us by our senses, beings which are one and all individuals, there existed also beings of a general, not individual, nature. An unbodily substance is the same absurdity as an unbodily body. Body, being, substance, are but different terms for the same reality. *It is impossible to separate thought from matter that thinks.* This matter is the substratum of all changes going on in the world. The word infinite is meaningless, unless it states that our mind is capable of performing an endless process of addition. Only material things being perceptible to us, we cannot know anything about the existence of God. My own existence alone is certain. Every human passion is a mechanical movement which has a beginning and an end. The objects of impulse are what we call good. Man is subject to the same laws as nature. Power and freedom are identical.

Hobbes had systematised Bacon, without, however, furnishing a proof for Bacon's fundamental principle, the origin of all human

the Latin *qualitas*; his "qual" was the activating principle arising from, and promoting in its turn, the spontaneous development of the thing, relation, or person subject to it, in contradistinction to a pain inflicted from without.

knowledge from the world of sensation. It was Locke who, in his *Essay on the Human Understanding*, supplied this proof.

Hobbes had shattered the theistic prejudices of Baconian materialism; Collins, Dodwall, Coward, Hartley, Priestley similarly shattered the last theological bars that still hemmed in Locke's sensationalism. At all events, for practical materialists, theism is but an easy-going way of getting rid of religion.\*

Thus Karl Marx wrote about the British origin of modern materialism. If Englishmen nowadays do not exactly relish the compliment he paid their ancestors, more's the pity. It is none the less undeniable that Bacon, Hobbes and Locke are the fathers of that brilliant school of French materialists which made the eighteenth century, in spite of all battles on land and sea won over Frenchmen by Germans and Englishmen, a pre-eminently French century, even before that crowning French Revolution, the results of which we outsiders, in England as well as in Germany, are still trying to acclimatise.

There is no denying it. About the middle of this century, what struck every cultivated foreigner who set up his residence in England was what he was then bound to consider the religious bigotry and stupidity of the English respectable middle class. We, at that time, were all materialists, or, at least, very advanced freethinkers, and to us it appeared inconceivable that almost all educated people in England should believe in all sorts of impossible miracles and that even geologists like Buckland and Mantell should contort the facts of their science so as not to clash too much with the myths of the book of Genesis; while, in order to find people who dared to use their own intellectual faculties with regard to religious matters, you had to go amongst the uneducated, the "great unwashed," as they were then called, the working people, especially the Owenite socialists.

But England has been "civilised" since then. The exhibition of 1851 sounded the knell of English insular exclusiveness. England became gradually internationalised, in diet, in manners, in ideas; so much so that I begin to wish that some English manners and customs had made as much headway on the Continent as other Continental habits have made here. Anyhow,

\* Marx and Engels, *Die Heilige Familie*, Frankfurt a. M., 1845, pp. 201-04.

the introduction and spread of salad oil (before 1851 known only to the aristocracy) has been accompanied by a fatal spread of continental scepticism in matters religious, and it has come to this, that agnosticism, though not yet considered "the thing" quite as much as the Church of England, is yet very nearly on a par, as far as respectability goes, with Baptism, and decidedly ranks above the Salvation Army. And I cannot help believing that under these circumstances it will be consoling to many who sincerely regret and condemn this progress of infidelity, to learn that these "new-fangled notions" are not of foreign origin, are not "made in Germany," like so many other articles of daily use, but are undoubtedly Old English, and that their British originators two hundred years ago went a good deal further than their descendants now dare to venture.

What, indeed, is agnosticism, but, to use an expressive Lancashire term, "shamefaced" materialism? The agnostic's conception of nature is materialistic throughout. The entire natural world is governed by law, and absolutely excludes the intervention of action from without. But, he adds, we have no means either of ascertaining or of disproving the existence of some supreme being beyond the known universe. Now, this might hold good at the time when Laplace, to Napoleon's question, why in the great astronomer's *Mécanique céleste* the Creator was not even mentioned, proudly replied: "*Je n'avais pas besoin de cette hypothèse.*" But nowadays, in our evolutionary conception of the universe, there is absolutely no room for either a creator or a ruler; and to talk of a supreme being shut out from the whole existing world implies a contradiction in terms, and as it seems to me, a gratuitous insult to the feelings of religious people.

Again, our agnostic admits that all our knowledge is based upon the information imparted to us by our senses. But, he adds, how do we know that our senses give us correct representations of the objects we perceive through them? And he proceeds to inform us that, whenever he speaks of objects or their qualities, he does in reality not mean these objects and qualities, of which he cannot know anything for certain, but merely the impressions which they have produced on his senses. Now, this line of reasoning seems undoubtedly hard to beat by mere argumenta-

tion. But before there was argumentation, there was action. *Im Anfang war die That*. And human action had solved the difficulty long before human ingenuity invented it. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. From the moment we turn to our own use these objects, according to the qualities we perceive in them, we put to an infallible test the correctness or otherwise of our sense perceptions. If these perceptions have been wrong, then our estimate of the use to which an object can be turned must also be wrong, and our attempt must fail. But if we succeed in accomplishing our aim, if we find that the object does agree with our idea of it, and does answer the purpose we intended it for, then that is positive proof that our perceptions of it and of its qualities, *so far*, agree with reality outside ourselves. And whenever we find ourselves face to face with a failure, then we generally are not long in making out the cause that made us fail; we find that the perception upon which we acted was either incomplete and superficial, or combined with the result of other perceptions in a way not warranted by them—what we call defective reasoning. So long as we take care to train and to use our senses properly, and to keep our action within the limits prescribed by perceptions properly made and properly used, so long we shall find that the result of our action proves the conformity of our perceptions with the objective nature of the things perceived. Not in one single instance, so far, have we been led to the conclusion that our sense perceptions, scientifically controlled, induce in our minds ideas respecting the outer world that are, by their very nature, at variance with reality, or that there is an inherent incompatibility between the outer world and our sense perceptions of it.

But then come the Neo-Kantian agnostics and say: We may correctly perceive the qualities of a thing, but we cannot by any sensible or mental process grasp the thing in itself. This "thing in itself" is beyond our ken. To this Hegel, long since, has replied: If you know all the qualities of a thing, you know the thing itself; nothing remains but the fact that the said thing exists without us; and when your senses have taught you that fact, you have grasped the last remnant of the thing in itself, Kant's celebrated unknowable *Ding an sich*. To which it may be added, that in Kant's time our knowledge of natural objects

was indeed so fragmentary that he might well suspect, behind the little we knew about each of them, a mysterious "thing in itself." But one after another these ungraspable things have been grasped, analysed, and, what is more, *reproduced* by the giant progress of science; and what we can produce, we certainly cannot consider as unknowable. To the chemistry of the first half of this century organic substances were such mysterious objects; now we learn to build them up one after another from their chemical elements without the aid of organic processes. Modern chemists declare that as soon as the chemical constitution of no matter what body is known, it can be built up from its elements. We are still far from knowing the constitution of the highest organic substances, the albuminous bodies; but there is no reason why we should not, if only after centuries, arrive at that knowledge and, armed with it, produce artificial albumen. But if we arrive at that, we shall at the same time have produced organic life, for life, from its lowest to its highest forms, is but the normal mode of existence of albuminous bodies.

As soon, however, as our agnostic has made these formal mental reservations, he talks and acts as the rank materialist he at bottom is. He may say that, as far as *we* know, matter and motion, or as it is now called, energy, can neither be created nor destroyed, but that we have no proof of their not having been created at some time or other. But if you try to use this admission against him in any particular case, he will quickly put you out of court. If he admits the possibility of spiritualism *in abstracto*, he will have none of it *in concreto*. As far as we know and can know, he will tell you there is no Creator and no Ruler of the universe; as far as we are concerned, matter and energy can neither be created nor annihilated; for us, mind is a mode of energy, a function of the brain; all we know is that the material world is governed by immutable laws, and so forth. Thus, as far as he is a scientific man, as far as he *knows* anything, he is a materialist; outside his science, in spheres about which he knows nothing, he translates his ignorance into Greek and calls it agnosticism.

At all events, one thing seems clear: even if I was an agnostic, it is evident that I could not describe the conception of history

sketched out in this little book, as "historical agnosticism." Religious people would laugh at me, agnostics would indignantly ask, was I going to make fun of them? And thus I hope even British respectability will not be overshocked if I use, in English, as well as in so many other languages the term "historical materialism," to designate that view of the course of history, which seeks the ultimate cause and the great moving power of all important historic events in the economic development of society, in the changes in the modes of production and exchange, in the consequent division of society into distinct classes, and in the struggles of these classes against one another.

This indulgence will perhaps be accorded to me all the sooner if I show that historical materialism may be of advantage even to British respectability. I have mentioned the fact that, about forty or fifty years ago, any cultivated foreigner settling in England was struck by what he was then bound to consider the religious bigotry and stupidity of the English respectable middle class. I am now going to prove that the respectable English middle class of that time was not quite as stupid as it looked to the intelligent foreigner. Its religious leanings can be explained.

When Europe emerged from the Middle Ages, the rising middle class of the towns constituted its revolutionary element. It had conquered a recognised position within mediæval feudal organisation, but this position, also, had become too narrow for its expansive power. The development of the middle class, the *bourgeoisie*, became incompatible with the maintenance of the feudal system; the feudal system, therefore, had to fall.

But the great international centre of feudalism was the Roman Catholic Church. It united the whole of feudalised Western Europe, in spite of all internal wars, into one grand political system, opposed as much to the schismatic Greek as to the Mohammedan countries. It surrounded feudal institutions with the halo of divine consecration. It had organised its own hierarchy on the feudal model, and, lastly, it was itself by far the most powerful feudal lord, holding, as it did, fully one-third of the soil of the Catholic world. Before profane feudalism could be successfully attacked in each country and in detail, this, its sacred central organisation, had to be destroyed.

Moreover, parallel with the rise of the middle class went on the great revival of science; astronomy, mechanics, physics, anatomy, physiology, were again cultivated. And the bourgeoisie, for the development of its industrial production, required a science which ascertained the physical properties of natural objects and the modes of action of the forces of nature. Now up to then science had but been the humble handmaid of the Church, had not been allowed to overstep the limits set by faith, and for that reason had been no science at all. Science rebelled against the Church; the bourgeoisie could not do without science, and, therefore, had to join in the rebellion.

The above, though touching but two of the points where the rising middle class was bound to come into collision with the established religion, will be sufficient to show, first, that the class most directly interested in the struggle against the pretensions of the Roman Church was the bourgeoisie; and second, that every struggle against feudalism, at that time, had to take on a religious disguise, had to be directed against the Church in the first instance. But if the universities and the traders of the cities started the cry, it was sure to find, and did find, a strong echo in the masses of the country people, the peasants, who everywhere had to struggle for their very existence with their feudal lords, spiritual and temporal.

The long fight of the bourgeoisie against feudalism culminated in three great decisive battles.

The first was what is called the Protestant Reformation in Germany. The war-cry raised against the Church by Luther was responded to by two insurrections of a political nature: first, that of the lower nobility under Franz von Sickingen (1523), then the great Peasants' War, 1525. Both were defeated, chiefly in consequence of the indecision of the parties most interested, the burghers of the towns—an indecision into the causes of which we cannot here enter. From that moment the struggle degenerated into a fight between the local princes and the central power, and ended by blotting out Germany, for two hundred years, from the politically active nations of Europe. The Lutheran reformation produced a new creed indeed, a religion adapted to absolute monarchy. No sooner were the

peasants of Northeast Germany converted to Lutheranism than they were from freemen reduced to serfs.

But where Luther failed, Calvin won the day. Calvin's creed was one fit for the boldest of the bourgeoisie of his time. His predestination doctrine was the religious expression of the fact that in the commercial world of competition success or failure does not depend upon a man's activity or cleverness, but upon circumstances uncontrollable by him. It is not of him that willeth or of him that runneth, but of the mercy of unknown superior economic powers; and this was especially true at a period of economic revolution, when all old commercial routes and centres were replaced by new ones, when India and America were opened to the world, and when even the most sacred economic articles of faith—the value of gold and silver—began to totter and to break down. Calvin's church constitution was thoroughly democratic and republican; and where the kingdom of God was republicanised, could the kingdoms of this world remain subject to monarchs, bishops and lords? While German Lutheranism became a willing tool in the hands of princes, Calvinism founded a republic in Holland and active republican parties in England, and, above all, Scotland.

In Calvinism, the second great bourgeois upheaval found its doctrine ready cut and dried. This upheaval took place in England. The middle class of the towns brought it on, and the yeomanry of the country districts fought it out. Curiously enough, in all the three great bourgeois risings, the peasantry furnishes the army that has to do the fighting; and the peasantry is just the class that, the victory once gained, is most surely ruined by the economic consequences of that victory. A hundred years after Cromwell, the yeomanry of England had almost disappeared. Anyhow, had it not been for that yeomanry and for the *plebeian* element in the towns, the bourgeoisie alone would never have fought the matter out to the bitter end, and would never have brought Charles I to the scaffold. In order to secure even those conquests of the bourgeoisie that were ripe for gathering at the time, the revolution had to be carried considerably further—exactly as in 1793 in France and 1848 in Germany. This seems, in fact, to be one of the laws of evolution of bourgeois society.



Well, upon this excess of revolutionary activity there necessarily followed the inevitable reaction which in its turn went beyond the point where it might have maintained itself. After a series of oscillations, the new centre of gravity was at last attained and became a new starting point. The grand period of English history, known to respectability under the name of "the Great Rebellion," and the struggles succeeding it, were brought to a close by the comparatively puny event entitled by Liberal historians, "the Glorious Revolution."

The new starting point was a compromise between the rising middle class and the ex-feudal landowners. The latter, though called, as now, the aristocracy, had been long since on the way which led them to become what Louis Philippe in France became at a much later period, "the first bourgeois of the kingdom." Fortunately for England, the old feudal barons had killed one another during the Wars of the Roses. Their successors, though mostly scions of the old families, had been so much out of the direct line of descent that they constituted quite a new body, with habits and tendencies far more bourgeois than feudal. They fully understood the value of money, and at once began to increase their rents by turning hundreds of small farmers out and replacing them by sheep. Henry VIII, while squandering the Church lands, created fresh bourgeois landlords by wholesale; the innumerable confiscations of estates, regranted to absolute or relative upstarts, and continued during the whole of the seventeenth century, had the same result. Consequently, ever since Henry VII, the English "aristocracy," far from counteracting the development of industrial production, had, on the contrary, sought to indirectly profit thereby; and there had always been a section of the great landowners willing, from economical or political reasons, to co-operate with the leading men of the financial and industrial bourgeoisie. The compromise of 1689 was, therefore, easily accomplished. The political spoils of "pelf and place" were left to the great landowning families, provided the economic interests of the financial, manufacturing and commercial middle class were sufficiently attended to. And these economic interests were at that time powerful enough to determine the general policy of the nation. There might be squabbles about matters of detail, but, on the whole,

the aristocratic oligarchy knew too well that its own economic prosperity was irretrievably bound up with that of the industrial and commercial middle class.

From that time, the bourgeoisie was a humble, but still a recognised component of the ruling classes of England. With the rest of them, it had a common interest in keeping in subjection the great working mass of the nation. The merchant or manufacturer himself stood in the position of master, or, as it was until lately called, of "natural superior" to his clerks, his workpeople, his domestic servants. His interest was to get as much and as good work out of them as he could; for this end they had to be trained to proper submission. He was himself religious; his religion had supplied the standard under which he had fought the king and the lords; he was not long in discovering the opportunities this same religion offered him for working upon the minds of his natural inferiors, and making them submissive to the behests of the masters it had pleased God to place over them. In short, the English bourgeoisie now had to take a part in keeping down the "lower orders," the great producing mass of the nation, and one of the means employed for that purpose was the influence of religion.

There was another fact that contributed to strengthen the religious leanings of the bourgeoisie. That was the rise of materialism in England. This new doctrine not only shocked the pious feelings of the middle class; it announced itself as a philosophy only fit for scholars and cultivated men of the world, in contrast to religion which was good enough for the uneducated masses, including the bourgeoisie. With Hobbes it stepped on the stage as a defender of royal prerogative and omnipotence; it called upon absolute monarchy to keep down that *puer robustus sed malitiosus*, to wit, the people. Similarly, with the successors of Hobbes, with Bolingbroke, Shaftesbury, etc., the new deistic form of materialism remained an aristocratic, esoteric doctrine, and, therefore, hateful to the middle class both for its religious heresy and for its anti-bourgeois political connections. Accordingly, in opposition to the materialism and deism of the aristocracy, those Protestant sects which had furnished the flag and the fighting contingent against the Stuarts, continued to furnish

the main strength of the progressive middle class, and form even today the backbone of "the Great Liberal Party."

In the meantime materialism passed from England to France, where it met and coalesced with another materialistic school of philosophers, a branch of Cartesianism. In France, too, it remained at first an exclusively aristocratic doctrine. But soon its revolutionary character asserted itself. The French materialists did not limit their criticism to matters of religious belief; they extended it to whatever scientific tradition or political institution they met with; and to prove the claim of their doctrine to universal application, they took the shortest cut, and boldly applied it to all subjects of knowledge in the giant work after which they were named—the *Encyclopédie*. Thus, in one or the other of its two forms—avowed materialism or deism—it became the creed of the whole cultured youth of France; so much so that, when the great revolution broke out, the doctrine hatched by English Royalists gave a theoretical flag to French Republicans and Terrorists, and furnished the text for the Declaration of the Rights of Man. The great French Revolution was the third uprising of the bourgeoisie, but the first that had entirely cast off the religious cloak and was fought out on undisguised political lines; it was the first, too, that was really fought out up to the destruction of one of the combatants, the aristocracy, and the complete triumph of the other, the bourgeoisie. In England the continuity of pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary institutions, and the compromise between landlords and capitalists, found its expression in the continuity of judicial precedents and in the religious preservation of the feudal forms of the law. In France the revolution constituted a complete breach with the traditions of the past; it cleared out the very last vestiges of feudalism, and created in the *Code Civil* a masterly adaptation of the old Roman Law—that almost perfect expression of the juridical relations corresponding to the economic stage called by Marx the production of commodities—to modern capitalistic conditions; so masterly that this French revolutionary code still serves as a model for reforms of the law of property in all other countries, not excepting England. Let us, however, not forget that if English law continues to express the economic relations of capitalistic society

in that barbarous feudal language which corresponds to the thing expressed, just as English spelling corresponds to English pronunciation—*vous écrivez Londres et vous prononcez Constantinople*, said a Frenchman—that same English law is the only one which has preserved through ages, and transmitted to America and the Colonies the best part of that old Germanic personal freedom, local self-government and independence from all interference but that of the law courts, which on the Continent has been lost during the period of absolute monarchy, and has nowhere been as yet fully recovered.

To return to our British bourgeois. The French Revolution gave him a splendid opportunity, with the help of the Continental monarchies, to destroy French maritime commerce, to annex French colonies, and to crush the last French pretensions to maritime rivalry. That was one reason why he fought it. Another was that the ways of this revolution went very much against his grain. Not only its "execrable" terrorism, but the very attempt to carry bourgeois rule to extremes. What should the British bourgeois do without his aristocracy, that taught him manners, such as they were, and invented fashions for him—that furnished officers for the army, which kept order at home, and the navy, which conquered colonial possessions and new markets abroad? There was indeed a progressive minority of the bourgeoisie, that minority whose interests were not so well attended to under the compromise; this section, composed chiefly of the less wealthy middle class, did sympathise with the revolution, but it was powerless in Parliament.

Thus, if materialism became the creed of the French Revolution, the God-fearing English bourgeois held all the faster to his religion. Had not the reign of terror in Paris proved what was the upshot, if the religious instincts of the masses were lost? The more materialism spread from France to neighbouring countries, and was reinforced by similar doctrinal currents, notably by German philosophy, the more, in fact, materialism and freethought generally became, on the Continent, the necessary qualifications of a cultivated man, the more stubbornly the English middle class stuck to its manifold religious creeds. These creeds might differ from one another, but they were, all of them, distinctly religious, Christian creeds.

While the revolution ensured the political triumph of the bourgeoisie in France, in England Watt, Arkwright, Cartwright, and others, initiated an industrial revolution, which completely shifted the centre of gravity of economic power. The wealth of the bourgeoisie increased considerably faster than that of the landed aristocracy. Within the bourgeoisie itself the financial aristocracy, the bankers, etc., were more and more pushed into the background by the manufacturers. The compromise of 1689, even after the gradual changes it had undergone in favour of the bourgeoisie, no longer corresponded to the relative position of the parties to it. The character of these parties, too, had changed; the bourgeoisie of 1830 was very different from that of the preceding century. The political power still left to the aristocracy, and used by them to resist the pretensions of the new industrial bourgeoisie, became incompatible with the new economic interests. A fresh struggle with the aristocracy was necessary; it could end only in a victory of the new economic power. First, the Reform Act was pushed through, in spite of all resistance, under the impulse of the French Revolution of 1830. It gave to the bourgeoisie a recognised and powerful place in Parliament. Then the repeal of the Corn Laws, which settled, once for all, the supremacy of the bourgeoisie, and especially of its most active portion, the manufacturers, over the landed aristocracy. This was the greatest victory of the bourgeoisie; it was, however, also the last it gained in its own exclusive interest. Whatever triumphs it obtained later on, it had to share with a new social power, first its ally, but soon its rival.

The industrial revolution had created a class of large manufacturing capitalists, but also a class—and a far more numerous one—of manufacturing workpeople. This class gradually increased in numbers, in proportion as the industrial revolution seized upon one branch of manufacture after another, and in the same proportion it increased in power. This power it proved as early as 1824, by forcing a reluctant Parliament to repeal the act forbidding combinations of workmen. During the Reform agitation, the workingmen constituted the Radical wing of the Reform Party; the Act of 1832 having excluded them from the suffrage, they formulated their demands in the People's

Charter, and constituted themselves, in opposition to the great bourgeois Anti-Corn Law party, into an independent party, the Chartists, the first workingmen's party of modern times.

Then came the Continental revolutions of February and March 1848, in which the working people played such a prominent part, and, at least in Paris, put forward demands which were certainly inadmissible from the point of view of capitalist society. And then came the general reaction. First the defeat of the Chartists on the 10th April, 1848, then the crushing of the Paris workingmen's insurrection in June of the same year, then the disasters of 1849 in Italy, Hungary, South Germany, and at last the victory of Louis Bonaparte over Paris, 2nd December, 1851. For a time, at least, the bugbear of working class pretensions was put down, but at what cost! If the British bourgeois had been convinced before of the necessity of maintaining the common people in a religious mood, how much more must he feel that necessity after all these experiences? Regardless of the sneers of his Continental compeers, he continued to spend thousands and tens of thousands, year after year, upon the evangelisation of the lower orders; not content with his own native religious machinery, he appealed to Brother Jonathan, the greatest organiser in existence of religion as a trade, and imported from America revivalism, Moody and Sankey, and the like; and, finally, he accepted the dangerous aid of the Salvation Army, which revives the propaganda of early Christianity, appeals to the poor as the elect, fights capitalism in a religious way, and thus fosters an element of early Christian class antagonism, which one day may become troublesome to the well-to-do people who now find the ready money for it.

It seems a law of historical development that the bourgeoisie can in no European country get hold of political power—at least for any length of time—in the same exclusive way in which the feudal aristocracy kept hold of it during the Middle Ages. Even in France, where feudalism was completely extinguished, the bourgeoisie, as a whole, has held full possession of the government for very short periods only. During Louis Philippe's reign, 1830-48, a very small portion of the bourgeoisie ruled the kingdom; by far the larger part were excluded

from the suffrage by the high qualification. Under the second republic, 1848-51, the whole bourgeoisie ruled, but for three years only; their incapacity brought on the second empire. It is only now, in the third republic, that the bourgeoisie as a whole has kept possession of the helm for more than twenty years; and they are already showing lively signs of decadence. A durable reign of the bourgeoisie has been possible only in countries like America, where feudalism was unknown, and society at the very beginning started from a bourgeois basis. And even in France and America, the successors of the bourgeoisie, the working people, are already knocking at the door.

In England, the bourgeoisie never held undivided sway. Even the victory of 1832 left the landed aristocracy in almost exclusive possession of all the leading government offices. The meekness with which the wealthy middle class submitted to this remained inconceivable to me until the great Liberal manufacturer, Mr. W. A. Forster, in a public speech implored the young men of Bradford to learn French, as a means to get on in the world, and quoted from his own experience how sheepish he looked when, as a Cabinet Minister, he had to move in society where French was, at least, as necessary as English! The fact was, the English middle class of that time were, as a rule, quite uneducated upstarts, and could not help leaving to the aristocracy those superior government places where other qualifications were required than mere insular narrowness and insular conceit, seasoned by business sharpness.\* Even now the endless news-

\* And even in business matters, the conceit of national chauvinism is but a sorry adviser. Up to quite recently, the average English manufacturer considered it derogatory for an Englishman to speak any language but his own, and felt rather proud than otherwise of the fact that "poor devils" of foreigners settled in England and took off his hands the trouble of disposing of his products abroad. He never noticed that these foreigners, mostly Germans, thus got command of a very large part of British foreign trade, imports and exports, and that the direct foreign trade of Englishmen became limited, almost entirely, to the colonies, China, the United States and South America. Nor did he notice that these Germans traded with other Germans abroad, who gradually organised a complete network of commercial colonies all over the world. But when Germany, about forty years ago, seriously began manufacturing for export, this network served her admirably in her transformation, in so short a time, from a corn exporting into a first-rate manufacturing coun-

paper debates about middle class education show that the English middle class does not yet consider itself good enough for the best education, and looks to something more modest. Thus, even after the repeal of the Corn Laws, it appeared a matter of course, that the men who had carried the day, the Cobdens, Brights, Forsters, etc. should remain excluded from a share in the official government of the country, until twenty years afterwards, a new Reform Act opened to them the door of the Cabinet. The English bourgeoisie are, up to the present day, so deeply penetrated by a sense of their social inferiority that they keep up, at their own expense and that of the nation, an ornamental caste of drones to represent the nation worthily at all state functions; and they consider themselves highly honoured whenever one of themselves is found worthy of admission into this select and privileged body, manufactured, after all, by themselves.

The industrial and commercial middle class had, therefore, not yet succeeded in driving the landed aristocracy completely from political power when another competitor, the working class, appeared on the stage. The reaction after the Chartist movement and the Continental revolutions, as well as the unparalleled extension of English trade from 1848-66 (ascribed vulgarly to Free Trade alone, but due far more to the colossal development of railways, ocean steamers and means of intercourse generally), had again driven the working class into the dependency of the Liberal Party, of which they formed, as in pre-Chartist times, the radical wing. Their claims to the franchise, however, gradually became irresistible; while the Whig leaders of the Liberals "funked," Disraeli showed his superiority by making the Tories seize the favourable moment and introduce household suffrage in the boroughs, along with a redistribution of seats. Then followed the ballot; then in 1884 the extension of household suffrage to the counties and a fresh redistribu-

try. Then, about ten years ago, the British manufacturer got frightened, and asked his ambassadors and consuls how it was that he could no longer keep his customers together. The unanimous answer was: 1) You don't learn your customer's language but expect him to speak your own: 2) You don't even try to suit your customer's wants, habits, and tastes, but expect him to conform to your English ones.



tion of seats, by which electoral districts were to some extent equalised. All these measures considerably increased the electoral power of the working class, so much so that in at least 150 to 200 constituencies that class now furnishes the majority of voters. But parliamentary government is a capital school for teaching respect for tradition; if the middle class look with awe and veneration upon what Lord John Manners playfully called "our old nobility," the mass of the working people then looked up with respect and deference to what used to be designated as "their betters," the middle class. Indeed, the British workman, some fifteen years ago, was the model workman, whose respectful regard for the position of his master, and whose self-restraining modesty in claiming rights for himself, consoled our German economists of the *Kathedersocialist* \* school for the incurable communistic and revolutionary tendencies of their own working men at home.

But the English middle class—good men of business as they are—saw farther than the German professors. They had shared their power but reluctantly with the working class. They had learnt, during the Chartist years, what that *puer robustus sed malitiosus*, the people, is capable of. And since that time, they had been compelled to incorporate the better part of the People's Charter in the Statutes of the United Kingdom. Now, if ever, the people must be kept in order by moral means, and the first and foremost of all moral means of action upon the masses is and remains—religion. Hence the parsons' majorities on the School Boards, hence the increasing self-taxation of the bourgeoisie for the support of all sorts of revivalism from ritualism to the Salvation Army.

And now came the triumph of British respectability over the free thought and religious laxity of the Continental bourgeois. The workmen of France and Germany had become rebellious. They were thoroughly infected with socialism, and, for very good reasons, were not at all particular as to the legality of the means by which to secure their own ascendancy. The *puer robustus*, here, turned from day to day more *malitiosus*. Nothing remained to the French and German bourgeoisie as a last resource but to silently drop their free thought, as a

\* Professorial Socialist.—Ed.

youngster, when sea-sickness creeps upon him, quietly drops the burning cigar he brought swaggeringly on board; one by one, the scoffers turned pious in outward behaviour, spoke with respect of the Church, its dogmas and rites, and even conformed with the latter as far as could not be helped. French bourgeoisie dined *maigre* on Fridays, and German ones sat out long Protestant sermons in their pews on Sundays. They had come to grief with materialism. "*Die Religion muss dem Volk erhalten werden*,"—religion must be kept alive for the people—that was the only and the last means to save society from utter ruin. Unfortunately for themselves, they did not find this out until they had done their level best to break up religion for ever. And now it was the turn of the British bourgeois to sneer and to say: "Why, you fools, I could have told you that two hundred years ago!"

However, I am afraid neither the religious stolidity of the British, nor the *post festum* conversion of the Continental bourgeois will stem the rising proletarian tide. Tradition is a great retarding force, is the *vis inertiae* of history, but, being merely passive, is sure to be broken down; and thus religion will be no lasting safeguard to capitalist society. If our juridical, philosophical and religious ideas are the more or less remote offshoots of the economical relations prevailing in a given society, such ideas cannot, in the long run, withstand the effects of a complete change in these relations. And, unless we believe in supernatural revelation, we must admit that no religious tenets will ever suffice to prop up a tottering society.

In fact, in England too, the working people have begun to move again. They are, no doubt, shackled by traditions of various kinds. Bourgeois traditions, such as the widespread belief that there can be but two parties, Conservatives and Liberals, and that the working class must work out its salvation by and through the great Liberal Party. Workingmen's traditions, inherited from their first tentative efforts at independent action, such as the exclusion, from ever so many old trade unions, of all applicants who have not gone through a regular apprenticeship; which means the breeding, by every such union, of its own blacklegs. But for all that the English working class is moving, as even Professor Brentano has sorrowfully had to

report to his brother *Katheder-Socialists*. It moves, like all things in England, with a slow and measured step, with hesitation here, with more or less unfruitful, tentative attempts there; it moves now and then with an over-cautious mistrust of the name of socialism, while it gradually absorbs the substance; and the movement spreads and seizes one layer of the workers after another. It has now shaken out of their torpor the unskilled labourers of the East End of London, and we all know what a splendid impulse these fresh forces have given it in return. And if the pace of the movement is not up to the impatience of some people, let them not forget that it is the working class which keeps alive the finest qualities of the English character, and that, if a step in advance is once gained in England, it is, as a rule, never lost afterwards. If the sons of the old Chartists, for reasons explained above, were not quite up to the mark, the grandsons bid fair to be worthy of their forefathers.

But the triumph of the European working class does not depend upon England alone. It can only be secured by the co-operation of, at least, England, France and Germany. In both the latter countries the working class movement is well ahead of England. In Germany it is even within measurable distance of success. The progress it has there made during the last twenty-five years is unparalleled. It advances with ever increasing velocity. If the German middle class have shown themselves lamentably deficient in political capacity, discipline, courage, energy and perseverance, the German working class have given ample proof of all these qualities. Four hundred years ago, Germany was the starting point of the first upheaval of the European middle class; as things are now, is it outside the limits of possibility that Germany will be the scene, too, of the first great victory of the European proletariat?

*April 20, 1892*

F. ENGELS

## SOCIALISM UTOPIAN AND SCIENTIFIC

### I

MODERN SOCIALISM is, in its essence, the direct product of the recognition, on the one hand, of the class antagonisms, existing in the society of today, between proprietors and non-proprietors, between capitalists and wage workers; on the other hand, of the anarchy existing in production. But, in its theoretical form, modern socialism originally appears ostensibly as a more logical extension of the principles laid down by the great French philosophers of the eighteenth century.\* Like every new theory, modern socialism had, at first, to connect itself with the intellectual stock-in-trade ready to its hand, however deeply its roots lay in material economic facts.

The great men, who in France prepared men's minds for the coming revolution, were themselves extreme revolutionists. They recognised no external authority of any kind whatever. Religion, natural science, society, political institutions, everything, was subjected to the most unsparing criticism: everything must justify its existence before the judgment seat of reason, or give up existence. Reason became the sole measure of everything. It was the time when, as Hegel says, the world stood upon its head; \* first, in the sense that the human head, and

\* This is the passage on the French Revolution: "Thought, the concept of law, all at once made itself felt, and against this the old scaffolding of wrong could make no stand. In this conception of law, therefore, a constitution has now been established, and henceforth everything must be based upon this. Since the sun had been in the firmament, and the planets circled round him, the sight had never been seen of man standing upon his head—i.e., on the idea—and building reality after this image. Anaxagoras first said that the *Nous*, reason, rules the world; but now, for the first time, had man come to recognise that the Idea must rule the mental reality. And this was a magnificent sunrise. All thinking

the principles arrived at by its thought, claimed to be the basis of all human action and association; but by and by, also, in the wider sense that the reality which was in contradiction to these principles had, in fact, to be turned upside down. Every form of society and government then existing, every old traditional notion was flung into the lumber room as irrational; the world had hitherto allowed itself to be led solely by prejudices; everything in the past deserved only pity and contempt. Now, for the first time, appeared the light of day, the kingdom of reason; henceforth superstition, injustice, privilege, oppression, were to be superseded by eternal truth, eternal right, equality based on nature and the inalienable rights of man.

We know today that this kingdom of reason was nothing more than the idealised kingdom of the bourgeoisie; that this eternal right found its realisation in bourgeois justice; that this equality reduced itself to bourgeois equality before the law; that bourgeois property was proclaimed as one of the essential rights of man; and that the government of reason, the *Contrat Social* of Rousseau,<sup>7</sup> came into being, and only could come into being, as a democratic bourgeois republic. The great thinkers of the eighteenth century could, no more than their predecessors, go beyond the limits imposed upon them by their epoch.

But, side by side with the antagonism of the feudal nobility and the burghers, who claimed to represent all the rest of society, was the general antagonism of exploiters and exploited, of rich idlers and poor workers. It was this very circumstance that made it possible for the representatives of the bourgeoisie to put themselves forward as representing not one special class, but the whole of suffering humanity. Still further. From its origin, the bourgeoisie was saddled with its antithesis: capitalists cannot exist without wage workers, and, in the same proportion as the mediæval burgher of the guild developed into the modern bourgeois, the guild journeyman and the day labourer, outside

beings have participated in celebrating this holy day. A sublime emotion swayed men at that time, an enthusiasm of reason pervaded the world, as if now had come the reconciliation of the Divine Principle with the world." [Hegel: *Philosophy of History*, 1840, p. 535.] Is it not high time to set the Anti-Socialist Law in action against such teachings, subversive and to the common danger, by the late Professor Hegel?

the guilds, developed into the proletarian. And although, upon the whole, the bourgeoisie, in their struggle with the nobility, could claim to represent at the same time the interests of the different working classes of that period, yet in every great bourgeois movement there were independent outbursts of that class which was the forerunner, more or less developed, of the modern proletariat. For example, at the time of the German reformation and the peasants' war, the Anabaptists and Thomas Münzer; in the great English Revolution, the Levellers; in the great French Revolution, Babeuf.<sup>8</sup>

There were theoretical enunciations corresponding with these revolutionary uprisings of a class not yet developed; in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, utopian pictures<sup>9</sup> of ideal social conditions; in the eighteenth, actual communistic theories (Morelly and Mably). The demand for equality was no longer limited to political rights; it was extended also to the social conditions of individuals. It was not simply class privileges that were to be abolished, but class distinctions themselves. A communism, ascetic, denouncing all the pleasures of life, Spartan, was the first form of the new teaching. Then came the three great Utopians: Saint Simon, to whom the middle class movement, side by side with the proletarian, still had a certain significance; Fourier; and Owen, who in the country where capitalist production was most developed, and under the influence of the antagonisms begotten of this, worked out his proposals for the removal of class distinction systematically and in direct relation to French materialism.

One thing is common to all three. Not one of them appears as a representative of the interests of that proletariat, which historical development had in the meantime produced. Like the French philosophers, they do not claim to emancipate a particular class to begin with, but all humanity at once. Like them, they wish to bring in the kingdom of reason and eternal justice, but this kingdom, as they see it, is as far as heaven from earth from that of the French philosophers.

For, to our three social reformers, the bourgeois world, based upon the principles of these philosophers, is quite as irrational and unjust, and, therefore, finds its way to the dust hole quite as readily as feudalism and all the earlier stages of

society. If pure reason and justice have not, hitherto, ruled the world, this has been the case only because men have not rightly understood them. What was wanted was the individual man of genius, who has now arisen and who understands the truth. That he has now arisen, that the truth has now been clearly understood, is not an inevitable event, following of necessity in the chain of historical development, but a mere happy accident. He might just as well have been born 500 years earlier, and might then have spared humanity 500 years of error, strife and suffering.

We saw how the French philosophers of the eighteenth century, the forerunners of the revolution, appealed to reason as the sole judge of all that is. A rational government, rational society, were to be founded; everything that ran counter to eternal reason was to be remorselessly done away with. We saw also that this eternal reason was in reality nothing but the idealised understanding of the eighteenth century citizen, just then evolving into the bourgeois. The French Revolution had realised this rational society and government.

But the new order of things, rational enough as compared with earlier conditions, turned out to be by no means absolutely rational. The state based upon reason completely collapsed. Rousseau's *Contrat Social* had found its realisation in the Reign of Terror, from which bourgeoisie, who had lost confidence in their own political capacity, had taken refuge first in the corruption of the Directorate,<sup>10</sup> and, finally under the wing of the Napoleonic despotism. The promised eternal peace was turned into an endless war of conquest. The society based upon reason had fared no better. The antagonism between rich and poor, instead of dissolving into general prosperity, had become intensified by the removal of the guild and other privileges, which had to some extent bridged it over, and by the removal of the charitable institutions of the Church. The "freedom of property" from feudal fetters, now veritably accomplished, turned out to be, for the small capitalists and small proprietors, the freedom to sell their small property, crushed under the overmastering competition of the large capitalists and landlords. to these great lords, and thus, as far as the small capitalists and peasant proprietors were concerned, became "freedom from

property." The development of industry upon a capitalistic basis made poverty and misery of the working masses conditions of existence of society. Cash payment became more and more, in Carlyle's phrase,<sup>11</sup> the sole nexus between man and man. The number of crimes increased from year to year. Formerly, the feudal vices had openly stalked about in broad daylight; though not eradicated, they were now at any rate thrust into the background. In their stead, the bourgeois vices, hitherto practised in secret, began to blossom all the more luxuriantly. Trade became to a greater and greater extent cheating. The "fraternity" of the revolutionary motto was realized in the chicanery and rivalries of the battle of competition. Oppression by force was replaced by corruption; the sword, as the first social lever, by gold. The right of the first night was transferred from the feudal lords to the bourgeois manufacturers. Prostitution increased to an extent never heard of. Marriage itself remained, as before, the legally recognised form, the official cloak of prostitution, and, moreover, was supplemented by rich crops of adultery.

In a word, compared with the splendid promises of the philosophers, the social and political institutions born of the "triumph of reason" were bitterly disappointing caricatures. All that was wanting was the men to formulate this disappointment, and they came with the turn of the century. In 1802 Saint Simon's Geneva Letters appeared; in 1808 appeared Fourier's first work, although the groundwork of his theory dated from 1799; on January 1, 1800, Robert Owen undertook the direction of New Lanark.

At this time, however, the capitalist mode of production, and with it the antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, was still very incompletely developed. Modern industry, which had just arisen in England, was still unknown in France. But modern industry develops, on the one hand, the conflicts which make absolutely necessary a revolution in the mode of production and the doing away with its capitalistic character—conflicts not only between the classes begotten of it, but also between the very productive forces and the forms of exchange created by it. And, on the other hand, it develops, in these very gigantic productive forces, the means of ending these conflicts.



If, therefore, about the year 1800, the conflicts arising from the new social order were only just beginning to take shape, this holds still more fully as to the means of ending them. The "have-nothing" masses of Paris, during the Reign of Terror, were able for a moment to gain the mastery, and thus to lead the bourgeois revolution to victory in spite of the bourgeoisie themselves. But, in doing so, they only proved how impossible it was for their domination to last under the conditions then obtaining. The proletariat, which then for the first time evolved itself from these "have-nothing" masses as the nucleus of a new class, as yet quite incapable of independent political action, appeared as an oppressed, suffering order, to whom, in its incapacity to help itself, help could, at best, be brought in from without or down from above.

This historical situation also dominated the founders of socialism. To the crude conditions of capitalistic production and the crude class conditions corresponded crude theories. The solution of the social problems, which as yet lay hidden in undeveloped economic conditions, the utopians attempted to evolve out of the human brain. Society presented nothing but wrongs; to remove these was the task of reason. It was necessary, then, to discover a new and more perfect system of social order and to impose this upon society from without by propaganda, and, wherever it was possible, by the example of model experiments. These new social systems were foredoomed as utopian; the more completely they were worked out in detail, the more they could not avoid drifting off into pure phantasies.

These facts once established, we need not dwell a moment longer upon this side of the question, now wholly belonging to the past. We can leave it to the literary small fry to solemnly quibble over these phantasies, which today only make us smile, and to crow over the superiority of their own bald reasoning, as compared with such "insanity." For ourselves, we delight in the stupendously grand thoughts and germs of thought that everywhere break out through their phantastic covering, and to which these philistines are blind.

Saint Simon was a son of the great French Revolution, at the outbreak of which he was not yet thirty. The revolution was the victory of the third estate, *i.e.*, of the great masses of

the nation, *working* in production and in trade over the privileged *idle* classes, the nobles and the priests. But the victory of the third estate soon revealed itself as exclusively the victory of a small part of this "estate," as the conquest of political power by the socially privileged section of it, *i.e.*, the propertied bourgeoisie. And the bourgeoisie had certainly developed rapidly during the revolution, partly by speculation in the lands of the nobility and of the Church, confiscated and afterwards put up for sale, and partly by frauds upon the nation by means of army contracts. It was the domination of these swindlers that, under the Directorate, brought France to the verge of ruin, and thus gave Napoleon the pretext for his *coup d'état*.

Hence, to Saint Simon the antagonism between the third estate and the privileged classes took the form of an antagonism between "workers" and "idlers." The idlers were not merely the old privileged classes, but also all who, without taking any part in production or distribution, lived on their incomes. And the workers were not only the wage workers, but also the manufacturers, the merchants, the bankers. That the idlers had lost the capacity for intellectual leadership and political supremacy had been proved, and was by the revolution finally settled. That the non-possessing classes had not this capacity seemed to Saint Simon proved by the experiences of the Reign of Terror. Then, who was to lead and command? According to Saint Simon, science and industry, both united by a new religious bond, destined to restore that unity of religious ideas which had been lost since the time of the Reformation—a necessarily mystic and rigidly hierarchic "new Christianity." But science, that was the scholars; and industry, that was, in the first place, the working bourgeois, manufacturers, merchants, bankers. These bourgeoisie were, certainly, intended by Saint Simon to transform themselves into a kind of public officials, of social trustees; but they were still to hold, *vis-à-vis* of the workers, a commanding and economically privileged position. The bankers especially were to be called upon to direct the whole of social production by the regulation of credit. This conception was in exact keeping with a time in which modern industry in France and, with it, the chasm between bourgeoisie and proletariat was only just coming into existence. But what Saint Simon espe-

cially lays stress upon is this: what interests him first, and above all other things, is the lot of the class that is the most numerous and the most poor ("*la classe la plus nombreuse et la plus pauvre*").

Already, in his Geneva Letters, Saint Simon lays down the proposition that "all men ought to work." In the same work he recognises also that the Reign of Terror was the reign of the non-possessing masses. "See," says he to them, "what happened in France at the time when your comrades held sway there; they brought about a famine." But to recognise the French Revolution as a class war, and not simply one between nobility and bourgeoisie, but between nobility, bourgeoisie and the non-possessors, was, in the year 1802, a most pregnant discovery. In 1816 he declares that politics is the science of production, and foretells the complete absorption of politics by economics. The knowledge that economic conditions are the basis of political institutions appears here only in embryo. Yet what is here already very plainly expressed is the idea of the future conversion of political rule over men into an administration of things and a direction of processes of production—that is to say, the "abolition of the state," about which recently there has been so much noise.

Saint Simon shows the same superiority over his contemporaries, when in 1814, immediately after the entry of the allies into Paris, and again in 1815, during the Hundred Days' War,<sup>12</sup> he proclaims the alliance of France with England, and then of both these countries with Germany, as the only guarantee for the prosperous development and peace of Europe. To preach to the French in 1815 an alliance with the victors of Waterloo required as much courage as historical foresight.

If in Saint Simon we find a comprehensive breadth of view, by virtue of which almost all the ideas of later socialists, that are not strictly economic, are found in him in embryo, we find in Fourier a criticism of the existing conditions of society, genuinely French and witty, but not upon that account any the less thorough. Fourier takes the bourgeoisie, their inspired prophets before the revolution, and their interested eulogists after it, at their own word. He lays bare remorselessly the material and moral misery of the bourgeois world. He con-

fronts it with the earlier philosophers' dazzling promises of a society in which reason alone should reign, of a civilisation in which happiness should be universal, of an illimitable human perfectibility, and with the rose-coloured phraseology of the bourgeois ideologists of his time. He points out how everywhere the most pitiful reality corresponds with the most high-sounding phrases, and he overwhelms this hopeless fiasco of phrases with his mordant sarcasm.

Fourier is not only a critic; his imperturbably serene nature makes him a satirist, and assuredly one of the greatest satirists of all time. He depicts, with equal power and charm, the swindling speculations that blossomed out upon the downfall of the revolution, and the shopkeeping spirit prevalent in, and characteristic of, French commerce at that time. Still more masterly is his criticism of the bourgeois form of the relations between the sexes, and the position of woman in bourgeois society. He was the first to declare that in any given society the degree of woman's emancipation is the natural measure of the general emancipation.

But Fourier is at his greatest in his conception of the history of society. He divides its whole course, thus far, into four stages of evolution—savagery, barbarism, the patriarchate, civilisation. This last is identical with the so-called civil, or bourgeois society of today—*i.e.*, with the social order that came in with the sixteenth century. He proves "that the civilised stage raises every vice practised by barbarism in a simple fashion, into a form of existence, complex, ambiguous, equivocal, hypocritical"—that civilisation moves in "a vicious circle," in contradictions which it constantly reproduces without being able to solve them; hence it constantly arrives at the very opposite to that which it wants to attain, or pretends to want to attain, so that, *e.g.*, "under civilisation poverty is born of superabundance itself."

Fourier, as we see, uses the dialectic method in the same masterly way as his contemporary, Hegel. Using these same dialectics, he argues against the talk about illimitable human perfectibility that every historical phase has its period of ascent and also its period of descent, and he applies this observation

to the future of the whole human race. As Kant introduced into natural science the idea of the ultimate destruction of the earth, Fourier introduced into historical science that of the ultimate destruction of the human race.

Whilst in France the hurricane of the revolution swept over the land, in England a quieter, but not on that account less tremendous, revolution was going on. Steam and the new tool-making machinery were transforming manufacture into modern industry, and thus revolutionising the whole foundation of bourgeois society. The sluggish march of development of the manufacturing period changed into a veritable storm and stress period of production. With constantly increasing swiftness the splitting-up of society into large capitalists and non-possessing proletarians went on. Between these, instead of the former stable middle class, an unstable mass of artisans and small shopkeepers, the most fluctuating portion of the population, now led a precarious existence.

The new mode of production was, as yet, only at the beginning of its period of ascent; as yet it was the normal, regular method of production—the only one possible under existing conditions. Nevertheless, even then it was producing crying social abuses—the herding together of a homeless population in the worst quarters of the large towns; the loosening of all traditional moral bonds, of patriarchal subordination, of family relations; overwork, especially of women and children, to a frightful extent; complete demoralisation of the working class, suddenly flung into altogether new conditions, from the country into the town, from agriculture into modern industry, from stable conditions of existence into insecure ones that changed from day to day.

At this juncture there came forward as a reformer a manufacturer 29 years old—a man of almost sublime, childlike simplicity of character, and at the same time one of the few born leaders of men. Robert Owen had adopted the teaching of the materialistic philosophers: that man's character is the product, on the one hand, of heredity, on the other, of the environment of the individual during his lifetime, and especially during his period of development. In the industrial revolution most of his

class saw only chaos and confusion, and the opportunity of fishing in these troubled waters and making large fortunes quickly. He saw in it the opportunity of putting into practice his favourite theory, and so of bringing order out of chaos. He had already tried it with success, as superintendent of more than five hundred men in a Manchester factory. From 1800 to 1829, he directed the great cotton mill at New Lanark, in Scotland, as managing partner, along the same lines, but with greater freedom of action and with a success that made him a European reputation. A population, originally consisting of the most diverse and, for the most part, very demoralised elements, a population that gradually grew to 2,500, he turned into a model colony, in which drunkenness, police, magistrates, law-suits, poor laws, charity were unknown. And all this simply by placing the people in conditions worthy of human beings, and especially by carefully bringing up the rising generation. He was the founder of infant schools, and introduced them first at New Lanark. At the age of two the children came to school, where they enjoyed themselves so much that they could scarcely be got home again. Whilst his competitors worked their people thirteen or fourteen hours a day, in New Lanark the working day was only ten and a half hours. When a crisis in cotton stopped work for four months, his workers received their full wages all the time. And with all this the business more than doubled in value, and to the last yielded large profits to its proprietors.

In spite of all this, Owen was not content. The existence which he secured for his workers was, in his eyes, still far from being worthy of human beings. "The people were slaves at my mercy." The relatively favourable conditions in which he had placed them were still far from allowing a rational development of the character and of the intellect in all directions, much less of the free exercise of all their faculties. "And yet, the working part of this population of 2,500 persons was daily producing as much real wealth for society as, less than half a century before, it would have required the working part of a population of 600,000 to create. I asked myself, what became of the difference between the wealth consumed by 2,500

persons and that which would have been consumed by 600,000?" \*

The answer was clear. It had been used to pay the proprietors of the establishment 5 per cent on the capital they had laid out, in addition to over £300,000 clear profit. And that which held for New Lanark held to a still greater extent for all the factories in England. "If this new wealth had not been created by machinery, imperfectly as it has been applied, the wars of Europe, in opposition to Napoleon, and to support the aristocratic principles of society, could not have been maintained. And yet this new power was the creation of the working classes." \*\* To them, therefore, the fruits of this new power belonged. The newly-created, gigantic productive forces, hitherto used only to enrich individuals and to enslave the masses, offered to Owen the foundations for a reconstruction of society; they were destined, as the common property of all, to be worked for the common good of all.

Owen's communism was based upon this purely business foundation, the outcome, so to say, of commercial calculation. Throughout, it maintained this practical character. Thus, in 1823, Owen proposed the relief of the distress in Ireland by communist colonies, and drew up complete estimates of costs of founding them, yearly expenditure and probable revenue. And in his definite plan for the future, the technical working out of details is managed with such practical knowledge—ground plan, front and side and bird's-eye views all included—that the Owen method of social reform once accepted, there is from the practical point of view little to be said against the actual arrangement of details.

His advance in the direction of communism was the turning-point in Owen's life. As long as he was simply a philanthropist, he was rewarded with nothing but wealth, applause, honour and glory. He was the most popular man in Europe. Not only men of his own class, but statesmen and princes listened to him

\* From *The Revolution in Mind and Practice*, p. 21, a memorial addressed to all the "red republicans, communists and socialists of Europe," and sent to the provisional government of France, 1848, and also "to Queen Victoria and her responsible advisers."

\*\* *Ibid.*

approvingly. But when he came out with his communist theories, that was quite another thing. Three great obstacles seemed to him especially to block the path to social reform: private property, religion, the present form of marriage. He knew what confronted him if he attacked these—outlawry, ex-communication from official society, the loss of his whole social position. But nothing of this prevented him from attacking them without fear of consequences, and what he had foreseen happened. Banished from official society, with a conspiracy of silence against him in the press, ruined by his unsuccessful communist experiments in America, in which he sacrificed all his fortune, he turned directly to the working class and continued working in their midst for thirty years. Every social movement, every real advance in England on behalf of the workers links itself on to the name of Robert Owen. He forced through in 1819, after five years' fighting, the first law limiting the hours of labour of women and children in factories. He was president of the first congress at which all the trade unions of England united in a single great trade association.<sup>13</sup> He introduced as transition measures to the complete communistic organisation of society, on the one hand, co-operative societies for retail trade and production. These have since that time, at least, given practical proof that the merchant and the manufacturer are socially quite unnecessary. On the other hand, he introduced labour bazaars for the exchange of the products of labour through the medium of labour notes, whose unit was a single hour of work; institutions necessarily doomed to failure, but completely anticipating Proudhon's bank of exchange<sup>14</sup> of a much later period, and differing entirely from this in that it did not claim to be the panacea for all social ills, but only a first step towards a much more radical revolution of society.

The Utopians' mode of thought has for a long time governed the socialist ideas of the nineteenth century, and still governs some of them. Until very recently all French and English socialists did homage to it. The earlier German communism, including that of Weitling, was of the same school. To all these, socialism is the expression of absolute truth, reason and justice, and has only to be discovered to conquer all the world by virtue of its own power. And as absolute truth is independent of time,



space, and of the historical development of man, it is a mere accident when and where it is discovered. With all this, absolute truth, reason and justice are different with the founder of each different school. And as each one's special kind of absolute truth, reason and justice is again conditioned by his subjective understanding, his conditions of existence, the measure of his knowledge and his intellectual training, there is no other ending possible in this conflict of absolute truths than that they shall be mutually exclusive one of the other. Hence, from this nothing could come but a kind of eclectic, average socialism, which, as a matter of fact, has up to the present time dominated the minds of most of the socialist workers in France and England. Hence, a mish-mash allowing of the most manifold shades of opinion; a mish-mash of such critical statements, economic theories, pictures of future society by the founders of different sects, as excite a minimum of opposition; a mish-mash which is the more easily brewed the more the definite sharp edges of the individual constituents are rubbed down in the stream of debate, like rounded pebbles in a brook.

To make a science of socialism, it had first to be placed upon a real basis.

## II

IN THE meantime, along with and after the French philosophy of the eighteenth century had arisen the new German philosophy, culminating in Hegel. Its greatest merit was the taking up again of dialectics as the highest form of reasoning. The old Greek philosophers were all natural born dialecticians, and Aristotle, the most encyclopædic intellect of them, had already analysed the most essential forms of dialectic thought. The newer philosophy, on the other hand, although in it also dialectics had brilliant exponents (*e.g.* Descartes and Spinoza), had, especially through English influence, become more and more rigidly fixed in the so-called metaphysical mode of reasoning, by which also the French of the eighteenth century were almost wholly dominated, at all events in their special philosophical work. Outside philosophy in the restricted sense, the French nevertheless produced masterpieces of dialectic. We need only call to mind Diderot's *Le Neveu de Rameau*, and Rousseau's *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes*. We give here, in brief, the essential character of these two modes of thought.

When we consider and reflect upon nature at large, or the history of mankind, or our own intellectual activity, at first we see the picture of an endless entanglement of relations and reactions, permutations and combinations, in which nothing remains what, where, and as it was, but everything moves, changes, comes into being and passes away. We see, therefore, at first the picture as a whole, with its individual parts still more or less kept in the background; we observe the movements, transitions, connections, rather than the things that move, combine, and are connected. This primitive, naïve, but intrinsically correct conception of the world is that of ancient Greek philosophy, and was first clearly formulated by Heraclitus: everything is and is not, for everything is fluid, is constantly changing, constantly coming into being and passing away.

But this conception, correctly as it expresses the general character of the picture of appearances as a whole, does not suffice to explain the details of which this picture is made up, and so long as we do not understand these, we have not a clear idea of the whole picture. In order to understand these details we must detach them from their natural or historical connection and examine each one separately, its nature, special causes, effects, etc. This is, primarily, the task of natural science and historical research; branches of science which the Greeks of classical times, on very good grounds, relegated to a subordinate position, because they had first of all to collect materials for these sciences to work upon. A certain amount of natural and historical material must be collected before there can be any critical analysis, comparison and arrangement in classes, orders and species. The foundations of the exact natural sciences were, therefore, first worked out by the Greeks of the Alexandrian period,<sup>15</sup> and later, in the Middle Ages, by the Arabs. Real natural science dates from the second half of the fifteenth century, and thence onward it has advanced with constantly increasing rapidity. The analysis of nature into its individual parts, the grouping of the different natural processes and objects in definite classes, the study of the internal anatomy of organised bodies in their manifold forms—these were the fundamental conditions of the gigantic strides in our knowledge of nature that have been made during the last four hundred years. But this method of work has also left us as legacy the habit of observing natural objects and processes in isolation, apart from their connection with the vast whole; of observing them in repose, not in motion; as constants, not as essentially variables; in their death, not in their life. And when this way of looking at things was transferred by Bacon and Locke from natural science to philosophy, it begot the narrow, metaphysical mode of thought peculiar to the last century.

To the metaphysician, things and their mental reflexes, ideas, are isolated, are to be considered one after the other and apart from each other, are objects of investigation fixed, rigid, given once for all. He thinks in absolutely irreconcilable antitheses. "His communication is 'yea, yea; nay, nay'; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." For him a thing either

exists or does not exist; a thing cannot at the same time be itself and something else. Positive and negative absolutely exclude one another; cause and effect stand in a rigid antithesis one to the other.

At first sight this mode of thinking seems to us very luminous, because it is that of so-called sound common sense. Only sound common sense, respectable fellow that he is, in the homely realm of his own four walls, has very wonderful adventures directly he ventures out into the wide world of research. And the metaphysical mode of thought, justifiable and necessary as it is in a number of domains whose extent varies according to the nature of the particular object of investigation, sooner or later reaches a limit, beyond which it becomes one-sided, restricted, abstract, lost in insoluble contradictions. In the contemplation of individual things, it forgets the connection between them; in the contemplation of their existence, it forgets the beginning and end of that existence; of their repose, it forgets their motion. It cannot see the wood for the trees.

For everyday purposes we know and can say, *e.g.*, whether an animal is alive or not. But, upon closer inquiry, we find that this is, in many cases, a very complex question, as the jurists know very well. They have cudgelled their brains in vain to discover a rational limit beyond which the killing of the child in its mother's womb is murder. It is just as impossible to determine absolutely the moment of death, for physiology proves that death is not an instantaneous, momentary phenomenon, but a very protracted process.

In like manner, every organised being is every moment the same and not the same; every moment it assimilates matter supplied from without, and gets rid of other matter; every moment some cells of its body die and others build themselves anew; in a longer or shorter time the matter of its body is completely renewed, and is replaced by other molecules of matter, so that every organised being is always itself, and yet something other than itself.

Further, we find upon closer investigation that the two poles of an antithesis, positive and negative, *e.g.*, are as inseparable as they are opposed, and that despite all their opposition, they mutually interpenetrate. And we find, in like manner, that

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

None of these processes and modes of thought enters into the framework of metaphysical reasoning. Dialectics, on the other hands, comprehends things and their representations, ideas, in their essential connection, concatenation, motion, origin and ending. Such processes as those mentioned above are, therefore, so many corroborations of its own method of procedure.

Nature is the proof of dialectics, and it must be said for modern science that it has furnished this proof with very rich materials increasing daily, and thus has shown that, in the last resort, nature works dialectically and not metaphysically; that she does not move in the eternal oneness of a perpetually recurring circle, but goes through a real historical evolution. In this connection Darwin must be named before all others. He dealt the metaphysical conception of nature the heaviest blow by his proof that all organic beings, plants, animals and man himself, are the products of a process of evolution going on through millions of years. But the naturalists who have learned to think dialectically are few and far between, and this conflict of the results of discovery with preconceived modes of thinking explains the endless confusion now reigning in theoretical natural science, the despair of teachers as well as learners, of authors and readers alike.

An exact representation of the universe, of its evolution, of the development of mankind, and of the reflection of this evolution in the minds of men, can therefore only be obtained by the methods of dialectics, with its constant regard to the innumerable actions and reactions of life and death, of progressive or retrogressive changes. And in this spirit the new German philosophy has worked. Kant began his career by resolving the stable solar system of Newton and its eternal duration, after the famous initial impulse had once been given, into the

result of a historic process, the formation of the sun and all the planets out of a rotating nebulous mass. From this he at the same time drew the conclusion that, given this origin of the solar system, its future death followed of necessity. His theory half a century later was established mathematically by Laplace, and half a century after that the spectroscope proved the existence in space of such incandescent masses of gas in various stages of condensation.

This new German philosophy culminated in the Hegelian system. In this system—and herein is its great merit—for the first time the whole world, natural, historical, intellectual, is represented as a process, *i.e.*, as in constant motion, change, transformation, development; and the attempt is made to trace out the internal connection that makes a continuous whole of all this movement and development. From this point of view the history of mankind no longer appeared as a wild whirl of senseless deeds of violence, all equally condemnable at the judgment seat of mature philosophic reason, and which are best forgotten as quickly as possible, but as the process of evolution of man himself. It was now the task of the intellect to follow the gradual march of this process through all its devious ways, and to trace out the inner law running through all its apparently accidental phenomena.

That the Hegelian system did not solve the problem it propounded is here immaterial. Its epoch-making merit was that it propounded the problem. This problem is one that no single individual will ever be able to solve. Although Hegel was—with Saint Simon—the most encyclopædic mind of his time, yet he was limited, first, by the necessarily limited extent of his own knowledge, and, second, by the limited extent and depth of the knowledge and conceptions of his age. To these limits a third must be added. Hegel was an idealist. To him the thoughts within his brain were not the more or less abstract pictures of actual things and processes, but, conversely, things and their evolution were only the realised pictures of the "Idea," existing somewhere from eternity before the world was. This way of thinking turned everything upside down, and completely reversed the actual connection of things in the world. Correctly and ingeniously as many individual groups of facts were grasped

by Hegel, yet, for the reasons just given, there is much that is botched, artificial, laboured, in a word, wrong in point of detail. The Hegelian system, in itself, was a colossal miscarriage—but it was also the last of its kind. It was suffering, in fact, from an internal and incurable contradiction. Upon the one hand, its essential proposition was the conception that human history is a process of evolution, which, by its very nature, cannot find its intellectual final term in the discovery of any so-called absolute truth. But, on the other hand, it laid claim to being the very essence of this absolute truth. A system of natural and historical knowledge embracing everything, and final for all time, is a contradiction to the fundamental law of dialectic reasoning. This law, indeed, by no means excludes, but, on the contrary, includes the idea that the systematic knowledge of the external universe can make giant strides from age to age.

The perception of the fundamental contradiction in German idealism led necessarily back to materialism, but *nota bene*, not to the simply metaphysical, exclusively mechanical materialism of the eighteenth century. Old materialism looked upon all previous history as a crude heap of irrationality and violence; modern materialism sees in it the process of evolution of humanity, and aims at discovering the laws thereof. With the French of the eighteenth century, and even with Hegel, the conception obtained of nature as a whole, moving in narrow circles, and forever immutable, with its eternal celestial bodies, as Newton, and unalterable organic species, as Linnæus, taught. Modern materialism embraces the more recent discoveries of natural science according to which nature also has its history in time, the celestial bodies, like the organic species that, under favourable conditions, people them, being born and perishing. And even if nature, as a whole, must still be said to move in recurrent cycles, these cycles assume infinitely larger dimensions. In both aspects, modern materialism is essentially dialectic, and no longer requires the assistance of that sort of philosophy which, queen-like, pretended to rule the remaining mob of sciences. As soon as each special science is bound to make clear its position in the great totality of things and of our knowledge of things, a special science dealing with this totality is superfluous or unnecessary. That which still survives of all earlier philoso-

phy is the science of thought and its laws—formal logic and dialectics. Everything else is subsumed in the positive science of nature and history.

Whilst, however, the revolution in the conception of nature could only be made in proportion to the corresponding positive materials furnished by research, already much earlier certain historical facts had occurred which led to a decisive change in the conception of history. In 1831, the first working class rising took place in Lyons;<sup>16</sup> between 1838 and 1842, the first national working class movement, that of the English Chartists,<sup>17</sup> reached its height. The class struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie came to the front in the history of the most advanced countries in Europe, in proportion to the development, upon the one hand, of modern industry, upon the other, of the newly-acquired political supremacy of the bourgeoisie. Facts more and more strenuously gave the lie to the teachings of bourgeois economy as to the identity of the interests of capital and labour, as to the universal harmony and universal prosperity that would be the consequence of unbridled competition. All these things could no longer be ignored, any more than the French and English socialism, which was their theoretical, though very imperfect, expression. But the old idealist conception of history, which was not yet dislodged, knew nothing of class struggles based upon economic interests, knew nothing of economic interests; production and all economic relations appeared in it only as incidental, subordinate elements in the "history of civilisation."

The new facts made imperative a new examination of all past history. Then it was seen that *all* past history, with the exception of its primitive stages, was the history of class struggles; that these warring classes of society are always the products of the modes of production and of exchange—in a word, of the *economic* conditions of their time; that the economic structure of society always furnishes the real basis, starting from which we can alone work out the ultimate explanation of the whole superstructure of juridical and political institutions as well as of the religious, philosophical and other ideas of a given historical period. Hegel had freed history from metaphysics—he had made it dialectic; but his conception of history was es-



entially idealistic. But now idealism was driven from its last refuge, the philosophy of history; now a materialistic treatment of history was propounded, and a method found of explaining man's "knowing" by his "being," instead of, as heretofore, his "being" by his "knowing."

From that time forward socialism was no longer an accidental discovery of this or that ingenious brain, but the necessary outcome of the struggle between two historically developed classes—the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Its task was no longer to manufacture a system of society as perfect as possible, but to examine the historico-economic succession of events from which these classes and their antagonisms had of necessity sprung, and to discover in the economic conditions thus created the means of ending the conflict. But the socialism of earlier days was as incompatible with this materialistic conception as the conception of nature of the French materialists was with dialectics and modern natural science. The socialism of earlier days certainly criticised the existing capitalistic mode of production and its consequences. But it could not explain them, and, therefore, could not get the mastery of them. It could only simply reject them as bad. The more strongly this earlier socialism denounced the exploitation of the working class, inevitable under capitalism, the less able was it clearly to show in what this exploitation consisted and how it arose. But for this it was necessary—1) to present the capitalistic method of production in its historical connection and its inevitableness during a particular historical period, and therefore, also, to present its inevitable downfall; and 2) to lay bare its essential character, which was still a secret. This was done by the discovery of *surplus value*. It was shown that the appropriation of unpaid labour is the basis of the capitalist mode of production and of the exploitation of the worker that occurs under it; that even if the capitalist buys the labour power of his labourer at its full value as a commodity on the market, he yet extracts more value from it than he paid for; and that in the ultimate analysis this surplus value forms those sums of value from which are heaped up the constantly increasing masses of capital in the hands of the possessing classes. The genesis

of capitalist production and the production of capital were both explained.

These two great discoveries, the materialistic conception of history and the revelation of the secret of capitalistic production through surplus value, we owe to Marx. With these discoveries socialism became a science. The next thing was to work out all its details and relations.

### III

THE materialist conception of history starts from the proposition that the production of the means to support human life and, next to production, the exchange of things produced, is the basis of all social structure; that in every society that has appeared in history, the manner in which wealth is distributed and society divided into classes or orders is dependent upon what is produced, how it is produced, and how the products are exchanged. From this point of view the final causes of all social changes and political revolutions are to be sought, not in men's brains, not in man's better insight into eternal truth and justice, but in changes in the modes of production and exchange. They are to be sought, not in the *philosophy*, but in the *economics* of each particular epoch. The growing perception that existing social institutions are unreasonable and unjust, that reason has become unreason, and right wrong, is only proof that in the modes of production and exchange changes have silently taken place, with which the social order, adapted to earlier economic conditions, is no longer in keeping. From this it also follows that the means of getting rid of the incongruities that have been brought to light must also be present, in a more or less developed condition, within the changed modes of production themselves. These means are not to be invented by deduction from fundamental principles, but are to be discovered in the stubborn facts of the existing system of production.

What is, then, the position of modern socialism in this connection?

The present structure of society—this is now pretty generally conceded—is the creation of the ruling class of today, of the bourgeoisie. The mode of production peculiar to the bourgeoisie, known, since Marx, as the capitalist mode of production, was incompatible with the feudal system, with the privileges it conferred upon individuals, entire social ranks and local corporations, as well as with the hereditary ties of subordination which

constituted the framework of its social organization. The bourgeoisie broke up the feudal system and built upon its ruins the capitalist order of society, the kingdom of free competition, of personal liberty, of equality before the law of all commodity owners, and of all the rest of the capitalist blessings. Thenceforward the capitalist mode of production could develop in freedom. Since steam, machinery and the making of machines by machinery transformed the older manufacture into modern industry, the productive forces evolved under the guidance of the bourgeoisie developed with a rapidity and in a degree unheard of before. But just as the older manufacture, in its time, and handicraft, becoming more developed under its influence, had come into collision with the feudal trammels of the guilds, so now modern industry, in its more complete development, comes into collision with the bounds within which the capitalistic mode of production holds it confined. The new productive forces have already outgrown the capitalistic mode of using them. And this conflict between productive forces and modes of production is not a conflict engendered in the mind of man, like that between original sin and divine justice. It exists, in fact, objectively, outside us, independently of the will and actions even of the men that have brought it on. Modern socialism is nothing but the reflex, in thought, of this conflict in fact; its ideal reflection in the minds, first, of the class directly suffering under it, the working class.

Now, in what does this conflict consist?

Before capitalistic production, *i.e.*, in the Middle Ages, the system of petty industry obtained generally, based upon the private property of the labourers in their means of production; in the country, the agriculture of the small peasant, freeman or serf; in the towns, the handicrafts organised in guilds. The instruments of labour—land, agricultural implements, the workshop, the tool—were the instruments of labour of single individuals, adapted for the use of one worker, and, therefore, of necessity, small, dwarfish, circumscribed. But for this very reason they belonged, as a rule, to the producer himself. To concentrate these scattered, limited means of production, to enlarge them, to turn them into the powerful levers of production of the present day—this was precisely the historic rôle of

capitalist production and of its upholder, the bourgeoisie. In Part IV of *Capital*<sup>18</sup> Marx has explained in detail, how since the fifteenth century this has been historically worked out through the three phases of simple co-operation, manufacture and modern industry. But the bourgeoisie, as is also shown there, could not transform these puny means of production into mighty productive forces, without transforming them, at the same time, from means of production of the individual into *social* means of production only workable by a collectivity of men. The spinning-wheel, the hand-loom, the blacksmith's hammer were replaced by the spinning machine, the power-loom, the steam-hammer; the individual workshop, by the factory, implying the co-operation of hundreds and thousands of workmen. In like manner, production itself changed from a series of individual into a series of social acts, and the products from individual to social products. The yarn, the cloth, the metal articles that now came out of the factory were the joint product of many workers, through whose hands they had successively to pass before they were ready. No one person could say of them: "I made that; this is *my* product."

But where, in a given society, the fundamental form of production is that spontaneous division of labour which creeps in gradually and not upon any preconceived plan, there the products take on the form of *commodities*, whose mutual exchange, buying and selling, enable the individual producers to satisfy their manifold wants. And this was the case in the Middle Ages. The peasant, *e.g.*, sold to the artisan agricultural products and bought from him the products of handicraft. Into this society of individual producers, of commodity producers, the new mode of production thrust itself. In the midst of the old division of labour, grown up spontaneously and upon *no definite plan*, which had governed the whole of society, now arose division of labour upon a *definite plan*, as organised in the factory; side by side with *individual* production appeared *social* production. The products of both were sold in the same market, and, therefore, at prices at least approximately equal. But organisation upon a definite plan was stronger than spontaneous division of labour. The factories working with the combined social forces of a collectivity of individuals produced their commodities far more

cheaply than the individual small producers. Individual production succumbed in one department after another. Socialised production revolutionised all the old methods of production. But its revolutionary character was, at the same time, so little recognised, that it was, on the contrary, introduced as a means of increasing and developing the production of commodities. When it arose, it found ready-made, and made liberal use of, certain machinery for the production and exchange of commodities; merchants' capital, handicraft, wage labour. Socialised production thus introducing itself as a new form of the production of commodities, it was a matter of course that under it the old forms of appropriation remained in full swing, and were applied to its products as well.

In the mediæval stage of evolution of the production of commodities, the question as to the owner of the product of labour could not arise. The individual producer, as a rule, had, from raw material belonging to himself, and generally his own handiwork, produced it with his own tools, by the labour of his own hands or of his family. There was no need for him to appropriate the new product. It belonged wholly to him, as a matter of course. His property in the product was, therefore, based *upon his own labour*. Even where external help was used, this was, as a rule, of little importance, and very generally was compensated by something other than wages. The apprentices and journeymen of the guilds worked less for board and wages than for education, in order that they might become master craftsmen themselves.

Then came the concentration of the means of production and of the producers in large workshops and manufactories, their transformation into actual socialised means of production and socialised producers. But the socialised producers and means of production and their products were still treated, after this change, just as they had been before, *i.e.*, as the means of production and the products of individuals. Hitherto, the owner of the instruments of labour had himself appropriated the product, because as a rule it was his own product and the assistance of others was the exception. Now the owner of the instruments of labour always appropriated to himself the product, although it was no longer *his* product but exclusively the product

of the *labour of others*. Thus, the products now produced socially were not appropriated by those who had actually set in motion the means of production and actually produced the commodities, but by the *capitalists*. The means of production, and production itself, had become in essence socialised. But they were subjected to a form of appropriation which presupposes the private production of individuals, under which, therefore, every one owns his own product and brings it to market. The mode of production is subjected to this form of appropriation, although it abolishes the conditions upon which the latter rests.\*

This contradiction, which gives to the new mode of production its capitalistic character, *contains the germ of the whole of the social antagonisms of today*. The greater the mastery obtained by the new mode of production over all important fields of production and in all manufacturing countries, the more it reduced individual production to an insignificant residuum, *the more clearly was brought out the incompatibility of socialised production with capitalistic appropriation*.

The first capitalists found, as we have said, alongside of other forms of labour, wage labour ready-made for them on the market. But it was exceptional, complementary, necessary, transitory wage labour. The agricultural labourer, though, upon occasion, he hired himself out by the day, had a few acres of his own land on which he could at all events live at a pinch. The guilds were so organised that the journeyman of today became the master of tomorrow. But all this changed, as soon as the means of production became socialised and concentrated in the hands of capitalists. The means of production, as well as the product of the individual producer became more and more worthless; there was nothing left for him but to turn wage

\* It is hardly necessary in this connection to point out, that, even if the form of appropriation remains the same, the *character* of the appropriation is just as much revolutionised as production is by the changes described above. It is, of course, a very different matter whether I appropriate to myself my own product or that of another. Note in passing that wage labour, which contains the whole capitalistic mode of production in embryo, is very ancient; in a sporadic, scattered form it existed for centuries alongside of slave labour. But the embryo could duly develop into the capitalistic mode of production only when the necessary historical pre-conditions had been furnished.

worker under the capitalist. Wage labour, aforesaid the exception and accessory, now became the rule and basis of all production; aforesaid complementary, it now became the sole remaining function of the worker. The wage worker for a time became a wage worker for life. The number of these permanent wage workers was further enormously increased by the breaking up of the feudal system that occurred at the same time, by the disbanding of the retainers of the feudal lords, the eviction of the peasants from their homesteads, etc. The separation was made complete between the means of production concentrated in the hands of the capitalists on the one side, and the producers, possessing nothing but their labour power, on the other. *The contradiction between socialised production and capitalistic appropriation manifested itself as the antagonism of proletariat and bourgeoisie.*

We have seen that the capitalistic mode of production thrust its way into a society of commodity producers, of individual producers, whose social bond was the exchange of their products. But every society, based upon the production of commodities, has this peculiarity: that the producers have lost control over their own social inter-relations. Each man produces for himself with such means of production as he may happen to have, and for such exchange as he may require to satisfy his remaining wants. No one knows how much of his particular article is coming on the market, nor how much of it will be wanted. No one knows whether his individual product will meet an actual demand, whether he will be able to make good his cost of production or even to sell his commodity at all. Anarchy reigns in socialised production.

But the production of commodities, like every other form of production, has its peculiar inherent laws inseparable from it; and these laws work, despite anarchy, in and through anarchy. They reveal themselves in the only persistent form of social inter-relations, *i.e.*, in exchange, and here they affect the individual producers as compulsory laws of competition. They are, at first, unknown to these producers themselves, and have to be discovered by them gradually and as the result of experience. They work themselves out, therefore, independently of the producers, and in antagonism to them, as inexorable natural laws



of their particular form of production. The product governs the producers.

In mediæval society, especially in the earlier centuries, production was essentially directed towards satisfying the wants of the individual. It satisfied, in the main, only the wants of the producer and his family. Where relations of personal dependence existed, as in the country, it also helped to satisfy the wants of the feudal lord. In all this there was, therefore, no exchange; the products, consequently, did not assume the character of commodities. The family of the peasant produced almost everything they wanted: clothes and furniture, as well as means of subsistence. Only when it began to produce more than was sufficient to supply its own wants and the payments in kind to the feudal lord, only then did it also produce commodities. This surplus, thrown into socialised exchange and offered for sale, became commodities.

The artisans of the towns, it is true, had from the first to produce for exchange. But they, also, themselves supplied the greatest part of their own individual wants. They had gardens and plots of land. They turned their cattle out into the communal forest, which, also, yielded them timber and firing. The women spun flax, wool, and so forth. Production for the purpose of exchange, production of commodities was only in its infancy. Hence, exchange was restricted, the market narrow, the methods of production stable; there was local exclusiveness without, local unity within; the mark \* in the country, in the town, the guild.

But with the extension of the production of commodities, and especially with the introduction of the capitalist mode of production, the laws of commodity production, hitherto latent, came into action more openly and with greater force. The old bonds were loosened, the old exclusive limits broken through, the producers were more and more turned into independent, isolated producers of commodities. It became apparent that the production of society at large was ruled by absence of plan, by accident, by anarchy; and this anarchy grew to greater and greater height. But the chief means by aid of which the capitalist mode of production intensified this anarchy of

\* See Appendix.—*Ed.*

socialised production was the exact opposite of anarchy. It was the increasing organisation of production, upon a social basis, in every individual productive establishment. By this, the old, peaceful, stable condition of things was ended. Wherever this organisation of production was introduced into a branch of industry, it brooked no other method of production by its side. The field of labour became a battle ground. The great geographical discoveries, and the colonisation following upon them, multiplied markets and quickened the transformation of handicraft into manufacture. The war did not simply break out between the individual producers of particular localities. The local struggles begat in their turn national conflicts, the commercial wars of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries.<sup>19</sup>

Finally, modern industry and the opening of the world market made the struggle universal, and at the same time gave it an unheard-of virulence. Advantages in natural or artificial conditions of production now decide the existence or non-existence of individual capitalists, as well as of whole industries and countries. He that falls is remorselessly cast aside. It is the Darwinian struggle of the individual for existence transferred from nature to society with intensified violence. The conditions of existence natural to the animal appear as the final term of human development. The contradiction between socialised production and capitalistic appropriation now presents itself as *an antagonism between the organisation of production in the individual workshop and the anarchy of production in society generally.*

The capitalistic mode of production moves in these two forms of the antagonism immanent to it from its very origin. It is never able to get out of that "vicious circle," which Fourier had already discovered. What Fourier could not, indeed, see in his time is: that this circle is gradually narrowing; that the movement becomes more and more a spiral, and must come to an end, like the movement of the planets, by collision with the centre. It is the compelling force of anarchy in the production of society at large that more and more completely turns the great majority of men into proletarians; and it is the masses of the proletariat again who will finally put an end to anarchy

in production. It is the compelling force of anarchy in social production that turns the limitless perfectibility of machinery under modern industry into a compulsory law by which every individual industrial capitalist must perfect his machinery more and more, under penalty of ruin.

But the perfecting of machinery is making human labour superfluous. If the introduction and increase of machinery means the displacement of millions of manual, by a few machine workers, improvement in machinery means the displacement of more and more of the machine workers themselves. It means, in the last instance, the production of a number of available wage workers in excess of the average needs of capital, the formation of a complete industrial reserve army, as I called it in 1845,\* available at the times when industry is working at high pressure, to be cast out upon the street when the inevitable crash comes, a constant dead weight upon the limbs of the working class in its struggle for existence with capital, a regulator for the keeping of wages down to the low level that suits the interests of capital. Thus it comes about, to quote Marx, that machinery becomes the most powerful weapon in the war of capital against the working class; that the instruments of labour constantly tear the means of subsistence out of the hands of the labourer; that the very product of the worker is turned into an instrument for his subjugation. Thus it comes about that the economising of the instruments of labour becomes at the same time, from the outset, the most reckless waste of labour power, and robbery based upon the normal conditions under which labour functions; that machinery, "the most powerful instrument for shortening labour time, becomes the most unfailing means for placing every moment of the labourer's time and that of his family at the disposal of the capitalist for the purpose of expanding the value of his capital." (*Capital*, p. 406, New York, 1939. Thus it comes about that overwork of some becomes the preliminary condition for the idleness of others, and that modern industry, which hunts after new consumers over the whole world, forces the consumption of the masses at home down to a starvation minimum, and in doing

\* *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, Sonnenschein and Co., p. 84.

thus destroys its own home market. "The law that always equilibrates the relative surplus population, or industrial reserve army, to the extent and energy of accumulation, this law rivets the labourer to capital more firmly than the wedges of Vulcan did Prometheus to the rock. It establishes an accumulation of misery, corresponding with accumulation of capital. Accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time, accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole, *i.e.*, on the side of the class that produces *its own product in the form of capital.*" (Marx, *Capital*, p. 661, New York, 1939.) And to expect any other division of the products from the capitalistic mode of production is the same as expecting the electrodes of a battery not to decompose acidulated water, not to liberate oxygen at the positive, hydrogen at the negative pole, so long as they are connected with the battery.

We have seen that the ever-increasing perfectibility of modern machinery is, by the anarchy of social production, turned into a compulsory law that forces the individual industrial capitalist always to improve his machinery, always to increase its productive force. The bare possibility of extending the field of production is transformed for him into a similar compulsory law. The enormous expansive force of modern industry, compared with which that of gases is mere child's play, appears to us now as a *necessity* for expansion, both qualitative and quantitative, that laughs at all resistance. Such resistance is offered by consumption, by sales, by the markets for the products of modern industry. But the capacity for extension, extensive and intensive, of the markets is primarily governed by quite different laws, that work much less energetically. The extension of the markets cannot keep pace with the extension of production. The collision becomes inevitable, and as this cannot produce any real solution so long as it does not break in pieces the capitalist mode of production, the collisions become periodic. Capitalist production has begotten another "vicious circle."

As a matter of fact, since 1825, when the first general crisis broke out, the whole industrial and commercial world, production and exchange among all civilised peoples and their more or less barbaric hangers-on, are thrown out of joint about once

every ten years. Commerce is at a standstill, the markets are glutted, products accumulate, as multitudinous as they are unsaleable, hard cash disappears, credit vanishes, factories are closed, the mass of the workers are in want of the means of subsistence, because they have produced too much of the means of subsistence; bankruptcy follows upon bankruptcy, execution upon execution. The stagnation lasts for years; productive forces and products are wasted and destroyed wholesale, until the accumulated mass of commodities finally filter off, more or less depreciated in value, until production and exchange gradually begin to move again. Little by little the pace quickens. It becomes a trot. The industrial trot breaks into a canter, the canter in turn grows into the headlong gallop of a perfect steeplechase of industry, commercial credit and speculation, which finally, after breakneck leaps, ends where it began—in the ditch of a crisis. And so over and over again. We have now, since the year 1825, gone through this five times, and at the present moment (1877) we are going through it for the sixth time. And the character of these crises is so clearly defined that Fourier hit all of them off when he described the first as "*crise pléthorique*," a crisis from plethora.

In these crises, the contradiction between socialised production and capitalist appropriation ends in a violent explosion. The circulation of commodities is, for the time being, stopped. Money, the means of circulation, becomes a hindrance to circulation. All the laws of production and circulation of commodities are turned upside down. The economic collision has reached its apogee. *The mode of production is in rebellion against the mode of exchange.*

The fact that the socialised organisation of production within the factory has developed so far that it has become incompatible with the anarchy of production in society, which exists side by side with and dominates it, is brought home to the capitalists themselves by the violent concentration of capital that occurs during crises, through the ruin of many large, and a still greater number of small, capitalists. The whole mechanism of the capitalist mode of production breaks down under the pressure of the productive forces, its own creations. It is no longer able to turn all this mass of means of production into capital.

They lie fallow, and for that very reason the industrial reserve army must also lie fallow. Means of production, means of subsistence, available labourers, all the elements of production and of general wealth, are present in abundance. But "abundance becomes the source of distress and want" (Fourier), because it is the very thing that prevents the transformation of the means of production and subsistence into capital. For in capitalistic society the means of production can only function when they have undergone a preliminary transformation into capital, into the means of exploiting human labour power. The necessity of this transformation into capital of the means of production and subsistence stands like a ghost between these and the workers. It alone prevents the coming together of the material and personal levers of production; it alone forbids the means of production to function, the workers to work and live. On the one hand, therefore, the capitalistic mode of production stands convicted of its own incapacity to further direct these productive forces. On the other, these productive forces themselves, with increasing energy, press forward to the removal of the existing contradiction, to the abolition of their quality as capital, to the *practical recognition of their character as social productive forces*.

This rebellion of the productive forces, as they grow more and more powerful, against their quality as capital, this stronger and stronger command that their social character shall be recognised, forces the capitalist class itself to treat them more and more as social productive forces, so far as this is possible under capitalist conditions. The period of industrial high pressure, with its unbounded inflation of credit, not less than the crash itself, by the collapse of great capitalist establishments, tends to bring about that form of the socialisation of great masses of means of production, which we meet with in the different kinds of joint-stock companies. Many of these means of production and of distribution are, from the outset, so colossal, that, like the railroads, they exclude all other forms of capitalistic exploitation. At a further stage of evolution this form also becomes insufficient. The producers on a large scale in a particular branch of industry in a particular country unite in a "trust," a union for the purpose of regulating production.

They determine the total amount to be produced, parcel it out among themselves, and thus enforce the selling price fixed beforehand. But trusts of this kind, as soon as business becomes bad, are generally liable to break up, and, on this very account, compel a yet greater concentration of association. The whole of the particular industry is turned into one gigantic joint-stock company; internal competition gives place to the internal monopoly of this one company. This has happened in 1890 with the English *alkali* production, which is now, after the fusion of 48 large works, in the hands of one company, conducted upon a single plan, and with a capital of £6,000,000.

In the trusts, freedom of competition changes into its very opposite—into monopoly;<sup>20</sup> and the production without any definite plan of capitalistic society capitulates to the production upon a definite plan of the invading socialistic society. Certainly this is so far still to the benefit and advantage of the capitalists. But in this case the exploitation is so palpable that it must break down. No nation will put up with production conducted by trusts, with so barefaced an exploitation of the community by a small band of dividend mongers.

In any case, with trusts or without, the official representative of capitalist society—the state—will ultimately have to undertake the direction of production.\* This necessity of conversion

\*I say "have to." For only when the means of production and distribution have *actually* outgrown the form of management by joint-stock companies, and when, therefore, the taking them over by the state has become *economically* inevitable, only then—even if it is the state of today that effects this—is there an economic advance, the attainment of another step preliminary to the taking over of all productive forces by society itself. But of late, since Bismarck went in for state ownership of industrial establishments, a kind of spurious socialism has arisen, degenerating, now and again, into something of flunkeyism, that without more ado declares *all* state ownership, even of the Bismarckian sort, to be socialistic. Certainly, if the taking over by the state of the tobacco industry is socialistic, then Napoleon and Metternich must be numbered among the founders of socialism. If the Belgian state, for quite ordinary political and financial reasons, itself constructed its chief railway lines; if Bismarck, not under any economic compulsion, took over for the state the chief Prussian lines, simply to be the better able to have them in hand in case of war, to bring up the railway employees as voting cattle for the government, and especially to create for himself a new source of income independent of parliamentary votes—this was, in no sense, a

into state property is felt first in the great institutions for intercourse and communication—the post-office, the telegraphs, the railways.

If the crises demonstrate the incapacity of the bourgeoisie for managing any longer modern productive forces, the transformation of the great establishments for production and distribution into joint-stock companies, trusts and state property, show how unnecessary the bourgeoisie are for that purpose. All the social functions of the capitalist are now performed by salaried employees. The capitalist has no further social function than that of pocketing dividends, tearing off coupons, and gambling on the Stock Exchange, where the different capitalists despoil one another of their capital. At first the capitalistic mode of production forces out the workers. Now it forces out the capitalists, and reduces them, just as it reduced the workers, to the ranks of the surplus population, although not immediately into those of the industrial reserve army.

But the transformation, either into joint-stock companies and trusts, or into state ownership, does not do away with the capitalistic nature of the productive forces. In the joint-stock companies and trusts this is obvious. And the modern state, again, is only the organisation that bourgeois society takes on in order to support the external conditions of the capitalist mode of production against the encroachments, as well of the workers as of individual capitalists. The modern state, no matter what its form, is essentially a capitalist machine, the state of the capitalists, the ideal personification of the total national capital. The more it proceeds to the taking over of productive forces, the more does it actually become the national capitalist, the more citizens does it exploit. The workers remain wage workers—proletarians. The capitalist relation is not done away with. It is rather brought to a head. But, brought to a head, it topples over. State ownership of the productive forces is not the solution of the conflict, but con-

socialistic measure,\* directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously. Otherwise, the Royal Maritime Company, the Royal porcelain manufacture, and even the regimental tailor of the army would also be socialistic institutions, or even, as was seriously proposed by a sly dog in Frederick William III's reign, the taking over by the state of the brothels.



cealed within it are the technical conditions that form the elements of that solution.

This solution can only consist in the practical recognition of the social nature of the modern forces of production, and therefore in the harmonising of the modes of production, appropriation and exchange with the socialised character of the means of production. And this can only come about by society openly and directly taking possession of the productive forces which have outgrown all control except that of society as a whole. The social character of the means of production and of the products today reacts against the producers, periodically disrupts all production and exchange, acts only like a law of nature working blindly, forcibly, destructively. But with the taking over by society of the productive forces, the social character of the means of production and of the products will be utilised by the producers with a perfect understanding of its nature, and instead of being a source of disturbance and periodical collapse, will become the most powerful lever of production itself.

Active social forces work exactly like natural forces; blindly, forcibly, destructively, so long as we do not understand and reckon with them. But when once we understand them, when once we grasp their action, their direction, their effects, it depends only upon ourselves to subject them more and more to our own will, and by means of them to reach our own ends. And this holds quite especially of the mighty productive forces of today. As long as we obstinately refuse to understand the nature and the character of these social means of action—and this understanding goes against the grain of the capitalist mode of production and its defenders—so long these forces are at work in spite of us, in opposition to us, so long they master us, as we have shown above in detail.

But when once their nature is understood, they can, in the hands of the producers working together, be transformed from master demons into willing servants. The difference is as that between the destructive force of electricity in the lightning of the storm, and electricity under command in the telegraph and the voltaic arc; the difference between a conflagration, and fire working in the service of man. With this recognition at last of the real nature of the productive forces of today, the social

anarchy of production gives place to a social regulation of production upon a definite plan, according to the needs of the community and of each individual. Then the capitalist mode of appropriation, in which the product enslaves first the producer and then the appropriator, is replaced by the mode of appropriation of the products that is based upon the nature of the modern means of production; upon the one hand, direct social appropriation, as means to the maintenance and extension of production—on the other, direct individual appropriation, as means of subsistence and of enjoyment.

Whilst the capitalist mode of production more and more completely transforms the great majority of the population into proletarians, it creates the power which, under penalty of its own destruction, is forced to accomplish this revolution. Whilst it forces on more and more the transformation of the vast means of production, already socialised, into state property, it shows itself the way to accomplishing this revolution. *The proletariat seizes political power and turns the means of production into state property.*

But, in doing this, it abolishes itself as proletariat, abolishes all class distinctions and class antagonisms, abolishes also the state as state. Society thus far, based upon class antagonisms, had need of the state. That is, of an organisation of the particular class which was *pro tempore* the exploiting class, an organisation for the purpose of preventing any interference from without with the existing conditions of production, and therefore, especially, for the purpose of forcibly keeping the exploited classes in the condition of oppression corresponding with the given mode of production (slavery, serfdom, wage labour). The state was the official representative of society as a whole; the gathering of it together into a visible embodiment. But it was this only in so far as it was the state of that class which itself represented, for the time being, society as a whole; in ancient times, the state of slave-owning citizens; in the Middle Ages, the feudal lords; in our own time, the bourgeoisie. When at last it becomes the real representative of the whole of society, it renders itself unnecessary. As soon as there is no longer any social class to be held in subjection; as soon as class rule and the individual struggle for existence based upon our present

anarchy in production, with the collisions and excesses arising from these, are removed, nothing more remains to be repressed, and a special repressive force, a state, is no longer necessary. The first act by virtue of which the state really constitutes itself the representative of the whole of society—the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society—this is, at the same time, its last independent act as a state. State interference in social relations becomes, in one domain after another, superfluous, and then dies out of itself; the government of persons is replaced by the administration of things, and by the conduct of processes of production. The state is not “abolished.” *It dies out.* This gives the measure of the value of the phrase “a free state,” both as to its justifiable use at times by agitators, and as to its ultimate scientific insufficiency;<sup>21</sup> and also of the demands of the so-called anarchists for the abolition of the state out of hand.<sup>22</sup>

Since the historical appearance of the capitalist mode of production, the appropriation by society of all the means of production has often been dreamed of, more or less vaguely, by individuals, as well as by sects, as the ideal of the future. But it could become possible, could become a historical necessity, only when the actual conditions for its realisation were there. Like every other social advance, it becomes practicable, not by men understanding that the existence of classes is in contradiction to justice, equality, etc., not by the mere willingness to abolish these classes, but by virtue of certain new economic conditions. The separation of society into an exploiting and an exploited class, a ruling and an oppressed class, was the necessary consequence of the deficient and restricted development of production in former times. So long as the total social labour only yields a produce which but slightly exceeds that barely necessary for the existence of all; so long, therefore, as labour engages all or almost all the time of the great majority of the members of society—so long, of necessity, this society is divided into classes. Side by side with the great majority, exclusively bond slaves to labour, arises a class freed from directly productive labour, which looks after the general affairs of society, the direction of labour, state business, law, science, art, etc. It is, therefore, the law of division of labour that lies

at the basis of the division into classes. But this does not prevent this division into classes from being carried out by means of violence and robbery, trickery and fraud. It does not prevent the ruling class, once having the upper hand, from consolidating its power at the expense of the working class, from turning their social leadership into an intensified exploitation of the masses.

But if, upon this showing, division into classes has a certain historical justification, it has this only for a given period, only under given social conditions. It was based upon the insufficiency of production. It will be swept away by the complete development of modern productive forces. And, in fact, the abolition of classes in society presupposes a degree of historical evolution, at which the existence, not simply of this or that particular ruling class, but of any ruling class at all, and, therefore, the existence of class distinction itself has become an obsolete anachronism. It presupposes, therefore, the development of production carried out to a degree at which appropriation of the means of production and of the products, and, with this, of political domination, of the monopoly of culture, and of intellectual leadership by a particular class of society, has become not only superfluous, but economically, politically, intellectually a hindrance to development.

This point is now reached. Their political and intellectual bankruptcy is scarcely any longer a secret to the bourgeoisie themselves. Their economic bankruptcy recurs regularly every ten years. In every crisis, society is suffocated beneath the weight of its own productive forces and products, which it cannot use, and stands helpless, face to face with the absurd contradiction that the producers have nothing to consume, because consumers are wanting. The expansive force of the means of production bursts the bonds that the capitalist mode of production had imposed upon them. Their deliverance from these bonds is the one precondition for an unbroken, constantly accelerated development of the productive forces, and therewith for a practically unlimited increase of production itself. Nor is this all. The socialised appropriation of the means of production does away not only with the present artificial restrictions upon production, but also with the positive waste and devasta-

tion of productive forces and products that are at the present time the inevitable concomitants of production, and that reach their height in the crises. Further, it sets free for the community at large a mass of means of production and of products, by doing away with the senseless extravagance of the ruling classes of today, and their political representatives. The possibility of securing for every member of society, by means of socialised production, an existence not only fully sufficient materially, and becoming day by day more full, but an existence guaranteeing to all the free development and exercise of their physical and mental faculties—this possibility is now for the first time here, but *it is here*.\*

With the seizing of the means of production by society, production of commodities is done away with, and, simultaneously, the mastery of the product over the producer. Anarchy in social production is replaced by systematic definite organisation. The struggle for individual existence disappears. Then for the first time, man, in a certain sense, is finally marked off from the rest of the animal kingdom, and emerges from mere animal conditions of existence into really human ones. The whole sphere of the conditions of life which environ man, and which have hitherto ruled man, now comes under the dominion and control of man, who for the first time becomes the real, conscious lord of nature, because he has now become master of his own social organisation. The laws of his own social action, hitherto standing face to face with man as laws of nature foreign to and dominating him, will then be used with full understanding, and so mastered by him. Man's own social organisation, hitherto confronting him as a necessity imposed by

\* A few figures may serve to give an approximate idea of the enormous expansive force of the modern means of production, even under capitalist pressure. According to Mr. Giffen, the total wealth of Great Britain and Ireland amounted, in round numbers, in

1814 to £2,200,000,000

1865 to £6,100,000,000

1875 to £8,500,000,000

As an instance of the squandering of means of production and of products during a crisis, the total loss in the Germany iron industry alone, in the crisis 1873-78, was given at the second German Industrial Congress (Berlin, February 21, 1878) as £22,750,000.

nature and history, now becomes the result of his own free action. The extraneous objective forces that have hitherto governed history pass under the control of man himself. Only from that time will man himself, more and more consciously, make his own history—only from that time will the social causes set in movement by him have, in the main and in a constantly growing measure, the results intended by him. It is the ascent of man from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom.

Let us briefly sum up our sketch of historical evolution.

I. *Mediæval Society*—Individual production on a small scale. Means of production adapted for individual use; hence primitive, ungainly, petty, dwarfed in action. Production for immediate consumption, either of the producer himself or of his feudal lords. Only where an excess of production over this consumption occurs is such excess offered for sale, enters into exchange. Production of commodities, therefore, is only in its infancy. But already it contains within itself, in embryo, *anarchy in the production of society at large*.

II. *Capitalist Revolution*—Transformation of industry, at first by means of simple co-operation and manufacture. Concentration of the means of production, hitherto scattered, into great workshops. As a consequence, their transformation from individual to social means of production—a transformation which does not, on the whole, affect the form of exchange. The old forms of appropriation remain in force. The capitalist appears. In his capacity as owner of the means of production, he also appropriates the products and turns them into commodities. Production has become a *social* act. Exchange and appropriation continue to be *individual* acts, the acts of individuals. *The social product is appropriated by the individual capitalist*. Fundamental contradiction, whence arise all the contradictions in which our present day society moves, and which modern industry brings to light.

A. Severance of the producer from the means of production. Condemnation of the worker to wage labour for life. *Antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie*.

B. Growing predominance and increasing effectiveness of the laws governing the production of commodities. Unbridled competition. *Contradiction between socialised organisation in the individual factory and social anarchy in production as a whole.*

C. On the one hand, perfecting of machinery, made by competition compulsory for each individual manufacturer, and complemented by a constantly growing displacement of labourers. *Industrial reserve army.* On the other hand, unlimited extension of production, also compulsory under competition, for every manufacturer. On both sides, unheard of development of productive forces, excess of supply over demand, overproduction, glutting of the markets, crises every ten years, the vicious circle: excess here, of means of production and products—excess there, of labourers, without employment and without means of existence. But these two levers of production and of social well-being are unable to work together because the capitalist form of production prevents the productive forces from working and the products from circulating, unless they are first turned into capital—which their very superabundance prevents. The contradiction has grown into an absurdity. *The mode of production rises in rebellion against the form of exchange.* The bourgeoisie are convicted of incapacity further to manage their own social productive forces.

D. Partial recognition of the social character of the productive forces forced upon the capitalists themselves. Taking over of the great institutions for production and communication, first by joint-stock companies, later on by trusts, then by the state. The bourgeoisie demonstrated to be a superfluous class. All its social functions are now performed by salaried employees.

III. *Proletarian Revolution*—Solution of the contradictions. The proletariat seizes the public power, and by means of this transforms the socialised means of production, slipping from the hands of the bourgeoisie, into public property. By this act, the proletariat frees the means of production from the character of capital they have thus far borne, and gives their socialised

character complete freedom to work itself out. Socialised production upon a predetermined plan becomes henceforth possible. The development of production makes the existence of different classes of society thenceforth an anachronism. In proportion as anarchy in social production vanishes, the political authority of the state dies out. Man, at last the master of his own form of social organisation, becomes at the same time the lord over nature, his own master—free.

To accomplish this act of universal emancipation is the historical mission of the modern proletariat. To thoroughly comprehend the historical conditions and thus the very nature of this act, to impart to the now oppressed proletarian class a full knowledge of the conditions and of the meaning of the momentous act it is called upon to accomplish, this is the task of the theoretical expression of the proletarian movement, scientific socialism.



## APPENDIX

### THE MARK \*

IN A country like Germany, in which quite half the population live by agriculture, it is necessary that the socialist workingmen, and through them the peasants, should learn how the present system of landed property, large as well as small, has arisen. It is necessary to contrast the misery of the agricultural labourers of the present time and the mortgage servitude of the small peasants, with the old common property of all free men in what was then in truth their "fatherland," the free common possession of all by inheritance.

I shall give, therefore, a short historical sketch of the primitive agrarian conditions of the German tribes. A few traces of these have survived until our own time, but all through the Middle Ages they served as the basis and as the type of all public institutions, and permeated the whole of public life, not only in Germany, but also in the north of France, England and Scandinavia. And yet they have been so completely forgotten, that recently G. L. Maurer has had to rediscover their real significance.

Two fundamental facts, that arose spontaneously, govern the primitive history of all, or of almost all, nations; the grouping of the people according to kindred and common property in the soil. And this was the case with the Germans. As they had brought with them from Asia the method of grouping by tribes and gentes, as they even in the time of the Romans so drew up their battle array, that those related to each other always stood shoulder to shoulder, this grouping also governed the partitioning of their new territory east of the Rhine and north of the Danube. Each tribe settled down upon the new possession, not according to whim or accident, but, as Cæsar ex-

\* See p. 60.—*Ed.*

pressly states, according to the gens relationship between the members of the tribe. A particular area was apportioned to each of the nearly related larger groups, and on this again the individual gentes, each including a certain number of families, settled down by villages. A number of allied villages formed a hundred (old high German, *huntari*; old Norse, *heradh*). A number of hundreds formed a *gau* or shire. The sum total of the shires was the people itself.

The land which was not taken possession of by the village remained at the disposal of the hundred. What was not assigned to the latter remained for the shire. Whatever after that was still to be disposed of—generally a very large tract of land—was the immediate possession of the whole people. Thus in Sweden we find all these different stages of common holding side by side. Each village had its village common land (*bys almänningar*), and beyond this was the hundred common land (*härads*), the shire common lands (*lands*), and finally the people's common land. This last, claimed by the king as representative of the whole nation, was known therefore as *Konungs almänningar*. But all of these, even the royal lands, were named, without distinction, *almänningar*, common land.

This old Swedish arrangement of the common land, in its minute subdivision, evidently belongs to a later stage of development. If it ever did exist in Germany, it soon vanished. The rapid increase in the population led to the establishment of a number of daughter villages on the *mark*, i.e., on the large tract of land attributed to each individual mother village. These daughter villages formed a single mark association with the mother village, on the basis of equal or of restricted rights. Thus we find everywhere in Germany, so far as research goes back, a larger or smaller number of villages united in one mark association. But these associations were, at least, at first, still subject to the great federations of the marks of the hundred, or of the shire. And, finally, the people, as a whole, originally formed one single great mark association, not only for the administration of the land that remained the immediate possession of the people, but also as a supreme court over the subordinate local marks.

Until the time when the Frankish kingdom subdued Germany

east of the Rhine, the centre of gravity of the mark association seems to have been in the *gau* or shire—the shire seems to have formed the unit mark association. For, upon this assumption alone is it explicable that, upon the official division of the kingdom, so many old and large marks reappear as shires. Soon after this time began the decay of the old large marks. Yet even in the code known as the *Kaiserrecht*, the "Emperor's Law" of the thirteenth or fourteenth century, it is a general rule that a mark includes from six to twelve villages.

In Cæsar's time a great part at least of the Germans, the Suevi, to wit, who had not yet got any fixed settlement, cultivated their fields in common. From analogy with other peoples we may take it that this was carried on in such a way that the individual gentes, each including a number of nearly related families, cultivated in common the land apportioned to them, which was changed from year to year, and divided the products among the families. But after the Suevi, about the beginning of our era, had settled down in their new domains, this soon ceased. At all events, Tacitus (150 years after Cæsar) only mentions the tilling of the soil by individual families. But the land to be tilled only belonged to these for a year. Every year it was divided up anew and redistributed.

How this was done, is still to be seen at the present time on the Moselle and in the Hochwald, on the so-called "*Gehöferschaften*." There the whole of the land under cultivation, arable and meadows, not annually it is true, but every three, six, nine, or twelve years, is thrown together and parcelled out into a number of "*Gewanne*," or areas, according to situation and the quality of the soil. Each *Gewann* is again divided into as many equal parts, long, narrow strips, as there are claimants in the association. These are shared by lot among the members, so that every member receives an equal portion in each *Gewann*. At the present time the shares have become unequal by divisions among heirs, sales, etc.; but the old full share still furnishes the unit that determines the half, or quarter, or one-eighth shares. The uncultivated land, forest and pasture land, is still a common possession for common use.

The same primitive arrangement obtained until the beginning of this century in the so-called assignments by lot (*Loosgüter*)

of the Rhein palatinate in Bavaria, whose arable land has since been turned into the private property of individuals. The *Gehöferschaften* also find it more and more to their interest to let the periodical re-division become obsolete and to turn the changing ownership into settled private property. Thus most of them, if not all, have died out in the last forty years and given place to villages with peasant proprietors using the forests and pasture land in common.

The first piece of ground that passed into the private property of individuals was that on which the house stood. The inviolability of the dwelling, that basis of all personal freedom, was transferred from the caravan of the nomadic train to the log house of the stationary peasant, and gradually was transformed into a complete right of property in the homestead. This had already come about in the time of Tacitus. The free German's homestead must, even in that time, have been excluded from the mark, and thereby inaccessible to its officials, a safe place of refuge for fugitives, as we find it described in the regulations of the marks of later times, and to some extent, even in the "*leges Barbarorum*," the codifications of German tribal customary law, written down from the fifth to the eighth century. For the sacredness of the dwelling was not the effect but the cause of its transformation into private property.

Four or five hundred years after Tacitus, according to the same law books, the cultivated land also was the hereditary, although not the absolute freehold property of individual peasants, who had the right to dispose of it by sale or any other means of transfer. The causes of this transformation, as far as we can trace them, are twofold.

First, from the beginning there were in Germany itself, besides the close villages already described, with their complete ownership in common of the land, other villages where, besides homesteads, the fields also were excluded from the mark, the property of the community, and were parcelled out among the individual peasants as their hereditary property. But this was only the case where the nature of the place, so to say, compelled it: in narrow valleys, and on narrow, flat ridges between marshes, as in Westphalia; later on, in the Odenwald, and in almost all the Alpine valleys. In these places the village con-

sisted, as it does now, of scattered individual dwellings, each surrounded by the fields belonging to it. A periodical re-division of the arable land was in these cases hardly possible, and so what remained within the mark was only the circumjacent untilled land. When, later, the right to dispose of the homestead by transfer to a third person became an important consideration, those who were free owners of their fields found themselves in an advantageous position. The wish to attain these advantages may have led in many of the villages with common ownership of the land to the letting the customary method of partition die out and to the transformation of the individual shares of the members into hereditary and transferable freehold property.

But, second, conquest led the Germans on to Roman territory, where, for centuries, the soil had been private property (the unlimited property of Roman law), and where the small number of conquerors could not possibly altogether do away with a form of holding so deeply rooted. The connection of hereditary private property in fields and meadows with Roman law, at all events on territory that had been Roman, is supported by the fact that such remains of common property in arable land as have come down to our time are found on the left bank of the Rhine—*i.e.*, on conquered territory, but territory *thoroughly Germanised*. When the Franks settled here in the fifth century, common ownership in the fields must still have existed among them, otherwise we should not find there *Gehöferschaften* and *Loosgüter*. But here also private ownership soon got the mastery, for this form of holding only do we find mentioned, in so far as arable land is concerned, in the Riparian law of the sixth century. And in the interior of Germany, as I have said, the cultivated land also soon became private property.

But if the German conquerors adopted private ownership in fields and meadows—*i.e.*, gave up at the first division of the land, or soon after, any repartition (for it was nothing more than this), they introduced, on the other hand, everywhere their German mark system, with common holding of woods and pastures, together with the over-lordship of the mark in respect to the partitioned land. This happened not only with the Franks in the north of France and the Anglo-Saxons in England, but also with the Burgundians in Eastern France, the Visigoths in

the south of France and Spain, and the Ostrogoths and Lombardians in Italy. In these last-named countries, however, as far as is known, traces of the mark government have lasted until the present time almost exclusively in the higher mountain regions.

The form that the mark government has assumed after the periodical partition of the cultivated land had fallen into disuse is that which now meets us, not only in the old popular laws of the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth centuries, but also in the English and Scandinavian law books of the Middle Ages, in the many German mark regulations (the so-called *Weisthümer*) from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century, and in the customary laws (*coutumes*) of Northern France.

Whilst the association of the mark gave up the right of, from time to time, partitioning fields and meadows anew among its individual members, it did not give up a single one of its other rights over these lands. And these rights were very important. The association had only transferred their fields to individuals with a view to their being used as arable and meadow land, and with that view alone. Beyond that the individual owner had no right. Treasures found in the earth, if they lay deeper than the ploughshare goes, did not, therefore, originally belong to him, but to the community. It was the same thing with digging for ores, and the like. All these rights were, later on, stolen by the princes and landlords for their own use.

But, further, the use of arable and meadow lands was under the supervision and direction of the community and that in the following form. Wherever three-field farming obtained—and that was almost everywhere—the whole cultivated area of the village was divided into three equal parts, each of which was alternately sown one year with winter seed, the second with summer seed, and the third lay fallow. Thus the village had each year its winter field, its summer field, its fallow field. In the partition of the land care was taken that each member's share was made up of equal portions from each of the three fields, so that everyone could, without difficulty, accommodate himself to the regulations of the community, in accordance with which he would have to sow autumn seed only in his winter field, and so on.

The field whose turn it was to lie fallow returned, for the time being, into the common possession, and served the community in general for pasture. And as soon as the two other fields were reaped, they likewise became again common property until seed time, and were used as common pasturage. The same thing occurred with the meadows after the aftermath. The owners had to remove the fences upon all fields given over to pasturage. This compulsory pasturage, of course, made it necessary that the time of sowing and of reaping should not be left to the individual, but be fixed for all by the community or by custom.

All other land, *i.e.*, all that was not house and farmyard, or so much of the mark as had been distributed among individuals, remained, as in early times, common property for common use; forests, pasture lands, heaths, moors, rivers, ponds, lakes, roads and bridges, hunting and fishing grounds. Just as the share of each member in so much of the mark as was distributed was of equal size, so was his share also in the use of the "common mark." The nature of this use was determined by the members of the community as a whole. So, too, was the mode of partition, if the soil that had been cultivated no longer sufficed, and a portion of the common mark was taken under cultivation. The chief use of the common mark was in pasturage for the cattle and feeding of pigs on acorns. Besides that, the forest yielded timber and firewood, litter for the animals, berries and mushrooms, whilst the moor, where it existed, yielded turf. The regulations as to pasture, the use of wood, etc., make up the most part of the many mark records written down at various epochs between the thirteenth and the eighteenth centuries, at the time when the old unwritten law of custom began to be contested. The common woodlands that are still met with here and there, are the remnants of these ancient unpartitioned marks. Another relic, at all events in West and South Germany, is the idea, deeply rooted in the popular consciousness, that the forest should be common property, wherein every one may gather flowers, berries, mushrooms, beechnuts and the like, and generally so long as he does no mischief, act and do as he will. But this also Bismarck remedies, and with his famous berry

legislation brings down the Western Provinces to the level of the old Prussian squirearchy.

Just as the members of the community originally had equal shares in the soil and equal rights of usage, so they had also an equal share in the legislation, administration and jurisdiction within the mark. At fixed times and, if necessary, more frequently, they met in the open air to discuss the affairs of the mark and to sit in judgment upon breaches of regulations and disputes concerning the mark. It was, only in miniature, the primitive assembly of the German people, which was, originally, nothing other than a great assembly of the mark. Laws were made, but only in rare cases of necessity. Officials were chosen, their conduct in office examined, but chiefly judicial functions were exercised. The president had only to formulate the questions. The judgment was given by the aggregate of the members present.

The unwritten law of the mark was, in primitive times, pretty much the only public law of those German tribes, which had no kings; the old tribal nobility, which disappeared during the conquest of the Roman empire, or soon after, easily fitted itself into this primitive constitution, as easily as all other spontaneous growths of the time, just as the Celtic clan nobility, even as late as the seventeenth century, found its place in the Irish holding of the soil in common. And this unwritten law has struck such deep roots into the whole life of the Germans, that we find traces of it at every step and turn in the historical development of our people. In primitive times, the whole public authority in time of peace was exclusively judicial, and rested in the popular assembly of the hundred, the shire, or of the whole tribe. But this popular tribunal was only the popular tribunal of the mark adapted to cases that did not purely concern the mark, but came within the scope of the public authority. Even when the Frankish kings began to transform the self-governing shires into provinces governed by royal delegates, and thus separated the royal shire courts from the common mark tribunals, in both the judicial function remained vested in the people. It was only when the old democratic freedom had been long undermined, when attendance at the public assemblies and tribunals had become a severe burden upon the impover-



ished freemen, that Charlemagne, in his shire courts, could introduce judgment by *Schöffen*, lay assessors, appointed by the king's judge, in the place of judgment by the whole popular assembly.\* But this did not seriously touch the tribunals of the mark. These, on the contrary, still remained the model even for the feudal tribunals in the Middle Ages. In these, too, the feudal lord only formulated the issues, whilst the vassals themselves found the verdict. The institutions governing a village during the Middle Ages are but those of an independent village mark, and passed into those of a town as soon as the village was transformed into a town, *i.e.*, was fortified with walls and trenches. All later constitutions of cities have grown out of these original town mark regulations. And, finally, from the assembly of the mark were copied the arrangements of the numberless free associations of mediæval times not based upon common holding of the land, and especially those of the free guilds. The rights conferred upon the guild for the exclusive carrying on of a particular trade were dealt with just as if they were rights in a common mark. With the same jealousy, often with precisely the same means in the guilds as in the mark, care was taken that the share of each member in the common benefits and advantages should be equal, or as nearly equal as possible.

All this shows the mark organisation to have possessed an almost wonderful capacity for adaptation to the most different departments of public life and to the most various ends. The same qualities it manifested during the progressive development of agriculture and in the struggle of the peasants with the advance of large landed property. It had arisen with the settlement of the Germans in Germania Magna, that is, at a time when the breeding of cattle was the chief means of livelihood, and when the rudimentary, half-forgotten agriculture which they had brought with them from Asia was only just put into practice again. It held its own all through the Middle Ages in fierce, incessant conflicts with the land-holding nobility. But it

\* Not to be confused with the *Schöffen* courts after the manner of Bismarck and Leonhardt, in which lawyers and lay assessors combined find verdict and judgment. In the old judicial courts there were no lawyers at all, the presiding judge had no vote at all, and the *Schöffen* or lay assessors gave the verdict independently.

was still such a necessity that wherever the nobles had appropriated the peasants' land, the villages inhabited by these peasants, now turned into serfs, or at best into *coloni* or dependent tenants, were still organised on the lines of the old mark, in spite of the constantly increasing encroachments of the lords of the manor. Farther on we will give an example of this. It adapted itself to the most different forms of holding the cultivated land, so long as only an uncultivated common was still left, and in like manner to the most different rights of property in the common mark, as soon as this ceased to be the free property of the community. It died out when almost the whole of the peasants' lands, both private and common, were stolen by the nobles and the clergy, with the willing help of the princes. But economically obsolete and incapable of continuing as the prevalent social organisation of agriculture it became only when the great advances in farming of the last hundred years made agriculture a science and led to altogether new systems of carrying it on.

The undermining of the mark organisation began soon after the conquest of the Roman empire. As representatives of the nation, the Frankish kings took possession of the immense territories belonging to the people as a whole, especially the forests, in order to squander them away as presents to their courtiers, to their generals, to bishops and abbots. Thus they laid the foundation of the great landed estates, later on, of the nobles and the Church. Long before the time of Charlemagne, the Church had a full third of all the land in France, and it is certain that, during the Middle Ages, this proportion held generally for the whole of Catholic Western Europe.

The constant wars, internal and external, whose regular consequences were confiscations of land, ruined a great number of peasants, so that even during the Merovingian dynasty, there were very many free men owning no land. The incessant wars of Charlemagne broke down the mainstay of the free peasantry. Originally every freeholder owed service, and not only had to equip himself, but also to maintain himself under arms for six months. No wonder that even in Charlemagne's time scarcely one man in five could be actually got to serve. Under the chaotic rule of his successors, the freedom of the peasants went still more rapidly to the dogs. On the one hand, the ravages of

the Northmen's invasions, the eternal wars between kings, and feuds between nobles, compelled one free peasant after another to seek the protection of some lord. Upon the other hand, the covetousness of these same lords and of the Church hastened this process; by fraud, by promises, threats, violence, they forced more and more peasants and peasants' land under their yoke. In both cases, the peasants' land was added to the lord's manor, and was, at best, only given back for the use of the peasant in return for tribute and service. Thus the peasant, from a free owner of the land, was turned into a tribute-paying, service-rendering appanage of it, into a serf. This was the case in the western Frankish kingdom, especially west of the Rhine. East of the Rhine, on the other hand, a large number of free peasants still held their own, for the most part scattered, occasionally united in villages entirely composed of freemen. Even here, however, in the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries, the overwhelming power of the nobles and the Church was constantly forcing more and more peasants into serfdom.

When a large landowner—clerical or lay—got hold of a peasant's holding, he acquired with it, at the same time, the rights in the mark that appertained to the holding. The new landlords were thus members of the mark and, within the mark, they were, originally, only regarded as on an equality with the other members of it, whether free or serfs, even if these happened to be their own bondsmen. But soon, in spite of the dogged resistance of the peasants, the lords acquired in many places special privileges in the mark, and were often able to make the whole of it subject to their own rule as lords of the manor. Nevertheless the old organization of the mark continued, though now it was presided over and encroached upon by the lord of the manor.

How absolutely necessary at that time the constitution of the mark was for agriculture, even on large estates, is shown in the most striking way by the colonisation of Brandenburg and Silesia by Frisian and Saxon settlers, and by settlers from the Netherlands and the Frankish banks of the Rhine. From the twelfth century, the people were settled in villages on the lands of the lords according to German law, *i.e.*, according to the old mark law, so far as it still held on the manors owned by lords.

Every man had house and homestead; a share in the village fields, determined after the old method by lot, and of the same size for all; and the right of using the woods and pastures, generally in the woods of the lord of the manor, less frequently in a special mark. These rights were hereditary. The fee simple of the land continued in the lord, to whom the colonists owed certain hereditary tributes and services. But these dues were so moderate, that the condition of the peasants was better here than anywhere else in Germany. Hence, they kept quiet when the peasants' war broke out. For this apostasy from their own cause they were sorely chastised.

About the middle of the thirteenth century there was everywhere a decisive change in favour of the peasants. The crusades had prepared the way for it. Many of the lords, when they set out to the East, explicitly set their peasant serfs free. Others were killed or never returned. Hundreds of noble families vanished, whose peasant serfs frequently gained their freedom. Moreover, as the needs of the landlords increased, the command over the payments in kind and services of the peasants became much more important than that over their persons. The serfdom of the earlier Middle Ages, which still had in it much of ancient slavery, gave to the lords rights which lost more and more their value; it gradually vanished, the position of the serfs narrowed itself down to that of simple hereditary tenants. As the method of cultivating the land remained exactly as of old, an increase in the revenues of the lord of the manor was only to be obtained by the breaking up of new ground, the establishing new villages. But this was only possible by a friendly agreement with the colonists, whether they belonged to the estate or were strangers. Hence, in the documents of this time, we meet with a clear determination and a moderate scale of the peasants' dues, and good treatment of the peasants, especially by the spiritual landlords. And lastly, the favourable position of the new colonists reacted again on the condition of their neighbours, the bondmen, so that in all the North of Germany these also, whilst they continued their services to the lords of the manor, received their personal freedom. The Slav and Lithuanian peasants alone were not freed. But this was not to last.

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the towns rose

rapidly, and became rapidly rich. Their artistic handicraft, their luxurious life, throve and flourished, especially in South Germany and on the Rhine. The profusion of the town patricians aroused the envy of the coarsely-fed, coarsely-clothed, roughly-furnished, country lords. But whence to obtain all these fine things? Lying in wait for travelling merchants became more and more dangerous and unprofitable. But to buy them, money was requisite. And that the peasants alone could furnish. Hence, renewed oppression of the peasants, higher tributes, and more *corvée*; hence renewed and always increasing eagerness to force the free peasants to become bondmen, the bondmen to become serfs, and to turn the common mark land into land belonging to the lord. In this the princes and nobles were helped by the Roman jurists who, with their application of Roman jurisprudence to German conditions, for the most part not understood by them, knew how to produce endless confusion, but yet that sort of confusion by which the lord always won and the peasant always lost. The spiritual lords helped themselves in a more simple way. They forged documents by which the rights of the peasants were curtailed and their duties increased. Against these robberies by the landlords, the peasants, from the end of the fifteenth century frequently rose in isolated insurrections, until, in 1525, the great Peasants' War overflowed Suabia, Bavaria, Franconia, extending into Alsace, the Palatinate, the Rheingau, and Thuringen. The peasants succumbed after hard fighting. From that time dates the renewed predominance of serfdom amongst the German peasants generally. In those places where the fight had raged, all remaining rights of the peasants were now shamelessly trodden under foot, their common land turned into the property of the lord, they themselves into serfs. The North German peasants, being placed in more favourable conditions, had remained quiet; their only reward was that they fell under the same subjection, only more slowly. Serfdom is introduced among the German peasantry from the middle of the sixteenth century in Eastern Prussia, Pomerania, Brandenburg, Silesia, and from the end of that century in Schleswig-Holstein, and henceforth becomes more and more their general condition.

This new act of violence had, however, an economic cause.

From the wars consequent upon the Protestant Reformation, only the German princes had gained greater power. It was now all up with the nobles' favourite trade of highway robbery. If the nobles were not to go to ruin, greater revenues had to be got out of their landed property. But the only way to effect this was to work at least a part of their own estates on their own account, upon the model of the large estates of the princes, and especially of the monasteries. That which had hitherto been the exception now became a necessity. But this new agricultural plan was stopped by the fact that almost everywhere the soil had been given to tribute-paying peasants. As soon as the tributary peasants, whether free men or *coloni*, had been turned into serfs, the noble lords had a free hand. Part of the peasants were, as it is now called in Ireland, evicted, *i.e.*, either hunted away or degraded to the level of cottars, with mere huts and a bit of garden land, whilst the ground belonging to their homestead was made part and parcel of the demesne of the lord, and was cultivated by the new cottars and such peasants as were still left in *corvée* labour. Not only were many peasants thus actually driven away, but the *corvée* service of those still left was enhanced considerably, and at an ever increasing rate. The capitalistic period announced itself in the country districts as the period of agricultural industry on a large scale, based upon the *corvée* labour of serfs.

This transformation took place at first rather slowly. But then came the Thirty Years' War. For a whole generation Germany was overrun in all directions by the most licentious soldiery known to history. Everywhere was burning, plundering, rape and murder. The peasant suffered most where, apart from the great armies, the smaller independent bands, or rather the freebooters, operated uncontrolled, and upon their own account. The devastation and depopulation were beyond all bounds. When peace came, Germany lay on the ground helpless, downtrodden, cut to pieces, bleeding; but, once again, the most pitiable, miserable of all was the peasant.

The land-owing noble was now the only lord in the country districts. The princes, who just at that time were reducing to nothing his political rights in the assemblies of Estates by way of compensation, left him a free hand against the peasants. The

last power of resistance on the part of the peasant had been broken by the war. Thus the noble was able to arrange all agrarian conditions in the manner most conducive to the restoration of his ruined finances. Not only were the deserted homesteads of the peasants, without further ado, united with the lord's demesne; the eviction of the peasants was carried on wholesale and systematically. The greater the lord of the manor's demesne, the greater, of course, the *corvée* required from the peasants. The system of "unlimited *corvée*" was introduced anew; the noble lord was able to command the peasant, his family, his cattle, to labour for him, as often and as long as he pleased. Serfdom was now general; a free peasant was now as rare as a white crow. And in order that the noble lord might be in a position to nip in the bud the very smallest resistance on the part of the peasants, he received from the princes of the land the right of patrimonial jurisdiction, *i.e.*, he was nominated sole judge in all cases of offence and dispute among the peasants, even if the peasant's dispute was with him, the lord himself, so that the lord was judge in his own case! From that time, the stick and the whip ruled the agricultural districts. The German peasant, like the whole of Germany, had reached his lowest point of degradation. The peasant, like the whole of Germany, had become so powerless that all self-help failed him, and deliverance could only come from without.

And it came. With the French Revolution came for Germany also and for the German peasant the dawn of a better day. No sooner had the armies of the revolution conquered the left bank of the Rhine, than all the old rubbish vanished, as at the stroke of an enchanter's wand—*corvée* service, rent dues of every kind to the lord, together with the noble lord himself. The peasant of the left bank of the Rhine was now lord of his own holding; moreover, in the Code Civil, drawn up at the time of the revolution and only baffled and botched by Napoleon, he received a code of laws adapted to his new conditions, that he could not only understand, but also carry comfortably in his pocket.

But the peasant on the right bank of the Rhine had still to wait a long time. It is true that in Prussia, after the well-deserved defeat at Jena, some of the most shameful privileges

of the nobles were abolished, and the so-called redemption of such peasant's burdens as were still left was made legally possible. But to a great extent and for a long time this was only on paper. In the other German states, still less was done. A second French Revolution, that of 1830, was needed to bring about the "redemption" in Baden and certain other small states bordering upon France. And at the moment when the third French Revolution, in 1848, at last carried Germany along with it, the redemption was far from being completed in Prussia, and in Bavaria had not even begun. After that, it went along more rapidly and unimpeded; the *corvée* labour of the peasants, who had this time become rebellious on their own account, had lost all value.

And in what did this redemption consist? In this, that the noble lord, on receipt of a certain sum of money or of a piece of land from the peasant, should henceforth recognise the peasant's land, as much or as little as was left to him, as the peasant's property, free of all burdens; though all the land that had at any time belonged to the noble lord was nothing but land stolen from the peasants. Nor was this all. In these arrangements, the government officials charged with carrying them out almost always took the side, naturally, of the lords, with whom they lived and caroused, so that the peasants, even against the letter of the law, were again defrauded right and left.

And thus, thanks to three French revolutions, and to the German one, that has grown out of them, we have once again a free peasantry. But how very inferior is the position of our free peasant of today compared with the free member of the mark of the olden time! His homestead is generally much smaller, and the unpartitioned mark is reduced to a few very small and poor bits of communal forest. But, without the use of the mark, there can be no cattle for the small peasant; without cattle, no manure; without manure, no agriculture. The tax-collector and the officer of the law threatening in the rear of him, whom the peasant of today knows only too well, were people unknown to the old members of the mark. And so was the mortgagee, into whose clutches nowadays one peasant's holding after another falls. And the best of it is that these modern free peasants, whose property is so restricted, and whose wings



are so clipped, were created in Germany, where everything happens too late, at a time when scientific agriculture and the newly-invented agricultural machinery make cultivation on a small scale a method of production more and more antiquated, less and less capable of yielding a livelihood. As spinning and weaving by machinery replaced the spinning-wheel and the hand-loom, so these new methods of agricultural production must inevitably replace the cultivation of land in small plots by landed property on a large scale, provided that the time necessary for this be granted.

For already the whole of European agriculture, as carried on at the present time, is threatened by an overpowering rival, *viz.*, the production of corn on a gigantic scale by America. Against this soil, fertile, manured by nature for a long range of years, and to be had for a bagatelle, neither our small peasants, up to their eyes in debt, nor our large landowners, equally deep in debt, can fight. The whole of the European agricultural system is being beaten by American competition. Agriculture, as far as Europe is concerned, will only be possible if carried on upon socialised lines, and for the advantage of society as a whole.

This is the outlook for our peasants. And the restoration of a free peasant class, starved and stunted as it is, has this value—that it has put the peasant in a position, with the aid of his natural comrade, the worker, to help himself, as soon as he once understands *how*.

## EDITOR'S NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> The *Sozialdemokrat*, central organ of the German Social-Democratic Party, was published in Zurich from 1879 to 1888, because of the Anti-Socialist Laws prevailing in Germany.
- <sup>2</sup> German bourgeois historians.
- <sup>3</sup> The German philosopher, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) enunciated the hypothesis of the origin of the solar system from a rotating nebular mass. This was developed further by the French mathematician and astronomer, Pierre Simon Laplace (1749-1827).
- <sup>4</sup> "In Germany" is a slip of the pen. It should read "among Germans." For, indispensable as German dialectics were for the genesis of scientific socialism, so equally indispensable for it were the developed economic and social conditions of England and France. The economic and political stage of development of Germany, which at the beginning of the 'forties was still more backward than today, could produce at the most caricatures of socialism (see *The Communist Manifesto*, Sec. III). Only by the subjection of the conditions produced in England and France to German dialectical criticism could a real result be achieved. From this angle, therefore, scientific socialism is not an *exclusively* German, but just as much an international product.—Note by Engels.
- <sup>5</sup> Nominalism is a school of mediæval philosophy whose adherents maintained that concepts are only *names* of things themselves, that ideas and concepts had no independent existence.
- <sup>6</sup> Representatives of the French bourgeoisie in philosophy and science during the preparatory period of the Great French Revolution of 1789-94. The most important of the philosophers of the Enlightenment included Voltaire, Rousseau, the Encyclopædists headed by Diderot.
- <sup>7</sup> Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-78), representative of the revolutionary wing of the bourgeoisie during the preparatory period of the Great French Revolution. He taught that society and the state originally sprang from a free "social contract" between free, mutually independent persons, but that the social system established by such a "social contract" was subsequently distorted by the appearance of social inequality.
- <sup>8</sup> The communism of Francois Babeuf was based on the idea of equality. Babeuf and his supporters wished to establish the communist system by means of conspiracies and insurrections.
- <sup>9</sup> Engels refers here to "the description of the ideal state of society without private property" occurring in the works of the utopian socialists —Thomas More and Tommaso Campanella (16th and 17th centuries).
- <sup>10</sup> The Directorate—the French government set up in 1794 after the downfall of the Jacobin dictatorship. It remained in power until 1799 when it was overthrown by Napoleon. The French wars of conquest were waged under the rule of Napoleon, who was proclaimed first "consul" and later emperor.
- <sup>11</sup> Thomas Carlyle was a representative of feudal socialism in England.
- <sup>12</sup> The wars of conquest waged by Napoleon ended in defeat. An alliance of almost all the European powers, with England and Russia at its head, was formed against France. In 1814 the allied forces entered

Paris and Napoleon was forced to abdicate. In 1815 he made an attempt to restore his power and wage a new war against the allies (the "Hundred Days' War") but was beaten at Waterloo and deposed.

- <sup>13</sup> In October, 1833, Robert Owen presided over a conference of trade unions which resolved on uniting on a national scale. The Great National Consolidated Trades Union, founded in 1834, was the first attempt to create a united national organisation of English trade unions. The organisation was dissolved at the end of 1834.
- <sup>14</sup> Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809-65), French petty-bourgeois utopian, the father of anarchism, saw salvation from all the evils of developing capitalism in the return to a system of small peasants—-independent producers, a system erected on the basis of small private property without the exploitation of wage labor.
- <sup>15</sup> The Alexandrian period of the development of science comprises the period from the third century before our era to the third century of our era. It gets its name from Alexandria, a port on the Mediterranean, in Egypt, which was one of the most important centers of economic connections at that time.
- <sup>16</sup> The rising of the Lyons weavers in France, 1831, was the answer to the firing upon a workers' demonstration during a strike for the establishment of a minimum wage. The workers erected barricades, occupied the town for a few days, and their resistance was overcome only when the regular troops came to the aid of the Lyons bourgeoisie.
- <sup>17</sup> The Chartist movement in England in the thirties and forties of the last century embraced the majority of the English working class and constituted the first independent *political* movement of the proletariat. It received its name from the "Charter," a petition which the workers laid before parliament in 1839, containing the following chief demands: (1) universal suffrage for all males of 21 and above; (2) annual parliaments; (3) salaried members of parliament; (4) secret ballot; (5) equal constituencies; (6) abolition of the property qualification for parliamentary candidates.
- <sup>18</sup> Engels refers here to *Capital*, Vol. I, which in Part IV (Chap. XI, XII, XIII) traces the history of the development of production from small handicrafts to large-scale industry.
- <sup>19</sup> The trade wars of the 17th and 18th centuries were waged between Portugal, Spain, Holland, France, and England for control of trade with India and America, and the exploitation of these two countries as colonies. England emerged from these wars as victor; by the end of the 18th century she dominated the entire trade of the world.
- <sup>20</sup> In *Capital*, Marx only indicated the *tendency* towards monopoly, and the intensification of all contradictions, including competition. After Marx's death, Engels had occasion to observe the development of this tendency. Since that time, monopoly has developed to a very high degree and has become the characteristic feature of present-day capitalism—imperialism. See V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, International Publishers, New York.
- <sup>21</sup> See Karl Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, International Publishers, New York.
- <sup>22</sup> The anarchists Proudhon, Bakunin, etc., did not comprehend the nature of the state and denied the significance of the revolutionary role of the governmental power in the hands of the victorious proletariat.

# Dialectical and Historical Materialism

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BY  
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## EDITOR'S NOTE

IN CHAPTER FOUR of the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, the reader will find an analysis of the period of reaction in Russia following the Revolution of 1905—the years 1908-12. Defeatist moods engendered as a result of the heavy-handed reaction led to revisionist tendencies and attempts at “improvements” of the theoretical bases of Marxism. In dealing with this period, the *History* tells of the role Lenin’s philosophic work, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, played in arming Marxists in their fight for dialectical and historical materialism—the philosophic foundations of Marxism. The authors of the *History* included at this point a brief exposition of dialectical and historical materialism. Joseph Stalin, who closely collaborated with those who prepared the *History*, wrote this section. It is reproduced in full in the following pages.

## DIALECTICAL AND HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

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

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

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

"My dialectic method," says Marx, "is fundamentally not only different from the Hegelian, but is its direct opposite. To Hegel, the process of thinking, which, under the name of 'the Idea,' he

even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurge (creator) of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of 'the Idea.' With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought." (*Capital*, Vol. I.)<sup>1</sup> \*

When describing their materialism, Marx and Engels usually refer to Feuerbach as the philosopher who restored materialism to its rights. This, however, does not mean that the materialism of Marx and Engels is identical with Feuerbach's materialism. As a matter of fact, Marx and Engels took from Feuerbach's materialism its "inner kernel," developed it into a scientific-philosophical theory of materialism and cast aside its idealistic and religious-ethical encumbrances. We know that Feuerbach, although he was fundamentally a materialist, objected to the name materialism. Engels more than once declared that "in spite of the materialist foundation, Feuerbach remained bound by the traditional idealist fetters," and that "the real idealism of Feuerbach becomes evident as soon as we come to his philosophy of religion and ethics." (*Ludwig Feuerbach*.)<sup>2</sup>

Dialectics comes from the Greek *dialego*, to discourse, to debate. In ancient times dialectics was the art of arriving at the truth by disclosing the contradictions in the argument of an opponent and overcoming these contradictions. There were philosophers in ancient times who believed that the disclosure of contradictions in thought and the clash of opposite opinions was the best method of arriving at the truth. This dialectical method of thought, later extended to the phenom-

\* All bibliographical references will be found in full at the end of this book.—Ed.



ena of nature, developed into the dialectical method of apprehending nature, which regards the phenomena of nature as being in constant movement and undergoing constant change, and the development of nature as the result of the development of the contradictions in nature, as the result of the interaction of opposed forces in nature.

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

1. The principal features of the Marxist *dialectical method* are as follows:

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

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

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

The dialectical method therefore requires that phenomena

should be considered not only from the standpoint of their interconnection and interdependence, but also from the standpoint of their movement, their change, their development, their coming into being and going out of being.

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

"All nature," says Engels, "from the smallest thing to the biggest, from a grain of sand to the sun, from the protista [the primary living cell—*Ed.*] to man, is in a constant state of coming into being and going out of being, in a constant flux, in a ceaseless state of movement and change." (*Dialectics of Nature.*)<sup>3</sup>

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

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

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

"Nature," says Engels, "is the test of dialectics, and it must be said for modern natural science that it has furnished extremely rich and daily increasing materials for this test, and has thus proved that in the last analysis nature's process is dialectical and not metaphysical, that it does not move in an eternally uniform and constantly repeated circle, but passes through a real history. Here prime mention should be made of Darwin, who dealt a severe blow to the metaphysical conception of nature by proving that the organic world of today, plants and animals, and consequently man too, is all a product of a process of development that has been in progress for millions of years." (*Socialism, Utopian and Scientific.*)<sup>4</sup>

Describing dialectical development as a transition from quantitative changes to qualitative changes, Engels says:

"In physics . . . every change is a passing of quantity into quality, as a result of quantitative change of some form of movement either inherent in a body or imparted to it. For example, the temperature of water has at first no effect on its liquid state; but as the temperature of liquid water rises or falls, a moment arrives when this state of cohesion changes and the water is converted in one case into steam and in the other into ice. . . . A definite minimum current is required to make a platinum wire glow; every metal has its melting temperature; every liquid has a definite

freezing point and boiling point at a given pressure, as far as we are able with the means at our disposal to attain the required temperatures; finally, every gas has its critical point at which, by proper pressure and cooling, it can be converted into a liquid state....What are known as the constants of physics (the point at which one state passes into another—*Ed.*) are in most cases nothing but designations for the nodal points at which a quantitative (change) increase or decrease of movement causes a qualitative change in the state of the given body, and at which, consequently, quantity is transformed into quality." (*Dialectics of Nature.*)<sup>5</sup>

Passing to chemistry, Engels continues:

"Chemistry may be called the science of the qualitative changes which take place in bodies as the effect of changes of quantitative composition. This was already known to Hegel....Take oxygen: if the molecule contains three atoms instead of the customary two, we get ozone, a body definitely distinct in odour and reaction from ordinary oxygen. And what shall we say of the different proportions in which oxygen combines with nitrogen or sulphur, and each of which produces a body qualitatively different from all other bodies!" (*Ibid.*)<sup>6</sup>

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

"This is precisely the Hegelian nodal line of measure relations, in which, at certain definite nodal points, the purely quantitative

increase or decrease gives rise to a *qualitative leap*; for example, in the case of water which is heated or cooled, where boiling-point and freezing-point are the nodes at which—under normal pressure—the leap to a new aggregate state takes place, and where consequently quantity is transformed into quality.” (*Anti-Dühring*.)<sup>7</sup>

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

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

“In its proper meaning,” Lenin says, “dialectics is the study of the contradiction *within the very essence of things*.” (*Philosophical Notebooks*.)<sup>8</sup>

And further:

“Development is the ‘struggle’ of opposites.” (*Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*.)<sup>9</sup>

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

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

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

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

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

Everything depends on the conditions, time and place.

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

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

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

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

In the eighties of the past century, in the period of the struggle between the Marxists and the Narodniks,\* the proletariat in Russia constituted an insignificant minority of the population, whereas the individual peasants constituted the vast majority of the population. But the proletariat was developing as a class, whereas the peasantry as a class was disintegrating. And just because the proletariat was developing as a class the

\* For a detailed discussion of Narodniks (Populists), read *The History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, International Publishers, 1939, pp. 8-22.

Marxists based their orientation on the proletariat. And they were not mistaken, for, as we know, the proletariat subsequently grew from an insignificant force into a first-rate historical and political force.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

2. The principal features of Marxist philosophical *materialism* are as follows:

(a) Contrary to idealism, which regards the world as the embodiment of an "absolute idea," a "universal spirit," "consciousness," Marx's philosophical materialism holds that the world is by its very nature *material*, that the multifold phenomena of the world constitute different forms of matter in motion, that interconnection and interdependence of phenomena, as established by the dialectical method, are a law of the development of moving matter, and that the world develops in accordance with the laws of movement of matter and stands in no need of a "universal spirit."

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

Speaking of the materialist views of the ancient philosopher Heraclitus, who held that "the world, the all in one, was not created by any god or any man, but was, is and ever will be a living flame, systematically flaring up and systematically dying down," Lenin comments: "A very good exposition of the rudiments of dialectical materialism." (*Philosophical Notebooks*.)<sup>10</sup>

(b) Contrary to idealism, which asserts that only our mind really exists, and that the material world, being, nature, exists only in our mind, in our sensations, ideas and perceptions, the Marxist materialist philosophy holds that matter, nature, be-

ing, is an objective reality existing outside and independent of our mind; that matter is primary, since it is the source of sensations, ideas, mind, and that mind is secondary, derivative, since it is a reflection of matter, a reflection of being; that thought is a product of matter which in its development has reached a high degree of perfection, namely, of the brain, and the brain is the organ of thought; and that therefore one cannot separate thought from matter without committing a grave error. Engels says:

"The question of the relation of thinking to being, the relation of spirit to nature is the paramount question of the whole of philosophy. . . . The answers which the philosophers gave to this question split them into two great camps. Those who asserted the primacy of spirit to nature. . . comprised the camp of *idealism*. The others, who regarded nature as primary, belong to the various schools of *materialism*." (*Ludwig Feuerbach*.)<sup>11</sup>

And further:

"The material, sensuously perceptible world to which we ourselves belong is the only reality. . . . Our consciousness and thinking, however supra-sensuous they may seem, are the product of a material, bodily organ, the brain. Matter is not a product of mind, but mind itself is merely the highest product of matter." (*Ibid.*)<sup>12</sup>

Concerning the question of matter and thought, Engels says:

"It is impossible to separate thought from matter that thinks. Matter is the subject of all changes." (*Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*.)<sup>13</sup>

Describing the Marxist philosophy of materialism, Lenin says:

"Materialism in general recognizes objectively real being (matter) as independent of consciousness, sensation, experience.... Consciousness is only the reflection of being, at best, an approximately true (adequate, ideally exact) reflection of it." (*Materialism and Empirio-Criticism.*)<sup>14</sup>

And further:

"Matter is that which, acting upon our sense-organs, produces sensation; matter is the objective reality given to us in sensation.... Matter, nature, being, the physical—is primary, and spirit, consciousness, sensation, the psychical—is secondary." (*Ibid.*)<sup>15</sup>

"The world picture is a picture of how matter moves and of how 'matter thinks.'" (*Ibid.*)<sup>16</sup>

"The brain is the organ of thought." (*Ibid.*)<sup>17</sup>

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

Criticizing the thesis of Kant and other idealists that the world is unknowable and that there are "things-in-themselves"

which are unknowable, and defending the well-known materialist thesis that our knowledge is authentic knowledge, Engels writes:

"The most telling refutation of this as of all other philosophical fancies is practice, *viz.*, experiment and industry. If we are able to prove the correctness of our conception of a natural process by making it ourselves, bringing it into being out of its conditions and using it for our own purposes into the bargain, then there is an end of the Kantian 'thing-in-itself.' The chemical substances produced in the bodies of plants and animals remained such 'things-in-themselves' until organic chemistry began to produce them one after another, whereupon the 'thing-in-itself' became a thing for us, as for instance, alizarin, the colouring matter of the madder, which we no longer trouble to grow in the madder roots in the field, but produce much more cheaply and simply from coal tar. For three hundred years the Copernican solar system was a hypothesis, with a hundred, a thousand or ten thousand chances to one in its favour, but still always a hypothesis. But when Leverrier, by means of the data provided by this system, not only deduced the necessity of the existence of an unknown planet, but also calculated the position in the heavens which this planet must necessarily occupy, and when Galle really found this planet, the Copernican system was proved." (*Ludwig Feuerbach.*)<sup>18</sup>

Accusing Bogdanov, Bazarov, Yushkevich and the other followers of Mach of fideism, and defending the well-known materialist thesis that our scientific knowledge of the laws of nature is authentic knowledge, and that the laws of science represent objective truth, Lenin says:

"Contemporary fideism does not at all reject science; all it rejects is the 'exaggerated claims' of science, to wit, its claim to

objective truth. If objective truth exists (as the materialists think), if natural science, reflecting the outer world in human 'experience,' is alone capable of giving us objective truth, then all fideism is absolutely refuted." (*Materialism and Empirio-Criticism.*)<sup>19</sup>

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

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

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

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

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

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

society are authentic data having the validity of objective truths.

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

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

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

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

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

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

which these ideas, theories, views, etc., are the reflection.

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

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

In this connection, Marx says:

"It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness." (*A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*.)<sup>20</sup>

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

The fall of the utopians, including the Narodniks, Anarchists and Socialist-Revolutionaries, was due, among other things, to the fact that they did not recognize the primary role which the conditions of the material life of society play in the development of society, and, sinking to idealism, did not base

their practical activities on the needs of the development of the material life of society, but, independently of and in spite of these needs, on "ideal plans" and "all-embracing projects" divorced from the real life of society.

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

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

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

New social ideas and theories arise only after the develop-



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

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

In this connection, Marx says:

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

Hence, in order to be able to influence the conditions of material life of society and to accelerate their development and

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

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

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

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

It now remains to elucidate the following question: what, from the viewpoint of historical materialism, is meant by the "conditions of material life of society" which in the final

\* For a detailed discussion of "Economists," a counterpart of "pure and simple" trade unionists in the United States, read *The History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, International Publishers, 1939, pp. 22-39.

analysis determine the physiognomy of society, its ideas, views, political institutions, etc.?

What, after all, are these "conditions of material life of society," what are their distinguishing features?

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

Historical materialism answers this question in the negative.

Geographical environment is unquestionably one of the constant and indispensable conditions of development of society and, of course, influences the development of society, accelerates or retards its development. But its influence is not the *determining* influence, inasmuch as the changes and development of society proceed at an incomparably faster rate than the changes and development of geographical environment. In the space of three thousand years three different social systems have been successively superseded in Europe: the primitive communal system, the slave system and the feudal system. In the eastern part of Europe, in the U.S.S.R., even four social systems have been superseded. Yet during this period geographical conditions in Europe have either not changed at all, or have changed so slightly that geography takes no note of them. And that is quite natural. Changes in geographical environment of any importance require millions

of years, whereas a few hundred or a couple of thousand years are enough for even very important changes in the system of human society.

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

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

Historical materialism answers this question too in the negative.

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

If growth of population were the determining force of

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

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

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

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

In order to live, people must have food, clothing, footwear, shelter, fuel, etc.; in order to have these material values, people must produce them; and in order to produce them, people

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

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

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

"In production," Marx says, "men not only act on nature but also on one another. They produce only by co-operating in a certain way and mutually exchanging their activities. In order to produce, they enter into definite connections and relations with one another and only within these social connections and relations does their action on nature, does production, take place." (*Wage-Labour and Capital*.)<sup>21</sup>

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

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

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

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

This means that the history of development of society is

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

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

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

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

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

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

Hence, if it is not to err in policy, the party of the proletariat must both in drafting its program and in its practical activities



proceed primarily from the laws of development of production, from the laws of economic development of society.

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

production as a whole, a crisis of production, a destruction of productive forces.

An instance in which the relations of production do not correspond to the character of the productive forces, conflict with them, is the economic crises in capitalist countries, where private capitalist ownership of the means of production is in glaring incongruity with the social character of the process of production, with the character of the productive forces. This results in economic crises, which lead to the destruction of productive forces. Furthermore, this incongruity itself constitutes the economic basis of social revolution, the purpose of which is to destroy the existing relations of production and to create new relations of production corresponding to the character of the productive forces.

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

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

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

While the state of the productive forces furnishes an answer to the question—with what instruments of production do men produce the material values they need?—the state of the relations of production furnishes the answer to another question—who owns the *means of production* (the land, forests,

waters, mineral resources, raw materials, instruments of production, production premises, means of transportation and communication, etc.), who commands the means of production, whether the whole of society, or individual persons, groups, or classes which utilize them for the exploitation of other persons, groups or classes?

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

development of their production experience, their labour skill, their ability to handle the instruments of production.

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

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

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

The basis of the relations of production under the slave system is that the slave owner owns the means of production; he also owns the worker in production—the slave, whom he can sell, purchase, or kill as though he were an animal. Such relations of production in the main correspond to the state of the productive forces of that period. Instead of stone tools,

men now have metal tools at their command; instead of the wretched and primitive husbandry of the hunter, who knew neither pasturage, nor tillage, there now appear pasturage, tillage, handicrafts, and a division of labour between these branches of production. There appears the possibility of the exchange of products between individuals and between societies, of the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few, the actual accumulation of the means of production in the hands of a minority, and the possibility of subjugation of the majority by a minority and their conversion into slaves. Here we no longer find the common and free labour of all members of society in the production process—here there prevails the forced labour of slaves, who are exploited by the non-labouring slave owners. Here, therefore, there is no common ownership of the means of production or of the fruits of production. It is replaced by private ownership. Here the slave owner appears as the prime and principal property owner in the full sense of the term.

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

The basis of the relations of production under the feudal system is that the feudal lord owns the means of production and does not fully own the worker in production—the serf, whom the feudal lord can no longer kill, but whom he can buy and sell. Alongside of feudal ownership there exists individual ownership by the peasant and the handicraftsman of his implements of production and his private enterprise based on his personal labour. Such relations of production in the main correspond to the state of the productive forces of that period. Further improvements in the smelting and working of

iron; the spread of the iron plough and the loom; the further development of agriculture, horticulture, viniculture and dairying; the appearance of manufactories alongside of the handicraft workshops—such are the characteristic features of the state of the productive forces.

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

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

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

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

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

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

These irreconcilable contradictions between the character of the productive forces and the relations of production make themselves felt in periodical crises of overproduction, when

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

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

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

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

The basis of the relations of production under the socialist system, which so far has been established only in the U.S.S.R., is the social ownership of the means of production. Here there are no longer exploiters and exploited. The goods produced are distributed according to labour performed, on the principle: "He who does not work, neither shall he eat." Here the mutual relations of people in the process of production are marked by comradely co-operation and the socialist mutual assistance of workers who are free from exploitation. Here the relations of production fully correspond to the state of productive forces, for the social character of the process of production is reinforced by the social ownership of the means of production.



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

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

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

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

"The use and fabrication of instruments of labour," \* says Marx, "although existing in the germ among certain species of animals, is specifically characteristic of the human labour-process, and Franklin therefore defines man as a tool-making animal. Relics of bygone instruments of labour possess the same importance for the investigation of extinct economic forms of society, as do fossil bones for the determination of extinct species of animals. It is not the articles made, but how they are made, and by what instruments that enables us to distinguish different economic epochs. . . . Instruments of labour not only supply a standard of the degree of development to which human labour has attained but they are also indicators of the social conditions under which that labour is carried on." (*Capital*, Vol. I.)<sup>22</sup>

\* By instruments of labour Marx has in mind primarily instruments of production.—Ed.

And further:

(a) "Social relations are closely bound up with productive forces. In acquiring new productive forces men change their mode of production; and in changing their mode of production, in changing the way of earning their living, they change all their social conditions. The hand-mill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill, society with the industrial capitalist." (Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*.)<sup>23</sup>

(b) "There is a continual movement of growth in productive forces, of destruction in social relations, of formation in ideas; the only immutable thing is the abstraction of movement." (*Ibid.*)<sup>24</sup>

Speaking of historical materialism as formulated in *The Communist Manifesto*, Engels says:

"Economic production and the structure of society of every historical epoch necessarily arising therefrom constitute the foundation for the political and intellectual history of that epoch; ... consequently ever since the dissolution of the primeval communal ownership of land all history has been a history of class struggles, of struggles between exploited and exploiting, between dominated and dominating classes at various stages of social evolution; ... this struggle, however, has now reached a stage where the exploited and oppressed class (the proletariat) can no longer emancipate itself from the class which exploits and oppresses it (the bourgeoisie), without at the same time forever freeing the whole of society from exploitation, oppression and class struggles." (Preface to the German edition of *The Communist Manifesto*.)<sup>25</sup>

A third feature of production is that the rise of new productive forces and of the relations of production corresponding to them does not take place separately from the old

system, after the disappearance of the old system, but within the old system; it takes place not as a result of the deliberate and conscious activity of man, but spontaneously, unconsciously, independently of the will of man. It takes place spontaneously and independently of the will of man for two reasons.

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

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

When, gradually and gropingly, certain members of primitive communal society passed from the use of stone tools to the use of iron tools, they, of course, did not know and did not stop to reflect what *social* results this innovation would lead to; they did not understand or realize that the change to metal tools meant a revolution in production, that it would in the long run lead to the slave system. They simply wanted to lighten their labour and secure an immediate and tangible advantage; their conscious activity was confined within the narrow bounds of this everyday personal interest.

When, in the period of the feudal system, the young bour-

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

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

"In the social production which men carry on [that is, in the production of the material values necessary to the life of men—*Ed.*] they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and *independent* \* of their will; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material forces of production." (*Selected Works*, Vol. 1.)<sup>20</sup>

This, however, does not mean that changes in the relations of production, and the transition from old relations of production to new relations of production proceed smoothly, without conflicts, without upheavals. On the contrary, such a transition usually takes place by means of the revolutionary overthrow of the old relations of production and the establishment of new relations of production. Up to a certain period the development of the productive forces and the changes in the realm of the relations of production proceed spontaneously, independently of the will of men. But that is so only up to a certain moment, until the new and developing productive forces have reached a proper state of maturity. After the new productive forces have matured, the existing relations of production and their upholders—the ruling classes—become that "insuperable" obstacle which can only be removed by the conscious action of the new classes, by the forcible acts of these classes, by revolution. Here there stands out in bold relief the *tremendous role* of new social ideas, of new political institutions, of a new political power, whose mission it is to abolish by force the old relations of production. Out of the conflict between the new productive forces and the old relations of production, out of the new economic demands of society there arise new social ideas; the new ideas organize

\* Our italics.—*Ed.*

and mobilize the masses; the masses become welded into a new political army, create a new revolutionary power, and make use of it to abolish by force the old system of relations of production, and firmly to establish the new system. The spontaneous process of development yields place to the conscious actions of men, peaceful development to violent upheaval, evolution to revolution.

"The proletariat," says Marx, "during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled, by the force of circumstances, to organize itself as a class...by means of a revolution, it makes itself the ruling class, and, as such, sweeps away by force the old conditions of production." (*The Communist Manifesto*.)<sup>27</sup>

And further:

(a) "The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the state, *i.e.*, of the proletariat organized as the ruling class; and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible." (*Ibid.*)<sup>28</sup>

(b) "Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one." (Karl Marx, *Capital*.)<sup>29</sup>

Here is the brilliant formulation of the essence of historical materialism given by Marx in 1859 in his historic Preface to his famous book, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*:

"In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material forces of production. The sum total

of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society—the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life determines the social, political and intellectual life 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 forces of production in society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or—what is but a legal expression for the same thing—with the property relations within which they have been at work before. From forms of development of the forces of production these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations a distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, æsthetic or philosophic—in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself, so can we not judge of such a period of transformation by its own consciousness; on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained rather from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social forces of production and the relations of production. No social order ever disappears before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have been developed; and new higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society itself. Therefore, mankind always sets itself only such tasks as it can solve; since, looking at the matter more closely, we will always find that the task itself arises only when the

material conditions necessary for its solution already exist or are at least in the process of formation." (*Selected Works*, Vol. I.)<sup>80</sup>

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

Such are the principal features of dialectical and historical materialism.



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# VALUE, PRICE AND PROFIT

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# NOTE

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## INTRODUCTION

THE present work is an address delivered by Karl Marx at two sessions of the General Council of the First International on June 20 and 27, 1865. The circumstances which led to this report are briefly as follows:

At the session of the General Council on April 4, 1865, John Weston, an influential member of the General Council and English workers' representative, proposed that the General Council should discuss the following questions:

(1) Can the social and material prospects of the working class be in general improved by wage increases?

(2) Do not the efforts of the trade unions to secure increases have a harmful effect on other branches of industry?

Weston declared that he would uphold a negative answer to the first question and a positive answer to the second one.

Weston's report was delivered and discussed at the session of the Council on May 2 and 20. In a letter to Engels of May 20, 1865, Marx refers to this as follows:

This evening a special session of the International. A good old fellow, an old Owenist, *Weston* (carpenter) has put forward the two following propositions, which he is continually defending in the *Beehive*: (1) That a general rise in the rate of wages would be of no use to the workers; (2) that therefore, etc., the trade unions have a *harmful* effect.

If these two propositions, in which *he* alone in our society believes, were accepted, we should be turned into a joke both on account of the trade unions here and of the *infection of strikes*<sup>1</sup> which now prevails on the Continent. . . . I am, of course, expected to supply the refutation. I ought really therefore to have worked out my reply for this evening, but thought it more important to write on at my book<sup>2</sup> and so shall have to depend upon improvisation.

Of course I know beforehand what the two main points are:

- (1) That the *wages of labour* determine the value of commodities,  
(2) that if the capitalists pay five instead of four shillings today,

<sup>1</sup> This phrase was written in English.—*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> *Capital*.—*Ed.*

they will sell their commodities for five instead of four shillings tomorrow (being enabled to do so by the increased demand).

Inane though this is, only attaching itself to the most superficial external appearance, it is nevertheless not easy to explain to ignorant people all the economic questions which compete with one another here. *You can't compress a course of political economy into one hour. But we shall do our best.*<sup>1</sup>

At the session of May 20, Weston's views were subjected to a smashing criticism by Marx, and Wheeler, a representative of the English trade unions on the General Council, also spoke against Weston. Marx did not confine himself to "improvisation," but proceeded to deliver a counter-report. Proposals were made at the sessions of the Central Council to publish the reports of Marx and Weston. In connection with this Marx wrote as follows to Engels on June 24:

I have read a paper in the Central Council (it would make two printer's sheets<sup>2</sup> perhaps) on the question brought up by Mr. Weston as to the effect of a general rise of wages, etc. The first part of it was an answer to Weston's nonsense; the second, a theoretical explanation, in so far as the occasion was suited to this.

Now the people want to have this printed. On the one hand, this might perhaps be useful, since they are connected with John Stuart Mill, Professor Beasley, Harrison, etc. On the other hand I have the following doubts: (1) It is none too flattering to have Mister Weston as one's opponent; (2) in the second part the thing contains, in an extremely condensed but relatively popular form, much that is new, taken in advance from my book, while at the same time it has necessarily to slur over all sorts of things. The question is, whether such anticipation is expedient?

The work, however, was not published either by Marx or Engels. It was found among Marx's papers after Engels' death and published by Marx's daughter, Eleanor Aveling. In the English language it was published under the title of *Value, Price and Profit*, while the German translation bore the title of *Wages, Price and Profit*.

This work, as Marx himself noted, falls into two parts. In the first part, Marx, while criticising Weston, is at the same time essentially attacking the so-called "theory of the wages

<sup>1</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Correspondence 1846-1895*, pp. 202-203.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> One sheet is 16 printed pages.—Ed.

fund," which had been presented in the main by Weston in his report, and which had John Stuart Mill as its most formidable supporter.

The gist of the theory of the wages fund is the assertion that the capital which may be expended in any given period for the payment of wages is a rigid and definite sum which cannot be augmented; and that therefore the wages of each worker are arrived at by dividing up this wages fund among the total number of workers in the country. From this theory it would follow that the struggle of the working class to raise wages is inexpedient and even harmful. This theory was thus a weapon in the hands of the employers in their struggle against the working masses. From the denial of the expediency of the economic struggle, this theory leads directly to a denial of the expediency of the political struggle of the workers, of the struggle against capitalism and consequently preaches to the workers political abstinence, and, at best, political subservience to the tutelage and leadership of the bourgeoisie. By presenting such views at the sessions of the General Council, Weston showed himself to be essentially a mouthpiece of bourgeois views. This was why Marx deemed it necessary to subject Weston's views to an annihilating criticism in a special counter-report. The subject dealt with by Marx has lost none of its actuality at the present day. The ideas underlying the theory of the "wages fund" continue to be put forward in more or less disguised forms, not only by capitalist economists but also by the social fascist trade union and reformist leadership in their arguments for acceptance of wage cuts.

In the second part of the present work Marx gives a popular exposition of the fundamental theses of the theories of value and surplus value and of the conclusions derived from these theories. As is mentioned by Marx in his letter to Engels, this part contains an exposition of several theses from his book *Capital* on which he was working at the time. Although it is so condensed, this part of the work nevertheless constitutes a model of lucid exposition and a consummate popularisation of the economic theory of Marx. A study of this pamphlet is still the best introduction to Marx's *Capital*.



# VALUE, PRICE AND PROFIT

## PRELIMINARY

CITIZENS,

Before entering into the subject matter, allow me to make a few preliminary remarks.

There reigns now on the Continent a real epidemic of strikes, and a general clamour for a rise of wages. The question will turn up at our Congress. You, as the head of the International Association, ought to have settled convictions upon this paramount question. For my own part, I considered it, therefore, my duty to enter fully into the matter, even at the peril of putting your patience to a severe test.

Another preliminary remark I have to make in regard to Citizen Weston. He has not only proposed to you, but has publicly defended, in the interest of the working class, as he thinks, opinions he knows to be most unpopular with the working class. Such an exhibition of moral courage all of us must highly honour. I hope that, despite the unvarnished style of my paper, at its conclusion he will find me agreeing with what appears to me the just idea lying at the bottom of his theses, which, however, in their present form, I cannot but consider theoretically false and practically dangerous.

I shall now at once proceed to the business before us.

## I

### PRODUCT AND WAGES

CITIZEN WESTON's argument rested, in fact, upon two premises: firstly, that the *amount of national production* is a *fixed thing*, a *constant* quantity or magnitude, as the mathematicians would say; secondly, that the *amount of real wages*, that is to say, of wages as measured by the quantity of the commodities they can buy, is a *fixed* amount, a *constant* magnitude.

Now, his first assertion is evidently erroneous. Year after year, you will find that the value and mass of production in-

crease, that the productive powers of the national labour increase, and that the amount of money necessary to circulate this increasing production continuously changes. What is true at the end of the year, and for different years compared with each other, is true for every average day of the year. The amount or magnitude of national production changes continuously. It is not a *constant* but a *variable* magnitude; and apart from changes in population it must be so, because of the continuous change in the *accumulation of capital* and the *productive powers of labour*. It is perfectly true that if a *rise in the general rate of wages* should take place today, that rise, whatever its ulterior effects might be, would, *by itself*, not *immediately* change the amount of production. It would, in the first instance, proceed from the existing state of things. But if *before* the rise of wages the national production was *variable*, and not *fixed*, it will continue to be variable and not fixed *after* the rise of wages.

But suppose the amount of national production to be *constant* instead of *variable*. Even then, what our friend Weston considers a logical conclusion would still remain a gratuitous assertion. If I have a given number, say eight, the absolute limits of this number do not prevent its parts from changing their *relative* limits. If profits were six and wages two, wages might increase to six and profits decrease to two, and still the total amount remain eight. Thus the fixed amount of production would by no means prove the fixed amount of wages. How then does our friend Weston prove this fixity? By asserting it.

But even conceding him his assertion, it would cut both ways, while he presses it only in one direction. If the amount of wages is a constant magnitude, then it can be neither increased nor diminished. If then, in enforcing a temporary rise of wages, the working men act foolishly, the capitalists, in enforcing a temporary fall of wages, would act not less foolishly. Our friend Weston does not deny that, under certain circumstances, the working men *can* enforce a rise of wages, but, their amount being naturally fixed, there must follow a reaction. On the other hand, he knows also that the capitalists *can* enforce a fall of wages, and, indeed, continuously try to enforce it. According to the principle of the constancy of wages, a reaction ought to

follow in this case not less than in the former. The working men, therefore, reacting against the attempt at, or the act of, lowering wages, would act rightly. They would, therefore, act rightly in enforcing a *rise of wages*, because every *reaction* against the lowering of wages is an *action* for raising wages. According to Citizen Weston's own principle of the *constancy of wages*, the working men ought, therefore, under certain circumstances, to combine and struggle for a rise of wages.

If he denies this conclusion, he must give up the premise from which it flows. He must not say that the amount of wages is a *constant quantity*, but that, although it cannot and must not *rise*, it can and must *fall*, whenever capital pleases to lower it. If the capitalist pleases to feed you upon potatoes instead of upon meat, and upon oats instead of upon wheat, you must accept his will as a law of political economy, and submit to it. If in one country the rate of wages is higher than in another, in the United States, for example, than in England, you must explain this difference in the rate of wages by a difference between the will of the American capitalist and the will of the English capitalist, a method which would certainly very much simplify, not only the study of economic phenomena, but of all other phenomena.

But even then, we might ask, *why* the will of the American capitalist differs from the will of the English capitalist? And to answer the question you must go beyond the domain of *will*. A parson may tell me that God wills one thing in France, and another thing in England. If I summon him to explain to me this duality of will, he might have the brass to answer me that God wills to have one will in France and another will in England. But our friend Weston is certainly the last man to make an argument of such a complete negation of all reasoning.

The *will* of the capitalist is certainly to take as much as possible. What we have to do is not to talk about his *will*, but to enquire into his *power*, the *limits of that power*, and the *character of those limits*.

## II

## PRODUCTION, WAGES, PROFITS

THE address Citizen Weston read to us might have been compressed into a nutshell.

All his reasoning amounted to this: If the working class forces the capitalist class to pay five shillings instead of four shillings in the shape of money wages, the capitalist will return in the shape of commodities four shillings' worth instead of five shillings' worth. The working class would have to pay five shillings for what, before the rise of wages, they bought with four shillings. But why is this the case? Why does the capitalist only return four shillings' worth for five shillings? Because the amount of wages is fixed. But why is it fixed at four shillings' worth of commodities? Why not at three, or two, or any other sum? If the limit of the amount of wages is settled by an economic law, independent alike of the will of the capitalist and the will of the working man, the first thing Citizen Weston had to do was to state that law and prove it. He ought then, moreover, to have proved that the amount of wages actually paid at every given moment always corresponds exactly to the necessary amount of wages, and never deviates from it. If, on the other hand, the given limit of the amount of wages is founded on the *mere will* of the capitalist, or the limits of his avarice, it is an arbitrary limit. There is nothing necessary in it. It may be changed *by* the will of the capitalist, and may, therefore, be changed *against* his will.

Citizen Weston illustrated his theory by telling you that when a bowl contains a certain quantity of soup, to be eaten by a certain number of persons, an increase in the broadness of the spoons would produce no increase in the amount of soup. He must allow me to find this illustration rather spoony. It reminded me somewhat of the simile employed by Menenius Agrippa. When the Roman plebeians struck against the Roman patricians, the patrician Agrippa told them that the patrician belly fed the plebeian members of the body politic. Agrippa failed to show that you feed the members of one man by filling the belly of another. Citizen Weston, on his part, has forgotten

that the bowl from which the workmen eat is filled with the whole produce of the national labour, and that what prevents them fetching more out of it is neither the narrowness of the bowl nor the scantiness of its contents, but only the smallness of their spoons.

By what contrivance is the capitalist enabled to return four shillings' worth for five shillings? By raising the price of the commodity he sells. Now, does a rise and, more generally, a change in the prices of commodities, do the prices of commodities themselves, depend on the mere will of the capitalist? Or are, on the contrary, certain circumstances wanted to give effect to that will? If not, the ups and downs, the incessant fluctuations of market prices, would become an insoluble riddle.

As we suppose that no change whatever has taken place either in the productive powers of labour, or in the amount of capital and labour employed, or in the value of the money wherein the values of products are estimated, but *only a change in the rate of wages*, how could that *rise of wages* affect the *prices of commodities*? Only by affecting the actual proportion between the demand for, and the supply of, these commodities.

It is perfectly true that, considered as a whole, the working class spends, and must spend, its income upon *necessaries*. A general rise in the rate of wages would, therefore, produce a rise in the demand for, and consequently in the *market prices of, necessaries*. The capitalists who produce these necessities would be compensated for the risen wages by the rising market prices of their commodities. But how with the other capitalists who do *not* produce necessities? And you must not fancy them a small body. If you consider that two-thirds of the national produce are consumed by one-fifth of the population—a member of the House of Commons stated it recently to be but one-seventh of the population—you will understand what an immense proportion of the national produce must be produced in the shape of luxuries, or be *exchanged* for luxuries, and what an immense amount of the necessities themselves must be wasted upon flunkies, horses, cats, and so forth, a waste we know from experience to become always much limited with the rising prices of necessities.

Well, what would be the position of those capitalists who do

not produce necessities? For the *fall in the rate of profit*, consequent upon the general rise of wages, they could not compensate themselves by a *rise in the price of their commodities*, because the demand for those commodities would not have increased. Their income would have decreased; and from this decreased income they would have to pay more for the same amount of higher-priced necessities. But this would not be all. As their income had diminished they would have less to spend upon luxuries, and therefore their mutual demand for their respective commodities would diminish. Consequent upon this diminished demand the prices of their commodities would fall. In these branches of industry, therefore, *the rate of profit would fall*, not only in simple proportion to the general rise in the rate of wages, but in the compound ratio of the general rise of wages, the rise in the prices of necessities, and the fall in the prices of luxuries.

What would be the consequence of *this difference in the rates of profit* for capitals employed in the different branches of industry? Why, the consequence that generally obtains whenever, from whatever reason, the *average rate of profit* comes to differ in the different spheres of production. Capital and labour would be transferred from the less remunerative to the more remunerative branches; and this process of transfer would go on until the supply in the one department of industry would have risen proportionately to the increased demand, and would have sunk in the other departments according to the decreased demand. *This change effected*, the *general rate of profit* would again be *equalised* in the different branches. As the whole derangement originally arose from a mere change in the proportion of the demand for, and the supply of, different commodities, the cause ceasing, the effect would cease, and *prices* would return to their former level and equilibrium. Instead of being limited to some branches of industry, *the fall in the rate of profit* consequent upon the rise of wages would have become *general*. According to our supposition, there would have taken place no change in the productive powers of labour, nor in the aggregate amount of production, but *that given amount of production would have changed its form*. A greater part of the produce would exist in the shape of necessities, a lesser part in

the shape of luxuries, or what comes to the same, a lesser part would be exchanged for foreign luxuries, and be consumed in its original form, or, what again comes to the same, a greater part of the native produce would be exchanged for foreign necessities instead of for luxuries. The general rise in the rate of wages would, therefore, after a temporary disturbance of market prices, only result in a general fall of the rate of profit without any permanent change in the prices of commodities.

If I am told that in the previous argument I assume the whole surplus wages to be spent upon necessities, I shall answer that I have made the supposition most advantageous to the opinion of Citizen Weston. If the surplus wages were spent upon articles formerly not entering into the consumption of the working men, the real increase of their purchasing power would need no proof. Being, however, only derived from an advance of wages, that increase of their purchasing power must exactly correspond to the decrease of the purchasing power of the capitalists. The *aggregate demand* for commodities would, therefore, not *increase*, but the constituent parts of that demand would *change*. The increasing demand on the one side would be counter-balanced by the decreasing demand on the other side. Thus the aggregate demand remaining stationary, no change whatever could take place in the market prices of commodities.

You arrive, therefore, at this dilemma: Either the surplus wages are equally spent upon all articles of consumption—then the expansion of demand on the part of the working class must be compensated by the contraction of demand on the part of the capitalist class—or the surplus wages are only spent upon some articles whose market prices will temporarily rise. Then the consequent rise in the rate of profit in some, and the consequent fall in the rate of profit in other branches of industry will produce a change in the distribution of capital and labour, going on until the supply is brought up to the increased demand in the one department of industry, and brought down to the diminished demand in the other. On the one supposition there will occur no change in the prices of commodities. On the other supposition, after some fluctuations of market prices, their exchangeable values of commodities will subside to the former level. On both suppositions the general rise in the rate

of wages will ultimately result in nothing else but a general fall in the rate of profit.

To stir up your powers of imagination Citizen Weston requested you to think of the difficulties which a general rise of English agricultural wages from nine shillings to eighteen shillings would produce. Think, he exclaimed, of the immense rise in the demand for necessities, and the consequent fearful rise in their prices! Now, all of you know that the average wages of the American agricultural labourer amount to more than double that of the English agricultural labourer, although the prices of agricultural produce are lower in the United States than in the United Kingdom, although the general relations of capital and labour obtain in the United States the same as in England, and although the annual amount of production is much smaller in the United States than in England. Why, then, does our friend ring this alarm bell? Simply to shift the real question before us. A sudden rise of wages from nine shillings to eighteen shillings would be a sudden rise to the amount of 100 per cent. Now, we are not at all discussing the question whether the general rate of wages in England could suddenly be increased by 100 per cent. We have nothing at all to do with the *magnitude* of the rise, which in every practical instance must depend on, and be suited to, given circumstances. We have only to inquire how a general rise in the rate of wages, even if restricted to one per cent, will act.

Dismissing friend Weston's fancy rise of 100 per cent, I propose calling your attention to the real rise of wages that took place in Great Britain from 1849 to 1859.

You are all aware of the Ten Hours Bill, or rather Ten and a Half Hours Bill, introduced since 1848. This was one of the greatest economic changes we have witnessed. It was a sudden and compulsory rise of wages, not in some local trades, but in the leading industrial branches by which England sways the markets of the world. It was a rise of wages under circumstances singularly unpropitious. Dr. Ure, Professor Senior, and all the other official economic mouthpieces of the middle class, *proved*, and I must say upon much stronger grounds than those of our friend Weston, that it would sound the death knell of English industry. They proved that it not only amounted to



a simple rise of wages, but to a rise of wages initiated by, and based upon, a diminution of the quantity of labour employed. They asserted that the twelfth hour you wanted to take from the capitalist was exactly the only hour from which he derived his profit. They threatened a decrease of accumulation, rise of prices, loss of markets, stinting of production, consequent reaction upon wages, ultimate ruin. In fact, they declared Maximilian Robespierre's Maximum Laws<sup>1</sup> to be a small affair compared to it; and they were right in a certain sense. Well, what was the result? A rise in the money wages of the factory operatives, despite the curtailing of the working day, a great increase in the number of factory hands employed, a continuous fall in the prices of their products, a marvellous development in the productive powers of their labour, an unheard-of progressive expansion of the markets for their commodities. In Manchester, at the meeting in 1860 of the Society for the Advancement of Science, I myself heard Mr. Newman confess that he, Dr. Ure, Senior, and all other official propounders of economic science had been wrong, while the instinct of the people had been right. I mention Mr. W. Newman, not Professor Francis Newman, because he occupies an eminent position in economic science, as the contributor to, and editor of, Mr. Thomas Tooke's *History of Prices*, that magnificent work which traces the history of prices from 1793 to 1856. If our friend Weston's fixed idea of a fixed amount of wages, a fixed amount of production, a fixed degree of the productive power of labour, a fixed and permanent will of the capitalists, and all his other fixedness and finality were correct, Professor Senior's woeful forebodings would have been right, and Robert Owen,<sup>2</sup> who already in 1816 proclaimed a general limitation of the work-

<sup>1</sup> The Maximum Law was introduced during the Great French Revolution in 1792, fixing definite price limits for commodities and standard rates of wages. The chief supporters of the Maximum Law were the so-called "madmen" who represented the interests of the urban and village poor. Robespierre, the leader of the Jacobin Party, introduced this law at a time when the Jacobins as a result of tactical considerations had formed a *bloc* with the "madmen."—*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> Robert Owen (1771-1858) was a British manufacturer who became a utopian socialist. He introduced in his factory the ten-hour day, and also organised sickness insurance, consumers' co-operative societies, etc.—*Ed.*

ing day the first preparatory step to the emancipation of the working class and actually in the teeth of the general prejudice inaugurated it on his own hook in his cotton factory at New Lanark, would have been wrong.

In the very same period during which the introduction of the Ten Hours Bill, and the rise of wages consequent upon it, occurred, there took place in Great Britain, for reasons which it would be out of place to enumerate here, a *general rise in agricultural wages*.

Although it is not required for my immediate purpose, in order not to mislead you, I shall make some preliminary remarks.

If a man got two shillings weekly wages, and if his wages rose to four shillings, the *rate of wages* would have risen by 100 per cent. This would seem a very magnificent thing if expressed as a rise in the *rate of wages*, although the *actual amount of wages*, four shillings weekly, would still remain a wretchedly small, a starvation, pittance. You must not, therefore, allow yourselves to be carried away by the high-sounding per cents in the *rate* of wages. You must always ask: What was the *original* amount?

Moreover, you will understand, that if there were ten men receiving each 2s. per week, five men receiving each 5s., and five men receiving 11s. weekly, the twenty men together would receive 100s., or £5, weekly. If then a rise, say by 20 per cent, upon the *aggregate* sum of their weekly wages took place, there would be an advance from £5 to £6. Taking the average, we might say that the *general rate of wages* had risen by 20 per cent, although, in fact, the wages of the ten men had remained stationary, the wages of the one lot of five men had risen from 5s. to 6s. only, and the wages of the other lot of five men from 55s. to 70s.<sup>1</sup> One half of the men would not have improved their position at all, one quarter would have improved it in an imperceptible degree, and only one quarter would have bettered it really. Still, reckoning by the *average*, the total amount of the wages of those twenty men would have increased by 20 per

<sup>1</sup> These figures, 55s.-70s., refer to the total wages of the group of five men. The wage of each man in the group would increase from 11s. to 14s.—Ed.

cent, and as far as the aggregate capital that employs them, and the prices of the commodities they produce, are concerned, it would be exactly the same as if all of them had equally shared in the average rise of wages. In the case of agricultural labour, the standard of wages being very different in the different counties of England and Scotland, the rise affected them very unequally.

Lastly, during the period when that rise of wages took place counteracting influences were at work, such as the new taxes consequent upon the Russian war, the extensive demolition of the dwelling-houses of the agricultural labourers, and so forth.

Having premised so much, I proceed to state that from 1849 to 1859 there took place a *rise of about 40 per cent* in the average rate of the agricultural wages of Great Britain. I could give you ample details in proof of my assertion, but for the present purpose think it sufficient to refer you to the conscientious and critical paper read in 1860 by the late Mr. John C. Morton at the London Society of Arts on *The Forces Used in Agriculture*. Mr. Morton gives the returns, from bills and other authentic documents, which he had collected from about one hundred farmers, residing in twelve Scotch and thirty-five English counties.

According to our friend Weston's opinion, and taken together with the simultaneous rise in the wages of the factory operatives, there ought to have occurred a tremendous rise in the prices of agricultural produce during the period 1849 to 1859. But what is the fact? Despite the Russian war, and the consecutive unfavourable harvests from 1854 to 1856, the average price of wheat, which is the leading agricultural produce of England, fell from about £3 per quarter for the years 1838 to 1848 to about £2 10s. per quarter for the years 1849 to 1859. This constitutes a fall in the price of wheat of more than 16 per cent simultaneously with an average rise of agricultural wages of 40 per cent. During the same period, if we compare its end with its beginning, 1859 with 1849, there was a decrease of official pauperism from 934,419 to 860,470, the difference being 73,949; a very small decrease, I grant, and which in the following years was again lost, but still a decrease.

It might be said that, consequent upon the abolition of the

Corn Laws, the import of foreign corn was more than doubled during the period from 1849 to 1859, as compared with the period from 1838 to 1848. And what of that? From Citizen Weston's standpoint one would have expected that this sudden, immense, and continuously increasing demand upon foreign markets must have sent up the prices of agricultural produce there to a frightful height, the effect of increased demand remaining the same, whether it comes from without or from within. What was the fact? Apart from some years of failing harvests, during all that period the ruinous fall in the price of corn formed a standing theme of declamation in France; the Americans were again and again compelled to burn their surplus produce; and Russia, if we are to believe Mr. Urquhart, prompted the Civil War in the United States because her agricultural exports were crippled by the Yankee competition in the markets of Europe.

*Reduced to its abstract form*, Citizen Weston's argument would come to this: Every rise in demand occurs always on the basis of a given amount of production. It can, therefore, *never increase the supply of the articles demanded, but only enhance their money prices*. Now the most common observation shows that an increased demand will, in some instances, leave the market prices of commodities altogether unchanged, and will, in other instances, cause a temporary rise of market prices followed by an increased supply, followed by a reduction of the prices to their original level, and in many cases *below* their original level. Whether the rise of demand springs from surplus wages, or from any other cause, does not at all change the conditions of the problem. From Citizen Weston's standpoint the general phenomenon was as difficult to explain as the phenomenon occurring under the exceptional circumstances of a rise of wages. His argument had, therefore, no peculiar bearing whatever upon the subject we treat. It only expressed his perplexity at accounting for the laws by which an increase of demand produces an increase of supply, instead of an ultimate rise of market prices.

## III

## WAGES AND CURRENCY

ON the second day of the debate our friend Weston clothed his old assertions in new forms. He said: Consequent upon a general rise in money wages, more currency will be wanted to pay the same wages. The currency being *fixed*, how can you pay with this fixed currency increased money wages? First the difficulty arose from the fixed amount of commodities accruing to the working man despite his increase of money wages; now it arises from the increased money wages, despite the fixed amount of commodities. Of course, if you reject his original dogma, his secondary grievance will disappear.

However, I shall show that this currency question has nothing at all to do with the subject before us.

In your country the mechanism of payments is much more perfected than in any other country of Europe. Thanks to the extent and concentration of the banking system, much less currency is wanted to circulate the same amount of values, and to transact the same or a greater amount of business. For example, as far as wages are concerned, the English factory operative pays his wages weekly to the shopkeeper, who sends them weekly to the banker, who returns them weekly to the manufacturer, who again pays them away to his working men, and so forth. By this contrivance the yearly wages of an operative, say of £52, may be paid by one single sovereign turning round every week in the same circle. Even in England the mechanism is less perfect than in Scotland, and is not everywhere equally perfect; and therefore we find, for example, that in some agricultural districts, as compared to the manufacturing districts, much more currency is wanted to circulate a much smaller amount of values.

If you cross the Channel you will find that the *money wages* are much lower than in England, but that they are circulated in Germany, Italy, Switzerland, and France by a *much larger amount of currency*. The same sovereign will not be so quickly intercepted by the banker or returned to the industrial capital-

ist; and, therefore, instead of one sovereign circulating £52 yearly, you want, perhaps, three sovereigns to circulate yearly wages to the amount of £25. Thus, by comparing continental countries with England, you will see at once that low money wages may require a much larger currency for their circulation than high money wages, and that this is, in fact, a merely technical point, quite foreign to our subject.

According to the best calculations I know, the yearly income of the working class of this country may be estimated at £250,000,000. This immense sum is circulated by about £3,000,000. Suppose a rise of wages of 50 per cent to take place. Then instead of £3,000,000 of currency, £4,500,000 would be wanted. As a very considerable part of the working man's daily expenses is laid out in silver and copper, that is to say, in mere tokens, whose relative value to gold is arbitrarily fixed by law, like that of inconvertible money paper, a rise of money wages by 50 per cent would, in the extreme case, require an additional circulation of sovereigns say to the amount of one million. One million, now dormant, in the shape of bullion or coin, in the cellars of the Bank of England, or of private bankers, would circulate. But even the trifling expense resulting from the additional minting or the additional wear and tear of that million might be spared, and would actually be spared, if any friction should arise from the want of the additional currency. All of you know that the currency of this country is divided into two great departments. One sort, supplied by bank-notes of different descriptions, is used in the transactions between dealers and dealers, and the larger payments from consumers to dealers, while another sort of currency, metallic coin, circulates in the retail trade. Although distinct, these two sorts of currency intermix with each other. Thus gold coin, to a very great extent, circulates even in larger payments for all the odd sums under £5. If tomorrow £4 notes, or £3 notes, or £2 notes were issued, the gold coin filling these channels of circulation would at once be driven out of them, and flow into those channels where they would be needed from the increase of money wages. Thus the additional million required by an advance of wages by 50 per cent would be supplied without the addition of one single sov-

ereign. The same effect might be produced, without one additional bank-note, by an additional bill circulation, as was the case in Lancashire for a very considerable time.

If a general rise in the rate of wages, for example, of 100 per cent, as Citizen Weston supposed it to take place in agricultural wages, would produce a great rise in the prices of necessaries, and, according to his views, require an additional amount of currency not to be procured, a *general fall in wages* must produce the same effect, on the same scale, in an opposite direction. Well! All of you know that the years 1858 to 1860 were the most prosperous years for the cotton industry, and that peculiarly the year 1860 stands in that respect unrivalled in the annals of commerce, while at the same time all other branches of industry were most flourishing. The wages of the cotton operatives and of all the other working men connected with their trade stood, in 1860, higher than ever before. The American crisis came, and those aggregate wages were suddenly reduced to about one fourth of their former amount. This would have been in the opposite direction a rise of 400 per cent. If wages rise from five to twenty, we say that they rise by 300 per cent; if they fall from twenty to five, we say that they fall by 75 per cent but the amount of rise in the one and the amount of fall in the other case would be the same, namely, fifteen shillings. This, then, was a sudden change in the rate of wages unprecedented, and at the same time extending over a number of operatives which, if we count all the operatives not only directly engaged in but indirectly dependent upon the cotton trade, was larger by one half than the number of agricultural labourers. Did the price of wheat fall? It *rose* from the annual average of 47s. 8d. per quarter during the three years of 1858-60 to the annual average 55s. 10d. per quarter during the three years 1861-63. As to the currency, there were coined in the mint in 1861 £8,673,232, against £3,378,102 in 1860. That is to say, there were coined £5,295,130 more in 1861 than in 1860. It is true the bank-note circulation was in 1861 less by £1,319,000 than in 1860. Take this off. There remains still an overplus of currency for the year 1861, as compared with the prosperity year, 1860, to the amount of £3,976,130, of about £4,000,000; but the bullion reserve in the Bank of England had

simultaneously decreased, not quite in the same, but in an approximating proportion.

Compare the year 1862 with 1842. Apart from the immense increase in the value and amount of commodities circulated, in 1862 the capital paid in regular transactions for shares, loans, etc., for the railways in England and Wales amounted alone to £320,000,000, a sum that would have appeared fabulous in 1842. Still, the aggregate amounts of currency in 1862 and 1842 were pretty nearly equal, and generally you will find a tendency to a progressive diminution of currency in the face of an enormously increasing value, not only of commodities, but of monetary transactions generally. From our friend Weston's standpoint this is an unsolvable riddle.

Looking somewhat deeper into this matter, he would have found that, quite apart from wages, and supposing them to be fixed, the value and mass of the commodities to be circulated, and generally the amount of monetary transactions to be settled, vary daily; that the amount of bank-notes issued varies daily; that the amount of payments realised without the intervention of any money, by the instrumentality of bills, cheques, book-credits, clearing houses, varies daily; that, as far as actual metallic currency is required, the proportion between the coin in circulation and the coin and bullion in reserve or sleeping in the cellars of banks varies daily; that the amount of bullion absorbed by the national circulation and the amount being sent abroad for international circulation vary daily. He would have found that his dogma of a fixed currency is a monstrous error, incompatible with the everyday movement. He would have inquired into the laws which enable a currency to adapt itself to circumstances so continually changing, instead of turning his misconception of the laws of currency into an argument against a rise of wages.

#### IV

##### SUPPLY AND DEMAND

OUR friend Weston accepts the Latin proverb that *repetitio est mater studiorum*, that is to say, that repetition is the mother of



study, and consequently he repeated his original dogma again under the new form, that the contraction of currency, resulting from an enhancement of wages, would produce a diminution of capital, and so forth. Having already discarded his currency crotchet, I consider it quite useless to enter upon the imaginary consequences he fancies to flow from his imaginary currency mishap. I shall proceed at once to reduce his *one and the same dogma*, repeated in so many different shapes, to its simplest theoretical expression.

The uncritical way in which he has treated his subject will become evident from one single remark. He pleads against a rise of wages or against high wages as the result of such a rise. Now, I ask him: What are high wages and what are low wages? Why constitute, for example, five shillings weekly low, and twenty shillings weekly high wages? If five is low as compared with twenty, twenty is still lower as compared with two hundred. If a man was to lecture on the thermometer, and commenced by declaiming on high and low degrees, he would impart no knowledge whatever. He must first tell me how the freezing-point is found out, and how the boiling-point, and how these standard points are settled by natural laws, not by the fancy of the sellers or makers of thermometers. Now, in regard to wages and profits, Citizen Weston has not only failed to deduce such standard points from economic laws, but he has not even felt the necessity to look after them. He satisfied himself with the acceptance of the popular slang terms of low and high as something having a fixed meaning, although it is self-evident that wages can only be said to be high or low as compared with a standard by which to measure their magnitudes.

He will be unable to tell me why a certain amount of money is given for a certain amount of labour. If he should answer me, "This was settled by the law of supply and demand," I should ask him, in the first instance, by what law supply and demand are themselves regulated. Aye, such an answer would at once put him out of court. The relations between the supply and demand of labour undergo perpetual changes, and with them the market prices of labour. If the demand overshoots the supply wages rise; if the supply overshoots the demand wages sink, although it might in such circumstances be necessary to

test the real state of demand and supply by a strike, for example, or any other method. But if you accept supply and demand as the law regulating wages, it would be as childish as useless to declaim against a rise of wages, because, according to the supreme law you appeal to, a periodical rise of wages is quite as necessary and legitimate as a periodical fall of wages. If you do *not* accept supply and demand as the law regulating wages, I again repeat the question, why a certain amount of money is given for a certain amount of labour?

But to consider matters more broadly: You would be altogether mistaken in fancying that the value of labour or any other commodity whatever is ultimately fixed by supply and demand. Supply and demand regulate nothing but the temporary *fluctuations* of market prices. They will explain to you why the market price of a commodity rises above or sinks below its *value*, but they can never account for that *value* itself. Suppose supply and demand to equilibrate, or, as the economists call it, to cover each other. Why, the very moment these opposite forces become equal they paralyse each other, and cease to work in the one or the other direction. At the moment when supply and demand equilibrate each other, and therefore cease to act, the *market price* of a commodity coincides with its *real value*, with the standard price round which its market prices oscillate. In inquiring into the nature of that *value*, we have therefore nothing at all to do with the temporary effects on market prices of supply and demand. The same holds true of wages as of the prices of all other commodities.

## V

### WAGES AND PRICES

REDUCED to their simplest theoretical expression, all our friend's arguments resolve themselves into this one single dogma: "*The prices of commodities are determined or regulated by wages.*"

I might appeal to practical observation to bear witness against this antiquated and exploded fallacy. I might tell you that the English factory operatives, miners, shipbuilders, and so forth, whose labour is relatively high-priced, undersell by the cheap-

ness of their produce all other nations; while the English agricultural labourer, for example, whose labour is relatively low-priced, is undersold by almost every other nation because of the dearness of his produce. By comparing article with article in the same country, and the commodities of different countries, I might show, apart from some exceptions more apparent than real, that on an average the high-priced labour produces the low-priced, and the low-priced labour produces the high-priced commodities. This, of course, would not prove that the high price of labour in the one, and its low price in the other instance, are the respective causes of those diametrically opposed effects, but at all events it would prove that the prices of commodities are not ruled by the prices of labour. However, it is quite superfluous for us to employ this empirical method.

It might, perhaps, be denied that Citizen Weston has put forward the dogma: "*The prices of commodities are determined or regulated by wages.*" In point of fact, he has never formulated it. He said, on the contrary, that profit and rent form also constituent parts of the prices of commodities, because it is out of the prices of commodities that not only the working man's wages, but also the capitalist's profits and the landlord's rents must be paid. But how in his idea are prices formed? First by wages. Then an additional percentage is joined to the price on behalf of the capitalist, and another additional percentage on behalf of the landlord. Suppose the wages of the labour employed in the production of a commodity to be ten. If the rate of profit was 100 per cent, to the wages advanced the capitalist would add ten, and if the rate of rent was also 100 per cent upon the wages, there would be added ten more, and the aggregate price of the commodity would amount to thirty. But such a determination of prices would be simply their determination by wages. If wages in the above case rose to twenty, the price of the commodity would rise to sixty, and so forth. Consequently all the superannuated writers on political economy who propounded the dogma that wages regulate prices, have tried to prove it by treating profit and rent *as mere additional percentages upon wages*. None of them was, of course, able to reduce the limits of those percentages to any economic law. They seem, on the contrary, to think profits settled by

tradition, custom, the will of the capitalist, or by some other equally arbitrary and inexplicable method. If they assert that they are settled by the competition between the capitalists, they say nothing. That competition is sure to equalise the different rates of profit in different trades, or reduce them to one average level, but it can never determine the level itself, or the general rate of profit.

What do we mean by saying that the prices of the commodities are determined by wages? Wages being but a name for the price of labour, we mean that the prices of commodities are regulated by the price of labour. As "*price*" is exchangeable value—and in speaking of value I speak always of exchangeable value—is exchangeable *value expressed in money*, the proposition comes to this, that "*the value of commodities is determined by the value of labour,*" or that "*the value of labour is the general measure of value.*"

But how, then, is the "*value of labour*" itself determined? Here we come to a standstill. Of course, to a standstill if we try reasoning logically. Yet the propounders of that doctrine make short work of logical scruples. Take our friend Weston, for example. First he told us that wages regulate the price of commodities and that consequently when wages rise prices must rise. Then he turned round to show us that a rise of wages will be no good because the prices of commodities had risen, and because wages were indeed measured by the prices of the commodities upon which they are spent. Thus we begin by saying that the value of labour determines the value of commodities, and we wind up by saying that the value of commodities determines the value of labour. Thus we move to and fro in the most vicious circle, and arrive at no conclusion at all.

On the whole, it is evident that by making the value of one commodity, say labour, corn, or any other commodity, the general measure and regulator of value, we only shift the difficulty, since we determine one value by another value, which on its side wants to be determined.

The dogma that "wages determine the price of commodities," expressed in its most abstract terms, comes to this, that "value is determined by value," and this tautology means that, in fact, we know nothing at all about value. Accepting this premise, all

reasoning about the general laws of political economy turns into mere twaddle. It was, therefore, the great merit of Ricardo that in his work *On The Principles of Political Economy*, published in 1817, he fundamentally destroyed the old, popular, and worn-out fallacy that "wages determine prices," a fallacy which Adam Smith and his French predecessors had spurned in the really scientific parts of their researches, but which, nevertheless, they reproduced in their more exoterical and vulgarising chapters.

## VI

## VALUE AND LABOUR

CITIZENS, I have now arrived at a point where I must enter upon the real development of the question. I cannot promise to do this in a very satisfactory way, because to do so I should be obliged to go over the whole field of political economy. I can, as the French would say, but *effleurer la question*, touch upon the main points.

The first question we have to put is: What is the *value* of a commodity? How is it determined?

At first sight it would seem that the value of a commodity is a thing quite *relative*, and not to be settled without considering one commodity in its relations to all other commodities. In fact, in speaking of the value, the value in exchange of a commodity, we mean the proportional quantities in which it exchanges with all other commodities. But then arises the question: How are the proportions in which commodities exchange with each other regulated?

We know from experience that these proportions vary infinitely. Taking one single commodity, wheat, for instance, we shall find that a quarter of wheat exchanges in almost countless variations of proportion with different commodities. Yet, *its value remaining always the same*, whether expressed in silk, gold, or any other commodity, it must be something distinct from, and independent of, these *different rates of exchange* with different articles. It must be possible to express, in a very different form, these various equations with various commodities.

Besides, if I say a quarter of wheat exchanges with iron in a certain proportion, or the value of a quarter of wheat is expressed in a certain amount of iron, I say that the value of wheat and its equivalent in iron are equal to *some third thing*, which is neither wheat nor iron, because I suppose them to express the same magnitude in two different shapes. Either of them, the wheat or the iron, must, therefore, independently of the other, be reducible to this third thing which is their common measure.

To elucidate this point I shall recur to a very simple geometrical illustration. In comparing the areas of triangles of all possible forms and magnitudes, or comparing triangles with rectangles, or any other rectilinear figure, how do we proceed? We reduce the area of any triangle whatever to an expression quite different from its visible form. Having found from the nature of the triangle that its area is equal to half the product of its base by its height, we can then compare the different values of all sorts of triangles, and of all rectilinear figures whatever, because all of them may be resolved into a certain number of triangles.

The same mode of procedure must obtain with the values of commodities. We must be able to reduce all of them to an expression common to all, and distinguishing them only by the proportions in which they contain that same and identical measure.

As the *exchangeable values* of commodities are only *social functions* of those things, and have nothing at all to do with the *natural* qualities, we must first ask: What is the common *social substance* of all commodities? It is *labour*. To produce a commodity a certain amount of labour must be bestowed upon it, or worked up in it. And I say not only *labour*, but *social labour*. A man who produces an article for his own immediate use, to consume it himself, creates a *product*, but not a *commodity*. As a self-sustaining producer he has nothing to do with society. But to produce a *commodity*, a man must not only produce an article satisfying some *social* want, but his labour itself must form part and parcel of the total sum of labour expended by society. It must be subordinate to the *division of labour within society*. It is nothing without the other

division of labour, and on its part is required to *integrate* them.

If we consider *commodities as values*, we consider them exclusively under the single aspect of *realised, fixed*, or, if you like, *crystallised social labour*. In this respect they can *differ* only by representing greater or smaller quantities of labour, as, for example, a greater amount of labour may be worked up in a silken handkerchief than in a brick. But how does one measure *quantities of labour*? By the *time the labour lasts*, in measuring the labour by the hour, the day, etc. Of course, to apply this measure, all sorts of labour are reduced to average or simple labour as their unit.

We arrive, therefore, at this conclusion. A commodity has a *value*, because it is a *crystallisation of social labour*. The *greatness* of its value, or its *relative* value, depends upon the greater or less amount of that social substance contained in it; that is to say, on the relative mass of labour necessary for its production. The *relative values of commodities* are, therefore, determined by the *respective quantities or amounts of labour, worked up, realised, fixed in them*. The *correlative* quantities of commodities which can be produced in the *same time of labour* are *equal*. Or the value of one commodity is to the value of another commodity as the quantity of labour fixed in the one is to the quantity of labour fixed in the other.

I suspect that many of you will ask: Does then, indeed, there exist such a vast, or any difference whatever, between determining of values of commodities by *wages*, and determining them by the *relative quantities of labour* necessary for their production? You must, however, be aware that the *reward* for labour, and *quantity* of labour, are quite disparate things. Suppose, for example, *equal quantities of labour* to be fixed in one quarter of wheat and one ounce of gold. I resort to the example because it was used by Benjamin Franklin in his first essay published in 1721, and entitled: *A Modest Enquiry into the Nature and Necessity of a Paper Currency*, where he, one of the first, hit upon the true nature of value. Well. We suppose, then, that one quarter of wheat and one ounce of gold are *equal values* or *equivalents*, because they are *crystallisations of equal amounts of average labour*, of so many days' or so many weeks' labour respectively fixed in them. In thus determining the rela-

tive values of gold and corn, do we refer in any way whatever to the *wages* of the agricultural labourer and the miner? Not a bit. We leave it quite *indeterminate* how their day's or week's labour was paid, or even whether wages labour was employed at all. If it was, wages may have been very unequal. The labourer whose labour is realised in the quarter of wheat may receive two bushels only, and the labourer employed in mining may receive one half of the ounce of gold. Or, supposing their wages to be equal, they may deviate in all possible proportions from the values of the commodities produced by them. They may amount to one half, one third, one fourth, one fifth, or any other proportional part of the one quarter of corn or the one ounce of gold. Their *wages* can, of course, not *exceed*, not be more than the values of the commodities they produced, but they can be *less* in every possible degree. Their *wages* will be *limited* by the *values* of the products, but the *values of their products* will not be limited by the wages. And above all, the values, the relative values of corn and gold, for example, will have been settled without any regard whatever to the value of the labour employed, that is to say, to *wages*. To determine the values of commodities by the *relative quantities of labour fixed in them*, is, therefore, a thing quite different from the tautological method of determining the values of commodities by the value of labour, or by wages. This point, however, will be further elucidated in the progress of our inquiry.

In calculating the exchangeable value of a commodity we must add to the quantity of labour *last* employed the quantity of labour *previously* worked up in the raw material of the commodity, and the labour bestowed on the implements, tools, machinery, and buildings, with which such labour is assisted. For example, the value of a certain amount of cotton yarn is the crystallisation of the quantity of labour added to the cotton during the spinning process, the quantity of labour previously realised in the cotton, itself, the quantity of labour realised in the coal, oil, and other auxiliary matter used, the quantity of labour fixed in the steam-engine, the spindles, the factory building, and so forth. Instruments of production properly so-called, such as tools, machinery, buildings, serve again and again for a longer or shorter period during repeated processes of produc-



tion. If they were used up at once, like the raw material, their whole value would at once be transferred to the commodities they assist in producing. But as a spindle, for example, is but gradually used up, an average calculation is made, based upon the average time it lasts, and its average waste or wear and tear during a certain period, say a day. In this way we calculate how much of the value of the spindle is transferred to the yarn daily spun, and how much, therefore, of the total amount of labour realised in a pound of yarn, for example, is due to the quantity of labour previously realised in the spindle. For our present purpose it is not necessary to dwell any longer upon this point.

It might seem that if the value of a commodity is determined by the *quantity of labour bestowed upon its production*, the lazier a man, or the clumsier a man, the more valuable his commodity, because the greater the time of labour required for finishing the commodity. This, however, would be a sad mistake. You will recollect that I used the word "*social labour*," and many points are involved in this qualification of "*social*." In saying that the value of a commodity is determined by the *quantity of labour* worked up or crystallised in it, we mean *the quantity of labour necessary* for its production in a given state of society, under certain social average conditions of production, with a given social average intensity, and average skill of the labour employed. When, in England, the power-loom came to compete with the hand-loom, only one-half the former time of labour was wanted to convert a given amount of yarn into a yard of cotton or cloth. The poor hand-loom weaver now worked seventeen and eighteen hours daily, instead of the nine or ten hours he had worked before. Still the product of twenty hours of his labour represented now only ten social hours of labour, or ten hours of labour socially necessary for the conversion of a certain amount of yarn into textile stuffs. His product of twenty hours had, therefore, no more value than his former product of ten hours.

If then the quantity of socially necessary labour realised in commodities regulates their exchangeable values, every increase in the quantity of labour wanted for the production of a com-

modity must augment its value, as every diminution must lower it.

If the respective quantities of labour necessary for the production of the respective commodities remained constant, their relative values also would be constant. But such is not the case. The quantity of labour necessary for the production of a commodity changes continuously with the changes in the productive powers of the labour employed. The greater the productive powers of labour, the more produce is finished in a given time of labour; and the smaller the productive powers of labour, the less produce is finished in the same time. If, for example, in the progress of population it should become necessary to cultivate less fertile soils, the same amount of produce would be only attainable by a greater amount of labour spent, and the value of agricultural produce would consequently rise. On the other hand, if with the modern means of production, a single spinner converts into yarn, during one working day, many thousand times the amount of cotton which he could have spun during the same time with the spinning wheel, it is evident that every single pound of cotton will absorb many thousand times less of spinning labour than it did before, and, consequently, the value added by spinning to every single pound of cotton will be a thousand times less than before. The value of yarn will sink accordingly.

Apart from the different natural energies and acquired working abilities of different peoples, the productive powers of labour must principally depend:

Firstly. Upon the *natural* conditions of labour, such as fertility of soil, mines, and so forth.

Secondly. Upon the progressive improvement of the *social powers of labour*, such as are derived from production on a grand scale, concentration of capital and combination of labour, subdivision of labour, machinery, improved methods, appliance of chemical and other natural agencies, shortening of time and space by means of communication and transport, and every other contrivance by which science presses natural agencies into the service of labour, and by which the social or co-operative character of labour is developed. The greater the productive powers of labour, the less labour is bestowed upon a given

amount of produce; hence the smaller the value of this produce. The smaller the productive powers of labour, the more labour is bestowed upon the same amount of produce; hence the greater its value. As a general law we may, therefore, set it down that:

*The values of commodities are directly as the times of labour employed in their production, and are inversely as the productive powers of the labour employed.*

Having till now only spoken of *value*, I shall add a few words about *price*, which is a peculiar form assumed by value.

Price, taken by itself, is nothing but the *monetary expression of value*. The values of all commodities of this country, for example, are expressed in gold prices, while on the Continent they are mainly expressed in silver prices. The value of gold or silver, like that of all other commodities, is regulated by the quantity of labour necessary for getting them. You exchange a certain amount of your national products, in which a certain amount of your national labour is crystallised, for the produce of the gold and silver producing countries, in which a certain quantity of *their* labour is crystallised. It is in this way, in fact by barter, that you learn to express in gold and silver the values of all commodities, that is the respective quantities of labour bestowed upon them. Looking somewhat closer into the *monetary expression of value*, or what comes to the same, the *conversion of value into price*, you will find that it is a process by which you give to the *values* of all commodities an *independent* and *homogeneous form*, or by which you express them as quantities of *equal* social labour. So far as it is but the monetary expression of value, price has been called *natural price* by Adam Smith, *prix nécessaire* by the French physiocrats.

What then is the relation between *value* and *market prices*, or between *natural prices* and *market prices*? You all know that the *market price* is the *same* for all commodities of the same kind, however the conditions of production may differ for the individual producers. The market price expresses only the *average amount of social labour* necessary, under the average conditions of production, to supply the market with a certain mass of a certain article. It is calculated upon the whole lot of a commodity or a certain description.

So far the *market price* of a commodity coincides with its *value*. On the other hand, the oscillations of market prices, rising now over, sinking now under the value or natural price, depend upon the fluctuations of supply and demand. The deviations of market prices from values are continual, but as Adam Smith says: "The natural price is the central price to which the prices of commodities are continually gravitating. Different accidents may sometimes keep them suspended a good deal above it, and sometimes force them down even somewhat below it. But whatever may be the obstacles which hinder them from settling in this centre of repose and continuance, they are constantly tending towards it."

I cannot now sift this matter. It suffices to say that *if* supply and demand equilibrate each other, the market prices of commodities will correspond with their natural prices, that is to say with their values, as determined by the respective quantities of labour required for their production. But supply and demand *must* constantly tend to equilibrate each other, although they do so only by compensating one fluctuation by another, a rise by a fall, and *vice versa*. If instead of considering only the daily fluctuations you analyse the movement of market prices for longer periods, as Mr. Tooke, for example, has done in his *History of Prices*, you will find that the fluctuations of market prices, their deviations from values, their ups and downs, paralyse and compensate each other; so that apart from the effect of monopolies and some other modifications I must now pass by, all descriptions of commodities are, on the average, sold at their respective *values* or natural prices. The average periods during which the fluctuations of market prices compensate each other are different for different kinds of commodities, because with one kind it is easier to adapt supply to demand than with the other.

If then, speaking broadly, and embracing somewhat longer periods, all descriptions of commodities sell at their respective values, it is nonsense to suppose that profit, not in individual cases, but that the constant and usual profits of different trades spring from surcharging the prices of commodities or selling them at a price over and above their *value*. The absurdity of this notion becomes evident if it is generalised. What a man

would constantly win as a seller he would as constantly lose as a purchaser. It would not do to say that there are men who are buyers without being sellers, or consumers without being producers. What these people pay to the producers, they must first get from them for nothing. If a man first takes your money and afterwards returns that money in buying your commodities, you will never enrich yourselves by selling your commodities too dear to that same man. This sort of transaction might diminish a loss, but would never help in realising a profit.

To explain, therefore, the *general nature of profits*, you must start from the theorem that, on an average, commodities are sold at their real values, and that *profits are derived from selling them at their values*, that is, in proportion to the quantity of labour realised in them. If you cannot explain profit upon this supposition, you cannot explain it at all. This seems paradox and contrary to everyday observation. It is also paradox that the earth moves round the sun, and that water consists of two highly inflammable gases. Scientific truth is always paradox, if judged by everyday experience, which catches only the delusive appearance of things.

## VII

### LABOURING POWER<sup>1</sup>

HAVING now, as far as it could be done in such a cursory manner, analysed the nature of *Value*, of the *Value of any commodity whatever*, we must turn our attention to the specific *Value of Labour*. And here, again, I must startle you by a seeming paradox. All of you feel sure that what they daily sell is their Labour; that, therefore, Labour has a Price, and that, the price of a commodity being only the monetary expression of its value, there must certainly exist such a thing as the *Value of Labour*. However, there exists no such thing as the *Value of Labour* in the common acceptance of the word. We have seen that the amount of necessary labour crystallised in a commodity constitutes its value. Now, applying this notion of value, how could we define, say, the value of a ten hours' working day?

<sup>1</sup> "Labour Power" in the English translation of *Capital*.

How much labour is contained in that day? Ten hours' labour. To say that the value of a ten hours' working day is equal to ten hours' labour, or the quantity of labour contained in it, would be a tautological and, moreover, a nonsensical expression. Of course, having once found out the true but hidden sense of the expression "*Value of Labour*," we shall be able to interpret this irrational, and seemingly impossible application of value, in the same way that, having once made sure of the real movement of the celestial bodies, we shall be able to explain their apparent or merely phenomenal movements.

What the working man sells is not directly his *Labour*, but his *Labouring Power*, the temporary disposal of which he makes over to the capitalist. This is so much the case that I do not know whether by the English laws, but certainly by some Continental laws, the *maximum time* is fixed for which a man is allowed to sell his labouring power. If allowed to do so for any indefinite period whatever, slavery would be immediately restored. Such a sale, if it comprised his lifetime, for example, would make him at once the lifelong slave of his employer.

One of the oldest economists and most original philosophers of England—Thomas Hobbes—has already, in his *Leviathan*, instinctively hit upon this point overlooked by all his successors. He says: "The *value or worth of a man* is, as in all other things, his *price*: that is so much as would be given for the *Use of his Power*."

Proceeding from this basis, we shall be able to determine the *Value of Labour* as that of all other commodities.

But before doing so, we might ask, how does this strange phenomenon arise, that we find on the market a set of buyers, possessed of land, machinery, raw material, and the means of life, all of them, save land in its crude state, the *products of labour*, and on the other hand, a set of sellers who have nothing to sell except their labouring power, their working arms and brains? That the one set buys continually in order to make a profit and enrich themselves, while the other set continually sells in order to earn their livelihood? The inquiry into this question would be an inquiry into what the economists call "*Previous, or Original Accumulation*," but which ought to be called *Original Expropriation*. We should find that this so-

called *Original Accumulation* means nothing but a series of historical processes, resulting in a *Decomposition of the Original Union* existing between the Labouring Man and his Means of Labour. Such an inquiry, however, lies beyond the pale of my present subject. The *Separation* between the Man of Labour and the Means of Labour once established, such a state of things will maintain itself and reproduce itself upon a constantly increasing scale, until a new and fundamental revolution in the mode of production should again overturn it, and restore the original union in a new historical form.

What, then, is the *Value of Labouring Power*?

Like that of every other commodity, its value is determined by the quantity of labour necessary to produce it. The labouring power of a man exists only in his living individuality. A certain mass of necessities must be consumed by a man to grow up and maintain his life. But the man, like the machine, will wear out, and must be replaced by another man. Beside the mass of necessities required for *his own* maintenance, he wants another amount of necessities to bring up a certain quota of children that are to replace him on the labour market and to perpetuate the race of labourers. Moreover, to develop his labouring power, and acquire a given skill, another amount of values must be spent. For our purpose it suffices to consider only average labour, the costs of whose education and development are vanishing magnitudes. Still I must seize upon this occasion to state that, as the costs of producing labouring powers of different quality do differ, so must differ the values of the labouring powers employed in different trades. The cry for an *equality of wages* rests, therefore, upon a mistake, is an inane wish never to be fulfilled. It is an offspring of that false and superficial radicalism that accepts premises and tries to evade conclusions. Upon the basis of the wages system the value of labouring power is settled like that of every other commodity; and as different kinds of labouring power have different values, or require different quantities of labour for their production, they *must* fetch different prices in the labour market. To clamour for *equal or even equitable retribution* on the basis of the wages system is the same as to clamour for *freedom* on the basis of the slavery system. What you think

just or equitable is out of the question. The question is: What is necessary and unavoidable with a given system of production?

After what has been said, the *value of labouring power* is determined by the *value of the necessities* required to produce, develop, maintain, and perpetuate the labouring power.

## VIII

### PRODUCTION OF SURPLUS VALUE

Now suppose that the average amount of the daily necessities of a labouring man require *six hours of average labour* for their production. Suppose, moreover, six hours of average labour to be also realised in a quantity of gold equal to 3s. Then 3s. would be the *Price*, or the monetary expression of the *Daily Value* of that man's *Labouring Power*. If he worked daily six hours he would daily produce a value sufficient to buy the average amount of his daily necessities, or to maintain himself as a labouring man.

But our man is a wages labourer. He must, therefore, sell his labouring power to a capitalist. If he sells it at 3s. daily, or 18s. weekly, he sells it at its value. Suppose him to be a spinner. If he works six hours daily he will add to the cotton a value of 3s. daily. This value, daily added by him, would be an exact equivalent for the wages, or the price of his labouring power, received daily. But in that case no *surplus value* or *surplus produce* whatever would go to the capitalist. Here, then, we come to the rub.

In buying the labouring power of the workman, and paying its value, the capitalist, like every other purchaser, has acquired the right to consume or use the commodity bought. You consume or use the labouring power of a man by making him work, as you consume or use a machine by making it run. By paying the daily or weekly value of the labouring power of the workman, the capitalist has, therefore, acquired the right to use or make that labouring power work during the *whole day or week*. The working day or the working week has, of course, certain limits, but those we shall afterwards look more closely at.



For the present I want to turn your attention to one decisive point.

The *value* of the labouring power is determined by the quantity of labour necessary to maintain or reproduce it, but the *use* of that labouring power is only limited by the active energies and physical strength of the labourer. The daily or weekly *value* of the labouring power is quite distinct from the daily or weekly exercise of that power, the same as the food a horse wants and the time it can carry the horseman are quite distinct. The quantity of labour by which the *value* of the workman's labouring power is limited forms by no means a limit to the quantity of labour which his labouring power is apt to perform. Take the example of our spinner. We have seen that, to daily reproduce his labouring power, he must daily reproduce a value of three shillings, which he will do by working six hours daily. But this does not disable him from working ten or twelve or more hours a day. But by paying the daily or weekly *value* of the spinner's labouring power the capitalist has acquired the right of using that labouring power during *the whole day or week*. He will, therefore, make him work daily, say, *twelve* hours. *Over and above* the six hours required to replace his wages, or the value of his labouring power, he will, therefore, have to work *six other hours*, which I shall call hours of *surplus labour*, which surplus labour will realise itself in a *surplus value* and a *surplus produce*. If our spinner, for example, by his daily labour of six hours, added three shillings' value to the cotton, a value forming an exact equivalent to his wages, he will, in twelve hours, add six shillings' worth to the cotton, and produce *a proportional surplus of yarn*. As he has sold his labouring power to the capitalist, the whole value or produce created by him belongs to the capitalist, the owner *pro tem.* of his labouring power. By advancing three shillings, the capitalist will, therefore, realise a value of six shillings, because, advancing a value in which six hours of labour are crystallised, he will receive in return a value in which twelve hours of labour are crystallised. By repeating this same process daily, the capitalist will daily advance three shillings and daily pocket six shillings, one half of which will go to pay wages anew, and the other half of which will form the *surplus value*, for which

the capitalist pays no equivalent. It is this *sort of exchange between capital and labour* upon which capitalistic production, or the wages system, is founded, and which must constantly result in reproducing the working man as a working man, and the capitalist as a capitalist.

*The rate of surplus value*, all other circumstances remaining the same, will depend on the proportion between that part of the working day necessary to reproduce the value of the labouring power and the *surplus time* or *surplus labour* performed for the capitalist. It will, therefore, depend on the *ratio in which the working day is prolonged over and above that extent*, by working which the working man would only reproduce the value of his labouring power, or replace his wages.

## IX

### VALUE OF LABOUR

WE must now return to the expression, "*Value, or Price of Labour.*"

We have seen that, in fact, it is only the value of the labouring power, measured by the values of commodities necessary for its maintenance. But since the workman receives his wages *after* his labour is performed, and knows, moreover, that what he actually gives to the capitalist is his labour, the value or price of his labouring power necessarily appears to him as the *price or value of his labour itself*. If the price of his labouring power is three shillings, in which six hours of labour are realised, and if he works twelve hours, he necessarily considers these three shillings as the value or price of twelve hours of labour, although these twelve hours of labour realise themselves in a value of six shillings. A double consequence flows from this.

Firstly. *The value or price of the labouring power* takes the semblance of the *price or value of labour itself*, although, strictly speaking, value and price of labour are senseless terms.

Secondly. Although one part only of the workman's daily labour is *paid*, while the other part is *unpaid*, and while that unpaid or surplus labour constitutes exactly the fund out of

which *surplus value* or *profit* is formed, it seems as if the aggregate labour was paid labour.

This false appearance distinguishes *wages labour* from other *historical* forms of labour. On the basis of the wages system even the *unpaid* labour seems to be *paid* labour. With the *slave*, on the contrary, even that part of his labour which is paid appears to be unpaid. Of course, in order to work the slave must live, and one part of his working day goes to replace the value of his own maintenance. But since no bargain is struck between him and his master, and no acts of selling and buying are going on between the two parties, all his labour seems to be given away for nothing.

Take, on the other hand, the peasant serf, such as he, I might say, until yesterday existed in the whole east of Europe. This peasant worked, for example, three days for himself on his own field or the field allotted to him, and the three subsequent days he performed compulsory and gratuitous labour on the estate of his lord. Here, then, the paid and unpaid parts of labour were visibly separated, separated in time and space; and our Liberals overflowed with moral indignation at the preposterous notion of making a man work for nothing.

In point of fact, however, whether a man works three days of the week for himself on his own field and three days for nothing on the estate of his lord, or whether he works in the factory or the workshop six hours daily for himself and six for his employer, comes to the same, although in the latter case the paid and unpaid portions of labour are inseparably mixed up with each other, and the nature of the whole transaction is completely masked by the *intervention of a contract* and the *pay* received at the end of the week. The gratuitous labour appears to be voluntarily given in the one instance, and to be compulsory in the other. That makes all the difference.

In using the word "*value of labour*," I shall only use it as a popular slang term for "*value of labouring power*."

## X

## PROFIT IS MADE BY SELLING A COMMODITY AT ITS VALUE

SUPPOSE an average hour of labour to be realised in a value equal to sixpence, or twelve average hours of labour to be realised in six shillings. Suppose, further, the value of labour to be three shillings or the produce of six hours' labour. If, then, in the raw material, machinery, and so forth, used up in a commodity, twenty-four average hours of labour were realised, its value would amount to twelve shillings. If, moreover, the workman employed by the capitalist added twelve hours of labour to those means of production, these twelve hours would be realised in an additional value of six shillings. The *total value of the product* would, therefore, amount to thirty-six hours of realised labour, and be equal to eighteen shillings. But as the value of labour, or the wages paid to the workman, would be three shillings only, no equivalent would have been paid by the capitalist for the six hours of surplus labour worked by the workman, and realised in the value of the commodity. By selling this commodity at its value for eighteen shillings, the capitalist would, therefore, realise a value of three shillings, for which he had paid no equivalent. These three shillings would constitute the surplus value or profit pocketed by him. The capitalist would consequently realise the profit of three shillings, not by selling his commodity at a price *over and above* its value, but by selling it *at its real value*.

The value of a commodity is determined by the *total quantity of labour* contained in it. But part of that quantity of labour is realised in a value, for which an equivalent has been paid in the form of wages; part of it is realised in a value for which *no* equivalent has been paid. Part of the labour contained in the commodity is *paid* labour; part is *unpaid* labour. By selling, therefore, the commodity *at its value*, that is, as the crystallisation of the *total quantity of labour* bestowed upon it, the capitalist must necessarily sell it at a profit. He sells not only *what* has cost him an equivalent, but he sells also *what* has cost him nothing, although it has cost the labour of his workman. The cost of the commodity to the capitalist and its real cost are

different things. I repeat, therefore, that normal and average profits are made by selling commodities not *above*, but *at their real values*.

## XI

### THE DIFFERENT PARTS INTO WHICH SURPLUS VALUE IS DECOMPOSED

THE *surplus value*, or that part of the total value of the commodity in which the *surplus labour* or *unpaid labour* of the working man is realised, I call *Profit*. The whole of that profit is not pocketed by the employing capitalist. The monopoly of land enables the landlord to take one part of that *surplus value*, under the name of *rent*, whether the land is used for agriculture or buildings or railways, or for any other productive purpose. On the other hand, the very fact that the possession of the *means of labour* enables the employing capitalist to produce a *surplus value*, or, what comes to the same, to *appropriate to himself a certain amount of unpaid labour*, enables the owner of the means of labour, which he lends wholly or partly to the employing capitalist—enables, in one word, the *money-lending capitalist* to claim for himself under the name of *interest* another part of that surplus value, so that there remains to the employing capitalist *as such* only what is called *industrial* or *commercial profit*.

By what laws this division of the total amount of surplus value amongst the three categories of people is regulated is a question quite foreign to our subject. This much, however, results from what has been stated.

*Rent, Interest, and Industrial Profit* are only different names for different parts of the *surplus value* of the commodity, or the *unpaid labour realised in it*, and they are *equally derived from this source, and from this source alone*. They are not derived from *land* as such nor from *capital* as such, but land and capital enable their owners to get their respective shares out of the surplus value extracted by the employing capitalist from the labourer. For the labourer himself it is a matter of subordinate importance whether that surplus value, the result of his

surplus labour, or unpaid labour, is altogether pocketed by the employing capitalist, or whether the latter is obliged to pay portions of it, under the names of rent and interest, away to third parties. Suppose the employing capitalist to use only his own capital and to be his own landlord, then the whole surplus value would go into his pocket.

It is the employing capitalist who immediately extracts from the labourer this surplus value, whatever part of it he may ultimately be able to keep for himself. Upon this relation, therefore, between the employing capitalist and the wages labourer the whole wages system and the whole present system of production hinge. Some of the citizens who took part in our debate were, therefore, wrong in trying to mince matters, and to treat this fundamental relation between the employing capitalist and the working man as a secondary question, although they were right in stating that, under given circumstances, a rise of prices might affect in very unequal degrees the employing capitalist, the landlord, the moneyed capitalist, and, if you please, the tax-gatherer.

Another consequence follows from what has been stated.

That part of the value of the commodity which represents only the value of the raw materials, the machinery, in one word, the value of the means of production used up, forms *no revenue* at all, but replaces *only capital*. But, apart from this, it is false that the other part of the value of the commodity *which forms revenue*, or may be spent in the form of wages, profits, rent, interest, is *constituted* by the value of wages, the value of rent, the value of profit, and so forth. We shall, in the first instance, discard wages, and only treat industrial profits, interest, and rent. We have just seen that the *surplus value* contained in the commodity, or that part of its value in which *unpaid labour* is realised, resolves itself into different fractions, bearing three different names. But it would be quite the reverse of the truth to say that its value is *composed* of, or *formed* by, the *addition* of the *independent values of these three constituents*.

If one hour of labour realises itself in a value of sixpence, if the working day of the labourer comprises twelve hours, if half of this time is unpaid labour, that surplus labour will add to the commodity a *surplus value* of three shillings, that is of

value for which no equivalent has been paid. This surplus value of three shillings constitutes the *whole fund* which the employing capitalist may divide, in whatever proportions, with the landlord and the money-lender. The value of these three shillings constitutes the limit of the value they have to divide amongst them. But it is not the employing capitalist who adds to the value of the commodity an arbitrary value for his profit, to which another value is added for the landlord, and so forth, so that the addition of these arbitrarily fixed values would constitute the total value. You see, therefore, the fallacy of the popular notion, which confounds the *decomposition* of a *given value* into three parts, with the *formation* of that value by the addition of three *independent* values, thus converting the aggregate value, from which rent, profit, and interest are derived, into an arbitrary magnitude.

If the total profit realised by a capitalist be equal to £100, we call this sum, considered as absolute magnitude, the *amount of profit*. But if we calculate the ratio which those £100 bear to the capital advanced, we call this *relative* magnitude, the *rate of profit*. It is evident that this rate of profit may be expressed in a double way.

Suppose £100 to be the capital *advanced in wages*. If the surplus value created is also £100—and this would show us that half the working day of the labourer consists of *unpaid labour*—and if we measured this profit by the value of the capital advanced in wages, we should say that the *rate of profit* amounted to one hundred per cent, because the value advanced would be one hundred and the value realised would be two hundred.

If, on the other hand, we should not only consider the *capital advanced in wages*, but the *total capital* advanced, say, for example, £500, of which £400 represented the value of raw materials, machinery, and so forth, we should say that the *rate of profit* amounted only to twenty per cent, because the profit of one hundred would be but the fifth part of the *total capital* advanced.

The first mode of expressing the rate of profit is the only one which shows you the real ratio between paid and unpaid labour, the real degree of the *exploitation* (you must allow

me this French word) *of labour*. The other mode of expression is that in common use, and is, indeed, appropriate for certain purposes. At all events, it is very useful for concealing the degree in which the capitalist extracts gratuitous labour from the workman.

In the remarks I have still to make I shall use the word *Profit* for the whole amount of the surplus value extracted by the capitalist without any regard to the division of that surplus value between different parties, and in using the words *Rate of Profit*, I shall always measure profits by the value of the capital advanced in wages.

## XII

### GENERAL RELATION OF PROFITS, WAGES AND PRICES

DEDUCT from the value of a commodity the value replacing the value of the raw materials, and other means of production used upon it, that is to say, deduct the value representing the *past* labour contained in it, and the remainder of its value will resolve into the quantity of labour added by the working man *last* employed. If that working man works twelve hours daily, if twelve hours of average labour crystallise themselves in an amount of gold equal to six shillings, this additional value of six shillings is the *only* value his labour will have created. This given value, determined by the time of his labour, is the only fund from which both he and the capitalist have to draw their respective shares or dividends, the only value to be divided into wages and profits. It is evident that this value itself will not be altered by the variable proportions in which it may be divided amongst the two parties. There will also be nothing changed if in the place of one working man you put the whole working population, twelve million working days, for example, instead of one.

Since the capitalist and workman have only to divide this limited value, that is, the value measured by the total labour of the working man, the more the one gets the less will the other get, and *vice versa*. Whenever a quantity is given, one part of it will increase inversely as the other decreases. If the wages



change, profits will change in an opposite direction. If wages fall, profits will rise; and if wages rise, profits will fall. If the working man, on our former supposition gets three shillings, equal to one half of the value he has created, or if his whole working day consists half of paid, half of unpaid labour, the *rate of profit* will be 100 per cent because the capitalist would also get three shillings. If the working man receives only two shillings or works only one third of the whole day for himself, the capitalist will get four shillings, and the rate of profit will be 200 per cent. If the working man receives four shillings, the capitalist will only receive two, and the rate of profit would sink to 50 per cent, but all these variations will not affect the value of the commodity. A general rise of wages would, therefore, result in a fall of the general rate of profit, but not affect values. But although the values of commodities, which must ultimately regulate their market prices, are exclusively determined by the total quantities of labour fixed in them, and not by the division of that quantity into paid and unpaid labour, it by no means follows that the values of the single commodities, or lots of commodities, produced during twelve hours, for example, will remain constant. The *number* or mass of commodities produced in a given time of labour, or by a given quantity of labour, depends upon the *productive power* of the labour employed, and not upon its *extent* or length. With one degree of the productive power of spinning labour, for example, a working day of twelve hours may produce twelve pounds of yarn, with a lesser degree of productive power only two pounds. If then twelve hours' average labour were realised in the value of six shillings in the one case, the twelve pounds of yarn would cost six shillings, in the the other case the two pounds of yarn would also cost six shillings. One pound of yarn would, therefore, cost sixpence in the one case, and three shillings in the other. This difference of price would result from the difference in the productive powers of labour employed. One hour of labour would be realised in one pound of yarn with the greater productive power, while with the smaller productive power, six hours of labour would be realised in one pound of yarn. The price of a pound of yarn would, in the one instance, be only sixpence, although wages were relatively

high and the rate of profit low; it would be three shillings in the other instance, although wages were low and the rate of profit high. This would be so because the price of the pound of yarn is regulated by the *total amount of labour worked up in it*, and not by the *proportional division of that total amount into paid and unpaid labour*. The fact I have before mentioned that high-priced labour may produce cheap, and low-priced labour may produce dear commodities, loses, therefore, its paradoxical appearance. It is only the expression of the general law that the value of a commodity is regulated by the quantity of labour worked up in it, but that quantity of labour worked up in it depends altogether upon the productive powers of the labour employed, and will, therefore, vary with every variation in the productivity of labour.

## XIII

MAIN CASES OF ATTEMPTS AT RAISING WAGES OR RESISTING  
THEIR FALL

LET us now seriously consider the main cases in which a rise of wages is attempted or a reduction of wages resisted.

1. We have seen that the *value of the labouring power*, or in more popular parlance, the *value of labour*, is determined by the value of necessities, or the quantity of labour required to produce them. If, then, in a given country the value of the daily average necessities of the labourer represented six hours of labour expressed in three shillings, the labourer would have to work six hours daily to produce an equivalent for his daily maintenance. If the whole working day was twelve hours, the capitalist would pay him the value of his labour by paying him three shillings. Half the working day would be unpaid labour, and the rate of profit would amount to 100 per cent. But now suppose that, consequent upon a decrease of productivity, more labour should be wanted to produce, say, the same amount of agricultural produce, so that the price of the average daily necessities should rise from three to four shillings. In that case the *value* of labour would rise by one third, or  $33\frac{1}{3}$  per cent. Eight hours of the working day would be required to

produce an equivalent for the daily maintenance of the labourer, according to his old standard of living. The surplus labour would therefore sink from six hours to four, and the rate of profit from 100 to 50 per cent. But in insisting upon a rise of wages, the labourer would only insist upon getting the *increased value of his labour*, like every other seller of a commodity, who, the costs of his commodities having increased, tries to get its increased value paid. If wages did not rise, or not sufficiently rise, to compensate for the increased values of necessaries, the *price of labour* would sink *below the value of labour*, and the labourer's standard of life would deteriorate.

But a change might also take place in an opposite direction. By virtue of the increased productivity of labour, the same amount of the average daily necessaries might sink from three to two shillings, or only four hours out of the working day, instead of six, be wanted to reproduce an equivalent for the value of the daily necessaries. The working man would now be able to buy with two shillings as many necessaries as he did before with three shillings. Indeed, the *value of labour* would have sunk, but that diminished value would command the same amount of commodities as before. Then profits would rise from three to four shillings, and the rate of profit from 100 to 200 per cent. Although the labourer's absolute standard of life would have remained the same, his *relative wages*, and therewith his *relative social position*, as compared with that of the capitalist, would have been lowered. If the working man should resist that reduction of relative wages, he would only try to get some share in the increased productive powers of his own labour, and to maintain his former relative position in the social scale. Thus, after the abolition of the Corn Laws, and in flagrant violation of the most solemn pledges given during the anti-Corn Law agitation, the English factory lords generally reduced wages ten per cent. The resistance of the workmen was at first baffled, but, consequent upon circumstances I cannot now enter upon, the ten per cent lost were afterwards regained.

2. The *values* of necessaries, and consequently the *value of labour*, might remain the same, but a change might occur in their *money prices*, consequent upon a previous *change* in the *value of money*.

By the discovery of more fertile mines and so forth, two ounces of gold might, for example, cost no more labour to produce than one ounce did before. The *value* of gold would then be depreciated by one half, or fifty per cent. As the *values* of all other commodities would then be expressed in twice their former *money prices*, so also the same with the *value of labour*. Twelve hours of labour, formerly expressed in six shillings, would now be expressed in twelve shillings. If the working man's wages should remain three shillings, instead of rising to six shillings, the *money price of his labour* would only be equal to *half the value of his labour*, and his standard of life would fearfully deteriorate. This would also happen in a greater or lesser degree if his wages should rise, but not proportionately to the fall in the value of gold. In such a case nothing would have been changed, either in the productive powers of labour, or in supply and demand, or in values. Nothing would have been changed except the *money names* of those values. To say that in such a case the workman ought not to insist upon a proportionate rise of wages, is to say that he must be content to be paid with names, instead of with things. All past history proves that whenever such a depreciation of money occurs, the capitalists are on the alert to seize this opportunity for defrauding the workman. A very large school of political economists assert that, consequent upon the new discoveries of gold lands, the better working of silver mines, and the cheaper supply of quicksilver, the value of precious metals has been again depreciated. This would explain the general and simultaneous attempts on the Continent at a rise of wages.

3. We have till now supposed that the *working day* has given limits. The working day, however, has, by itself, no constant limits. It is the constant tendency of capital to stretch it to its utmost physically possible length, because in the same degree surplus labour, and consequently the profit resulting therefrom, will be increased. The more capital succeeds in prolonging the working day, the greater the amount of other people's labour it will appropriate. During the seventeenth and even the first two-thirds of the eighteenth century a ten hours' working day was the normal working day all over England. During the anti-Jacobin war, which was in fact a war waged by the British

barons against the British working masses, capital celebrated its bacchanalia, and prolonged the working day from ten to twelve, fourteen, eighteen hours. Malthus, by no means a man whom you would suspect of a maudlin sentimentalism, declared in a pamphlet, published about 1815, that if this sort of thing was to go on the life of the nation would be attacked at its very source. A few years before the general introduction of the newly-invented machinery, about 1765, a pamphlet appeared in England under the title: *An Essay on Trade*. The anonymous author, an avowed enemy of the working classes, declaims on the necessity of expanding the limits of the working day. Amongst other means to this end, he proposes *working houses*, which, he says, ought to be "*Houses of Terror*." And what is the length of the working day he prescribes for these "*Houses of Terror*"? *Twelve hours*, the very same time which in 1832 was declared by capitalists, political economists, and ministers to be not only the existing but the necessary time of labour for a child under twelve years.

By selling his labouring power, and he must do so under the present system, the working man makes over to the capitalist the consumption of that power, but within certain rational limits. He sells his labouring power in order to maintain it, apart from its natural wear and tear, but not to destroy it. In selling his labouring power at its daily or weekly value, it is understood that in one day or one week that labouring power shall not be submitted to two days' or two weeks' waste or wear and tear. Take a machine worth £1,000. If it is used up in ten years it will add to the value of the commodities in whose production it assists £100 yearly. If it be used up in five years it would add £200 yearly, or the value of its annual wear and tear is in inverse ratio to the quickness with which it is consumed. But this distinguishes the working man from the machine. Machinery does not wear out exactly in the same ratio in which it is used. Man, on the contrary, decays in a greater ratio than would be visible from the mere numerical addition of work.

In their attempts at reducing the working day to its former rational dimensions, or, where they cannot enforce a legal fixation of a normal working day, at checking overwork by a rise of wages, a rise not only in proportion to the surplus time

exacted, but in a greater proportion, working men fulfil only a duty to themselves and their race. They only set limits to the tyrannical usurpations of capital. Time is the room of human development. A man who has no free time to dispose of, whose whole lifetime, apart from the mere physical interruptions by sleep, meals, and so forth, is absorbed by his labour for the capitalist, is less than a beast of burden. He is a mere machine for producing foreign wealth, broken in body and brutalised in mind. Yet the whole history of modern industry shows that capital, if not checked, will recklessly and ruthlessly work to cast down the whole working class to this utmost state of degradation.

In prolonging the working day the capitalist may pay *higher wages* and still lower the *value of labour*, if the rise of wages does not correspond to the greater amount of labour extracted, and the quicker decay of the labouring power thus caused. This may be done in another way. Your middle-class statisticians will tell you, for instance, that the average wages of factory families in Lancashire has risen. They forget that instead of the labour of the man, the head of the family, his wife and perhaps three or four children are now thrown under the Juggernaut wheels of capital, and that the rise of the aggregate wages does not correspond to the aggregate surplus labour extracted from the family.

Even with given limits of the working day, such as they now exist in all branches of industry subjected to the factory laws, a rise of wages may become necessary, if only to keep up the old standard *value of labour*. By increasing the *intensity* of labour, a man may be made to expend as much vital force in one hour as he formerly did in two. This has, to a certain degree, been effected in the trades, placed under the Factory Acts, by the acceleration of machinery, and the greater number of working machines which a single individual has now to superintend. If the increase in the intensity of labour or the mass of labour spent in an hour keeps some fair proportion to the decrease in the extent of the working day, the working man will still be the winner. If this limit is overshot, he loses in one form what he has gained in another, and ten hours of labour may then become as ruinous as twelve hours were

before. In checking this tendency of capital, by struggling for a rise of wages corresponding to the rising intensity of labour, the working man only resists the depreciation of his labour and the deterioration of his race.

4. All of you know that, from reasons I have not now to explain, capitalistic production moves through certain periodical cycles. It moves through a state of quiescence, growing animation, prosperity, overtrade, crisis, and stagnation. The market prices of commodities, and the market rates of profit, follow these phases, now sinking below their averages, now rising above them. Considering the whole cycle, you will find that one deviation of the market price is being compensated by the other, and that, taking the average of the cycle, the market prices of commodities are regulated by their values! Well! During the phase of sinking market prices and the phases of crisis and stagnation, the working man, if not thrown out of employment altogether, is sure to have his wages lowered. Not to be defrauded, he must, even with such a fall of market prices, debate with the capitalist in what proportional degree a fall of wages has become necessary. If, during the phases of prosperity, when extra profits are made, he did not battle for a rise of wages, he would, taking the average of one industrial cycle, not even receive his *average wages*, or the *value* of his labour. It is the utmost height of folly to demand that while his wages are necessarily affected by the adverse phases of the cycle, he should exclude himself from compensation during the prosperous phases of the cycle. Generally, the *values* of all commodities are only realised by the compensation of the continuously changing market prices, springing from the continuous fluctuations of demand and supply. On the basis of the present system labour is only a commodity like others. It must, therefore, pass through the same fluctuations to fetch an average price corresponding to its value. It would be absurd to treat it on the one hand as a commodity, and to want on the other hand to exempt it from the laws which regulate the prices of commodities. The slave receives a permanent and fixed amount of maintenance; the wages labourer does not. He must try to get a rise of wages in the one instance, if only to compensate for a fall of wages in the other. If he resigned himself to

accept the will, the dictates of the capitalist as a permanent economic law, he would share in all the miseries of the slave, without the security of the slave.

5. In all the cases I have considered, and they form ninety-nine out of a hundred, you have seen that a struggle for a rise of wages follows only in the track of *previous* changes, and is the necessary offspring of previous changes in the amount of production, the productive powers of labour, the value of labour, the value of money, the extent or the intensity of labour extracted, the fluctuations of market prices, dependent upon the fluctuations of demand and supply, and co-existent with the different phases of the industrial cycle; in one word, as reactions of labour against the previous action of capital. By treating the struggle for a rise of wages independently of all these circumstances, by looking only upon the change of wages, and overlooking all the other changes from which they emanate, you proceed from a false premise in order to arrive at false conclusions.

#### XIV

##### THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN CAPITAL AND LABOUR AND ITS RESULTS

1. HAVING shown that the periodical resistance on the part of the working men against a reduction of wages, and their periodical attempts at getting a rise of wages, are inseparable from the wages system, and dictated by the very fact of labour being assimilated to commodities, and therefore subject to the laws regulating the general movement of prices; having, furthermore, shown that a general rise of wages would result in a fall in the general rate of profit, but not affect the average prices of commodities, or their values, the question now ultimately arises, how far, in this incessant struggle between capital and labour, the latter is likely to prove successful.

I might answer by a generalisation, and say that, as with all other commodities, so with labour, its *market price* will, in the long run, adapt itself to its *value*; that, therefore, despite all the ups and downs, and do what he may, the working man



will, on an average, only receive the value of his labour, which resolves into the value of his labouring power, which is determined by the value of the necessities required for its maintenance and reproduction, which value of necessities finally is regulated by the quantity of labour wanted to produce them.

But there are some peculiar features which distinguish the *value of the labouring power*, or the *value of labour*, from the values of all other commodities. The value of the labouring power is formed by two elements—the one merely physical, the other historical or social. Its *ultimate limit* is determined by the *physical* element, that is to say, to maintain and reproduce itself, to perpetuate its physical existence, the working class must receive the necessities absolutely indispensable for living and multiplying. The *value* of those indispensable necessities forms, therefore, the ultimate limit of the *value of labour*. On the other hand, the length of the working day is also limited by ultimate, although very elastic boundaries. Its ultimate limit is given by the physical force of the labouring man. If the daily exhaustion of his vital forces exceeds a certain degree, it cannot be exerted anew, day by day. However, as I said, this limit is very elastic. A quick succession of unhealthy and short-lived generations will keep the labour market as well supplied as a series of vigorous and long-lived generations.

Besides this mere physical element, the value of labour is in every country determined by a *traditional standard of life*. It is not mere physical life, but it is the satisfaction of certain wants springing from the social conditions in which people are placed and reared up. The English standard of life may be reduced to the *Irish* standard; the standard of life of a German peasant to that of a Livonian peasant. The important part which historical tradition and social habitude play in this respect, you may learn from Mr. Thornton's work on *Overpopulation*, where he shows that the average wages in different agricultural districts of England still nowadays differ more or less according to the more or less favourable circumstances under which the districts have emerged from the state of serfdom.

This historical or social element, entering into the value of labour, may be expanded, or contracted, or altogether extinguished, so that nothing remains but the *physical limit*. Dur-

ing the time of the *anti-Jacobin war*, undertaken, as the incorrigible tax-eater and sinecurist, old George Rose, used to say, to save the comforts of our holy religion from the inroads of the French infidels, the honest English farmers, so tenderly handled in a former session of ours, depressed the wages of the agricultural labourers even beneath that *mere physical minimum*, but made up by *Poor Laws* the remainder necessary for the physical perpetuation of the race. This was a glorious way to convert the wages labourer into a slave, and Shakespeare's proud yeoman into a pauper.

By comparing the standard wages or values of labour in different countries, and by comparing them in different historical epochs of the same country, you will find that the *value of labour* itself is not a fixed but a variable magnitude, even supposing the values of all other commodities to remain constant.

A similar comparison would prove that not only the *market rates of profit* change, but its *average* rates.

But as to *profits*, there exists no law which determines their *minimum*. We cannot say what is the ultimate limit of their decrease. And why cannot we fix that limit? Because, although we can fix the *minimum* of wages, we cannot fix their *maximum*. We can only say that, the limits of the working day being given, the *maximum of profit* corresponds to the *physical minimum of wages*; and that wages being given, the *maximum of profit* corresponds to such a prolongation of the working day as is compatible with the physical forces of the labourer. The maximum of profit is therefore limited by the physical minimum of wages and the physical maximum of the working day. It is evident that between the two limits of this *maximum rate of profit* an immense scale of variations is possible. The fixation of its actual degree is only settled by the continuous struggle between capital and labour, the capitalist constantly tending to reduce wages to their physical minimum, and to extend the working day to its physical maximum, while the working man constantly presses in the opposite direction.

The question resolves itself into a question of the respective powers of the combatants.

2. As to the *limitation of the working day*, in England, as

in all their countries, it has never been settled except by *legislative interference*. Without the working men's continuous pressure from without that interference would never have taken place. But at all events, the result was not to be attained by private settlement between the working men and the capitalists. This very necessity of *general political action* affords the proof that in its merely economic action capital is the stronger side.

As to the *limits* of the *value of labour*, its actual settlement always depends upon supply and demand, I mean the demand for labour on the part of capital, and the supply of labour by the working men. In colonial countries the law of supply and demand favours the working man. Hence the relatively high standard of wages in the United States. Capital may there try its utmost. It cannot prevent the labour market from being continuously emptied by the continuous conversion of wages labourers into dependent, self-sustaining peasants. The function of a wages labourer is for a very large part of the American people but a probational state, which they are sure to leave within a longer or shorter term. To mend this colonial state of things, the paternal British government accepted for some time what is called the modern colonisation theory, which consists in putting an artificial high price upon colonial land, in order to prevent the too quick conversion of the wages labourer into the independent peasant.

But let us now come to old civilised countries, in which capital domineers over the whole process of production. Take, for example, the rise in England of agricultural wages from 1849 to 1859. What was its consequence? The farmers could not, as our friend Weston would have advised them, raise the value of wheat, nor even its market prices. They had, on the contrary, to submit to their fall. But during these eleven years they introduced machinery of all sorts, adopted more scientific methods, converted part of arable land into pasture, increased the size of farms, and with this the scale of production, and by these and other processes diminishing the demand for labour by increasing its productive power, made the agricultural population again relatively redundant. This is the general method in which a reaction, quicker or slower, of capital against a rise of wages takes place in old, settled countries. Ricardo has justly

remarked that machinery is in constant competition with labour, and can often be only introduced when the price of labour has reached a certain height, but the appliance of machinery is but one of the many methods for increasing the productive powers of labour. This very same development which makes common labour relatively redundant simplifies on the other hand skilled labour, and thus depreciates it.

The same law obtains in another form. With the development of the productive powers of labour the accumulation of capital will be accelerated, even despite a relatively high rate of wages. Hence, one might infer, as Adam Smith, in whose days modern industry was still in its infancy, did infer, that the accelerated accumulation of capital must turn this balance in favour of the working man, by securing a growing demand for his labour. From this same standpoint many contemporary writers have wondered that English capital having grown in the last twenty years so much quicker than English population, wages should not have been more enhanced. But simultaneously with the progress of accumulation there takes place a *progressive change in the composition of capital*. That part of the aggregate capital which consists of fixed capital, machinery, raw materials, means of production in all possible forms, progressively increases as compared with the other part of capital, which is laid out in wages or in the purchase of labour. This law has been stated in a more or less accurate manner by Mr. Barton, Ricardo, Sismondi, Professor Richard Jones, Professor Ramsay, Cherbulliez, and others.

If the proportion of these two elements of capital was originally one to one, it will, in the progress of industry, become five to one, and so forth. If of a total capital of 600, 300 is laid out in instruments, raw materials, and so forth, and 300 in wages, the total capital wants only to be doubled to create a demand for 600 working men instead of for 300. But if of a capital of 600, 500 is laid out in machinery, materials, and so forth, and 100 only in wages, the same capital must increase from 600 to 3,600 in order to create a demand for 600 workmen instead of for 300. In the progress of industry the demand for labour keeps, therefore, no pace with the accumulation of capital.

It will still increase, but increase in a constantly diminishing ratio as compared with the increase of capital.

These few hints will suffice to show that the very development of modern industry must progressively turn the scale in favour of the capitalist against the working man, and that consequently the general tendency of capitalistic production is not to raise, but to sink the average standard of wages, or to push the *value of labour* more or less to its *minimum limit*. Such being the tendency of *things* in this system, is this to say that the working class ought to renounce their resistance against the encroachments of capital and abandon their attempt at making the best of the occasional chances for their temporary improvement? If they did, they would be degraded to one level mass of broken down wretches past salvation. I think I have shown that their struggles for the standard of wages are incidents inseparable from the whole wages system, that in 99 cases out of 100 their efforts at raising wages are only efforts at maintaining the given value of labour and that the necessity of debating their price with the capitalist is inherent to their condition of having to sell themselves as commodities. By cowardly giving way in their everyday conflict with capital, they would certainly disqualify themselves for the initiating of any larger movement.

At the same time, and quite apart from the general servitude involved in the wages system, the working class ought not to exaggerate to themselves the ultimate working of these everyday struggles. They ought not to forget that they are fighting with effects, but not with the causes of those effects; that they are retarding the downward movement, but not changing its direction; that they are applying palliatives, not curing the malady. They ought, therefore, not to be exclusively absorbed in these unavoidable guerrilla fights incessantly springing up from the never-ceasing encroachments of capital or changes of the market. They ought to understand that, with all the miseries it imposes upon them, the present system simultaneously engenders the *material conditions* and the *social forms* necessary for an economic reconstruction of society. Instead of the *conservative* motto: "*A fair day's wages for a fair day's work!*" they ought to inscribe on their banner the *revolutionary* watchword: "*Abolition of the wages system!*"

After this very long and, I fear, tedious exposition, which I was obliged to enter into to do some justice to the subject matter, I shall conclude by proposing the following resolutions:

Firstly. A general rise in the rate of wages would result in a fall of the general rate of profit, but, broadly speaking, not affect the prices of commodities.

Secondly. The general tendency of capitalist production is not to raise, but to sink the average standard of wages.

Thirdly. Trades Unions work well as centres of resistance against the encroachments of capital. They fail partially from an injudicious use of their power. They fail generally from limiting themselves to a guerrilla war against the effects of the existing system, instead of simultaneously trying to change it, instead of using their organised forces as a lever for the final emancipation of the working class, that is to say, the ultimate abolition of the wages system.

# WAGE-LABOUR AND CAPITAL

By **KARL MARX**

With an Introduction by  
**FREDERICK ENGELS**



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## INTRODUCTION

THIS pamphlet first appeared in the form of a series of leading articles in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, beginning on April 4th, 1849. The text is made up from lectures delivered by Marx before the German Workingmen's Club of Brussels in 1847. The series was never completed. The promise "to be continued," at the end of the editorial in Number 269 of the newspaper, remained unfulfilled in consequence of the precipitous events of that time: the invasion of Hungary by the Russians, and the uprisings in Dresden, Iserlohn, Elberfeld, the Palatinate, and in Baden, which led to the suppression of the paper on May 19th, 1849. And among the papers left by Marx no manuscript of any continuation of these articles has been found.

*Wage-Labour and Capital* has appeared as an independent publication in several editions, the last of which was issued by the Swiss Co-operative Printing Association, in Hottingen-Zurich, in 1884. Hitherto, the several editions have contained the exact wording of the original articles. But since at least ten thousand copies of the present edition are to be circulated as a propaganda tract, the question necessarily forced itself upon me, would Marx himself, under these circumstances, have approved of an unaltered literal reproduction of the original?

Marx, in the forties, had not yet completed his criticism of political economy. This was not done until toward the end of the fifties. Consequently, such of his writings as were published before the first instalment of his *Critique of Political Economy* was finished, deviate in some points from those written after 1859, and contain expressions and whole sentences which, viewed from the standpoint of his later writings, appear inexact, and even incorrect. Now, it goes without saying that in ordinary editions, intended for the public in general, this earlier standpoint, as a part of the intellectual development of the author, has its place; that the author as well as the public, has an indisputable right to an unaltered reprint of these older writings. In such a case, I would not have dreamed of changing a single word in it. But it is otherwise when the edition is destined almost exclusively for the purpose of propaganda. In such

a case, Marx himself would unquestionably have brought the old work, dating from 1849, into harmony with his new point of view, and I feel sure that I am acting in his spirit when I insert in this edition the few changes and additions which are necessary in order to attain this object in all essential points.

Therefore I say to the reader at once: *this pamphlet is not as Marx wrote it in 1849, but approximately as Marx would have written it in 1891.* Moreover, so many copies of the original text are in circulation, that these will suffice until I can publish it again unaltered in a complete edition of Marx's works, to appear at some future time.

My alterations centre about one point. According to the original reading, the worker sells his *labour* for wages, which he receives from the capitalist; according to the present text, he sells his *labour-power*. And for this change, I must render an explanation: to the workers, in order that they may understand that we are not quibbling or word-juggling, but are dealing here with one of the most important points in the whole range of political economy; to the bourgeois, in order that they may convince themselves how greatly the uneducated workers, who can be easily made to grasp the most difficult economic analyses, excel our supercilious "cultured" folk, for whom such ticklish problems remain insoluble their whole life long.

Classical political economy<sup>1</sup> borrowed from the industrial practice the current notion of the manufacturer, that he buys and pays for the labour of his employees. This conception had been quite serviceable for the business purposes of the manufacturer, his bookkeeping and price calculation. But naïvely carried over into political economy, it there produced truly wonderful errors and confusions.

Political economy finds it an established fact that the prices of

<sup>1</sup> "By classical political economy I understand that economy which, since the time of W. Petty, has investigated the real relations of production in bourgeois society, in contradistinction to vulgar economy, which deals with appearances only, ruminates without ceasing on the materials long since provided by scientific economy, and there seeks plausible explanations of the most obtrusive phenomena for bourgeois daily use, but for the rest confines itself to systematising in a pedantic way, and proclaiming for everlasting truths, trite ideas held by the self-complacent bourgeoisie with regard to their own world, to them the best of all possible worlds." (Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 93f.)

all commodities, among them the price of the commodity which it calls "labour," continually change; that they rise and fall in consequence of the most diverse circumstances, which often have no connection whatsoever with the production of the commodities themselves, so that prices appear to be determined, as a rule, by pure chance. As soon, therefore, as political economy stepped forth as a science, it was one of its first tasks to search for the law that hid itself behind this chance, which apparently determined the prices of commodities, and which in reality controlled this very chance. Among the prices of commodities, fluctuating and oscillating, now upward, now downward, the fixed central point was searched for around which these fluctuations and oscillations were taking place. In short, starting from the price of commodities, political economy sought for the value of commodities as the regulating law, by means of which all price fluctuations could be explained, and to which they could all be reduced in the last resort.

And so classical political economy found that the value of a commodity was determined by the labour incorporated in it and requisite to its production. With this explanation it was satisfied. And we too may for the present stop at this point. But to avoid misconceptions, I will remind the reader that to-day this explanation has become wholly inadequate. Marx was the first to investigate thoroughly into the value-forming quality of labour and to discover that not all labour which is apparently, or even really, necessary to the production of a commodity, imparts under all circumstances to this commodity a magnitude of value corresponding to the quantity of labour used up. If, therefore, we say to-day in short, with economists like Ricardo, that the value of a commodity is determined by the labour necessary to its production, we always imply the reservations and restrictions made by Marx. Thus much for our present purpose; further information can be found in Marx's *Critique of Political Economy*, which appeared in 1859, and in the first volume of *Capital*.

But as soon as the economists applied this determination of value by labour to the commodity "labour," they fell from one contradiction into another. How is the value of "labour" determined? By the necessary labour embodied in it. But how much labour is embodied in the labour of a labourer for a day, a week.

a month, a year? The labour of a day, a week, a month, a year. If labour is the measure of all values, we can express the "value of labour" only in labour. But we know absolutely nothing about the value of an hour's labour, if all that we know about it is that it is equal to one hour's labour. So thereby we have not advanced one hair's breadth nearer our goal; we are constantly turning about in a circle.

Classical economics, therefore, essayed another turn. It said: the value of a commodity is equal to its cost of production. But what is the cost of production of "labour"? In order to answer this question, the economists are forced to strain logic just a little. Instead of investigating the cost of production of labour itself, which, unfortunately, cannot be ascertained, they now investigate the cost of production of *the labourer*. And this latter can be ascertained. It changes according to time and circumstances, but for a given condition of society, in a given locality, and in a given branch of production, it, too, is given, at least within quite narrow limits. We live to-day under the regime of capitalist production, under which a large and steadily growing class of the population can live only on the condition that it works for the owners of the means of production—tools, machines, raw materials, and means of subsistence—in return for wages. On the basis of this mode of production, the labourer's cost of production consists of the sum of the means of subsistence (or their price in money) which on the average are requisite to enable him to work, to maintain in him this capacity for work, and to replace him at his departure, by reason of age, sickness, or death, with another labourer—that is to say, to propagate the working class in required numbers.

Let us assume that the money price of these means of subsistence averages 3 shillings a day. Our labourer gets therefore a daily wage of 3 shillings from his employer. For this, the capitalist lets him work, say, twelve hours a day. Our capitalist, moreover, calculates somewhat in the following fashion: Let us assume that our labourer (a machinist) has to make a part of a machine which he finishes in one day. The raw material (iron and brass in the necessary prepared form) costs 20 shillings. The consumption of coal by the steam-engine, the wear and tear of this engine itself, of the turning-lathe, and of the other tools with which our labourer works, represent for one day and one labourer

a value of 1 shilling. The wages for one day are, according to our assumption, 3 shillings. This makes a total of 24 shillings for our piece of a machine.

But the capitalist calculates that on an average he will receive for it a price of 27 shillings from his customers, or 3 shillings over and above his outlay.

Whence do the 3 shillings pocketed by the capitalist come? According to the assertion of classical political economy, commodities are in the long run sold at their values, that is, they are sold at prices which correspond to the necessary quantities of labour contained in them. The average price of our part of a machine—27 shillings—would therefore equal its value, *i.e.*, equal the amount of labour embodied in it. But of these 27 shillings, 21 shillings were values already existing before the machinist began to work; 20 shillings were contained in the raw material, 1 shilling in the fuel consumed during the work and in the machines and tools used in the process and reduced in their efficiency to the value of this amount. There remains 6 shillings, which have been added to the value of the raw material. But according to the supposition of our economists themselves, these 6 shillings can arise only from the labour added to the raw material by the labourer. His twelve hours' labour has created, according to this, a new value of 6 shillings. Therefore, the value of his twelve hours' labour would be equivalent to 6 shillings. So we have at last discovered what the "value of labour" is.

"Hold on there!" cries our machinist. "Six shillings? But I have received only 3 shillings! My capitalist swears high and dry that the value of my twelve hours' labour is no more than 3 shillings, and if I were to demand six, he'd laugh at me. What kind of a story is that?"

If before this we got with our value of labour into a vicious circle, we now surely have driven straight into an insoluble contradiction. We searched for the value of labour, and we found more than we can use. For the labourer the value of the twelve hours' labour is 3 shillings; for the capitalist it is 6 shillings, of which he pays the workingman 3 shillings as wages, and pockets the remaining 3 shillings himself. According to this, labour has not one but two values, and, moreover, two very different values!

As soon as we reduce the values, now expressed in money, to

labour-time, the contradiction becomes even more absurd. By the twelve hours' labour a new value of 6 shillings is created. Therefore in six hours the new value created equals 3 shillings—the amount which the labourer receives for twelve hours' labour. For twelve hours' labour the workingman receives, as an equivalent, the product of six hours' labour. We are thus forced to one of two conclusions: either labour has two values, one of which is twice as large as the other, or twelve equals six! In both cases we get pure absurdities. Turn and twist as we may, we will not get out of this contradiction as long as we speak of the buying and selling of "labour" and of the "value of labour." And just so it happened to the political economists. The last offshoot of classical political economy—the Ricardian school—was largely wrecked on the insolubility of this contradiction. Classical political economy had run itself into a blind alley. The man who discovered the way out of this blind alley was Karl Marx.

What the economists had considered as the cost of production of "labour" was really the cost of production, not of "labour," but of the living labourer himself. And what this labourer sold to the capitalist was not his labour. "So soon as his labour really begins," says Marx, "it ceases to belong to him, and therefore can no longer be sold by him." At the most, he could sell his *future* labour, *i.e.*, assume the obligation of executing a certain piece of work in a certain time. But in this way he does not sell labour (which would first have to be performed), but for a stipulated payment he places his labour-power at the disposal of the capitalist for a certain time (in case of time-wages), or for the performance of a certain task (in case of piece-wages). He hires out or sells his *labour-power*. But this labour-power has grown up with his person and is inseparable from it. Its cost of production therefore coincides with his own cost of production; *what the economists called the cost of production of labour is really the cost of production of the labourer, and therewith of his labour-power*. And thus we can also go back from the cost of production of labour-power to the value of labour-power, and determine the quantity of social labour that is required for the production of a labour-power of a given quality, as Marx has done in the chapter on the "The Buying and Selling of Labour-Power."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Capital*, Vol. I, Part II, Chapter 6.

Now what takes place after the worker has sold his labour-power, *i.e.*, after he has placed his labour-power at the disposal of the capitalist for stipulated wages—whether time-wages or piece-wages? The capitalist takes the labourer into his workshop or factory, where all the articles required for the work can be found—raw materials, auxiliary materials (coal, dyestuffs, etc.), tools and machines. Here the worker begins to work. His daily wages are, as above, 3 shillings, and it makes no difference whether he earns them as day-wages or piece-wages. We again assume that in twelve hours the worker adds by his labour a new value of 6 shillings to the value of the raw materials consumed, which new value the capitalist realises by the sale of the finished piece of work. Out of this new value he pays the worker his 3 shillings, and the remaining 3 shillings he keeps himself. If, now, the labourer creates in twelve hours a value of 6 shillings, in six hours he creates a value of 3 shillings. Consequently, after working six hours for the capitalist the labourer has returned to him the equivalent of the 3 shillings received as wages. After six hours' work both are quits, neither one owing a penny to the other.

"Hold on there!" now cries out the capitalist. "I have hired the labourer for a whole day, for twelve hours. But six hours are only half a day. So work along lively there until the other six hours are at an end—only then will we be even." And, in fact, the labourer has to submit to the conditions of the contract upon which he entered of "his own free will," and according to which he bound himself to work twelve whole hours for a product of labour which cost only six hours' labour.

Similarly with piece-wages. Let us suppose that in twelve hours our worker makes twelve commodities. Each of these costs 2 shillings in raw material and wear and tear, and is sold for  $2\frac{1}{2}$  shillings. On our former assumption, the capitalist gives the labourer one-fourth of a shilling for each piece, which makes a total of 3 shillings for the twelve pieces. To earn this, the worker requires twelve hours. The capitalist receives 30 shillings for the twelve pieces; deducting 24 shillings for raw material and wear and tear there remains 6 shillings, of which he pays 3 shillings in wages and pockets the remaining 3. Just as before! Here also the worker labours six hours for himself, *i.e.*, to replace his wages



(half an hour in each of the twelve hours), and six hours for the capitalist.

The rock upon which the best economists were stranded as long as they started out from the value of labour, vanishes as soon as we make our starting-point the value of labour-power. Labour-power is, in our present-day capitalist society, a commodity like every other commodity, but yet a very peculiar commodity. It has, namely, the peculiarity of being a value-creating force, the source of value, and, moreover, when properly treated, the source of more value than it possesses itself. In the present state of production, human labour-power not only produces in a day a greater value than it itself possesses and costs; but with each new scientific discovery, with each new technical invention, there also rises the surplus of its daily production over its daily cost, while as a consequence there diminishes that part of the working day in which the labourer produces the equivalent of his day's wages, and, on the other hand, lengthens that part of the working day in which he must present labour *gratis* to the capitalist.

And this is the economic constitution of our entire modern society: the working class alone produces all values. For value is only another expression for labour, that expression, namely, by which is designated, in our capitalist society of to-day, the amount of socially necessary labour embodied in a particular commodity. But these values produced by the workers do not belong to the workers. They belong to the owners of the raw materials, machines, tools, and money, which enable them to buy the labour-power of the working class. Hence, the working class gets back only a part of the entire mass of products produced by it. And as we have just seen, the other portion, which the capitalist class retains, and which it has to share, at most, only with the landlord class, is increasing with every new discovery and invention, while the share which falls to the working class (*per capita*) rises but little and very slowly, or not at all, and under certain conditions it may even fall.

But these discoveries and inventions which supplant one another with ever-increasing speed, this productiveness of human labour which increases from day to day to unheard-of proportions, at last gives rise to a conflict, in which present capitalistic economy must go to ruin. On the one hand, immeasurable

wealth and a superfluity of products with which the buyers cannot cope. On the other hand, the great mass of society proletarianised, transformed into wage-labourers, and thereby disabled from appropriating to themselves that superfluity of products. The splitting up of society into a small class, immoderately rich, and a large class of wage-labourers devoid of all property, brings it about that this society smothers in its own superfluity, while the great majority of its members are scarcely, or not at all, protected from extreme want.

This condition becomes every day more absurd and more unnecessary. It *must* be gotten rid of ; it can be gotten rid of. A new social order is possible, in which the class differences of to-day will have disappeared, and in which—perhaps after a short transition period, which, though somewhat deficient in other respects, will in any case be very useful morally—there will be the means of life, of the enjoyment of life, and of the development and activity of all bodily and mental faculties, through the systematic use and further development of the enormous productive powers of society, which exists with us even now, with equal obligation upon all to work. And that the workers are growing ever more determined to achieve this new social order will be proven on both sides of the ocean on this dawning May Day, and on Sunday, May 3rd.

FREDERICK ENGELS.

London, April 30th, 1891.

# WAGE-LABOUR AND CAPITAL

## CHAPTER I

### PRELIMINARY

FROM various quarters we have been reproached for neglecting to portray the economic conditions which form the material basis of the present struggles between classes and nations. With set purpose we have hitherto touched upon these conditions only when they forced themselves upon the surface of the political conflicts.

It was necessary, beyond everything else, to follow the development of the class struggle in the history of our own day, and to prove empirically, by the actual and daily newly created historical material, that with the subjugation of the working class, accomplished in the days of February and March, 1848, the opponents of that class—the bourgeois republicans in France, and the bourgeois and peasant classes who were fighting feudal absolutism throughout the whole continent of Europe—were simultaneously conquered; that the victory of the “moderate republic” in France sounded at the same time the fall of the nations which had responded to the February revolution with heroic wars of independence; and finally that, by the victory over the revolutionary workingmen, Europe fell back into its old double slavery, into the *English-Russian* slavery. The June conflict in Paris, the fall of Vienna, the tragi-comedy in Berlin in November, 1848, the desperate efforts of Poland, Italy, and Hungary, the starvation of Ireland into submission—these were the chief events in which the European class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the working class was summed up, and from which we proved that every revolutionary uprising, however remote from the class struggle its object might appear, must of necessity fail until the revolutionary working class shall have conquered;—that every social reform must remain a Utopia until the proletarian revolution and the feudalistic counter-revolution have been pitted against each other in a *world-wide war*. In our presentation, as in reality, Belgium and Switzerland were tragicomic caricaturish *genre* pictures in the great historic tableau;

the one the model State of the bourgeois monarchy, the other the model State of the bourgeois republic; both of them, States that flatter themselves to be just as free from the class struggle as from the European revolution.<sup>1</sup>

But now, after our readers have seen the class struggle of the year 1848 develop into colossal political proportions, it is time to examine more closely the economic conditions themselves upon which is founded the existence of the capitalist class and its class rule, as well as the slavery of the workers.

We shall present the subject in three great divisions:

1. The Relation of Wage-Labour to Capital, the Slavery of the Worker, the Rule of the Capitalist.
2. The Inevitable Ruin of the Middle Classes and the so-called Commons<sup>2</sup> under the present system.
3. The Commercial Subjugation and Exploitation of the Bourgeois classes of the various European nations by the Despot of the World Market—England.<sup>3</sup>

We shall seek to portray this as simply and popularly as possible, and shall not presuppose a knowledge of even the most elementary notions of political economy. We wish to be understood by the workers. And, moreover, there prevails in Germany the most remarkable ignorance and confusion of ideas in regard to the simplest economic relations, from the patented defenders of existing conditions, down to the socialist wonder-workers and the unrecognised political geniuses, in which divided Germany is even richer than in duodecimo princelings. We therefore proceed to the consideration of the first problem.

<sup>1</sup> It must be remembered that this was written over forty years ago. To-day, the class struggle in Switzerland, and especially in Belgium, has reached that degree of development where it compels recognition from even the most superficial observers of political and industrial life.—*Translator's Note to 1891 edition.*

<sup>2</sup> That is the "common" people as distinct from the "noble" and "clerical" (or "religious") people. Originating in feudal times in the rank of free-man and town-burgher the "commons" or "citizens" (burgher, burghers, citizen, citizens, or bourgeois) formed the starting-point of the "bourgeoisie."—*Ed.*

<sup>3</sup> As stated by Engels in the Introduction, the series of articles on "Wage-Labour and Capital" remained incomplete; the pamphlet is confined almost exclusively to a consideration of the first "great division": the relation of wage-labour to capital.—*Ed.*

## CHAPTER II

### WHAT ARE WAGES?

If several workmen were to be asked: "How much wages do you get?" one would reply, "I get two shillings a day from my employer"; another, "I get three shillings a day," and so on. According to the different branches of industry in which they are employed, they would mention different sums of money that they receive from their respective employers for the completion of a certain task; for example, for weaving a yard of linen, or for setting a page of type. Despite the variety of their statements, they would all agree upon one point: that wages are the amount of money which the capitalist pays for a certain period of work or for a certain amount of work.

Consequently, it appears that the capitalist *buys* their labour with money, and that for money they *sell* him their labour. But this is merely an illusion. What they actually sell to the capitalist for money is their *labour-power*. This labour-power the capitalist buys for a day, a week, a month, etc. And after he has bought it, he uses it up by letting the worker labour during the stipulated time. With the same amount of money with which the capitalist has bought their labour-power (for example, with two shillings) he could have bought a certain amount of sugar or of any other commodity. The two shillings with which he bought twenty pounds of sugar is the price of the twenty pounds of sugar. The two shillings with which he bought twelve hours' use of the labour-power, is the price of twelve hours' labour. Labour-power, then, is a commodity, no more, no less so than is the sugar. The first is measured by the clock, the other by the scales.

Their commodity, labour-power, the workers exchange for the commodity of the capitalist, for money, and, moreover, this exchange takes place at a certain ratio. So much money for so long a use of labour-power. For twelve hours' weaving, two shillings. And these two shillings, do they not represent all the

other commodities which I can buy for two shillings? Therefore, actually, the worker has exchanged his commodity, labour-power, for commodities of all kinds, and, moreover, at a certain ratio. By giving him two shillings, the capitalist has given him so much meat, so much clothing, so much wood, light, etc., in exchange for his day's work. The two shillings therefore express the relation in which labour-power is exchanged for other commodities, the *exchange-value* of labour-power.

The exchange value of a commodity estimated in *money* is called its *price*. *Wages* therefore are only a special name for the price of labour-power, and are usually called the price of labour; it is the special name for the price of this peculiar commodity, which has no other repository than human flesh and blood.

Let us take any worker; for example, a weaver. The capitalist supplies him with the loom and the yarn. The weaver applies himself to work, and the yarn is turned into cloth. The capitalist takes possession of the cloth and sells it for twenty shillings, for example. Now are the wages of the weaver a share of the cloth, of the twenty shillings, of the product of his work? By no means. Long before the cloth is sold, perhaps long before it is fully woven, the weaver has received his wages. The capitalist, then, does not pay his wages out of the money which he will obtain from the cloth, but out of money already on hand. Just as little as loom and yarn are the product of the weaver to whom they are supplied by the employer, just so little are the commodities which he receives in exchange for his commodity—labour-power—his product. It is possible that the employer found no purchasers at all for the cloth. It is possible that he did not get even the amount of the wages by its sale. It is possible that he sells it very profitably in proportion to the weaver's wages. But all that does not concern the weaver. With a part of his existing wealth, of his capital, the capitalist buys the labour-power of the weaver in exactly the same manner as, with another part of his wealth, he has bought the raw material—the yarn—and the instrument of labour—the loom. After he has made these purchases, and among them belongs the labour-power necessary to the production of the cloth, *he produces only with raw materials and instruments of labour belonging to him*. For our good weaver, too, is one of the instruments of labour, and being in this respect on a par with the

loom, he has no more share in the product (the cloth), or in the price of the product, than the loom itself has.

*Wages, therefore, are not a share of the worker in the commodities produced by himself. Wages are that part of already existing commodities with which the capitalist buys a certain amount of productive labour-power.*

Consequently, labour-power is a commodity which its possessor, the wage-worker, sells to the capitalist. Why does he sell it? It is in order to live.

But the putting of labour-power into action, *i.e.*, the work, is the active expression of the labourer's own life. And this life activity he sells to another person in order to secure the necessary means of life. His life-activity, therefore, is but a means of securing his own existence. He works that he may keep alive. He does not count the labour itself as a part of his life; it is rather a sacrifice of his life. It is a commodity that he has auctioned off to another. The product of his activity, therefore, is not the aim of his activity. What he produces for himself is not the silk that he weaves, not the gold that he draws up the mining shaft, not the palace that he builds. What he produces for himself is *wages*; and the silk, the gold, and the palace are resolved for him into a certain quantity of necessities of life, perhaps into a cotton jacket, into copper coins, and into a basement dwelling. And the labourer who for twelve hours long, weaves, spins, bores, turns, builds, shovels, breaks stone, carries hods, and so on—is this twelve hours' weaving, spinning, boring, turning, building, shovelling, stone-breaking, regarded by him as a manifestation of life, as life? Quite the contrary. Life for him begins where this activity ceases, at the table, at the tavern seat, in bed. The twelve hours' work, on the other hand, has no meaning for him as weaving, spinning, boring, and so on, but only as earnings, which enable him to sit down at a table, to take his seat in the tavern, and to lie down in a bed. If the silk-worm's object in spinning were to prolong its existence as caterpillar, it would be a perfect example of a wage-worker.

Labour-power was not always a *commodity* (merchandise). Labour was not always wage-labour, *i.e.*, *free labour*. The *slave* did not sell his labour-power to the slave-owner, any more than the ox sells his labour to the farmer. The slave, together with his labour-power, was sold to his owner once for all. He is a

commodity that can pass from the hand of one owner to that of another. He *himself* is a commodity, but his labour-power is not *his* commodity. The *serf* sells<sup>1</sup> only a portion of his labour-power. It is not he who receives wages from the owner of the land; it is rather the owner of the land who receives a tribute from him. The serf belongs to the soil, and to the lord of the soil he brings its fruit. The *free labourer*, on the other hand, sells his very self, and that by fractions. He auctions off eight, ten, twelve, fifteen hours of his life, one day like the next, to the highest bidder, to the owner of raw materials, tools, and means of life, *i.e.*, to the capitalist. The labourer belongs neither to an owner nor to the soil, but eight, ten, twelve, fifteen hours of his daily life belong to whomsoever buys them. The worker leaves the capitalist, to whom he has sold himself, as often as he chooses, and the capitalist discharges him as often as he sees fit, as soon as he no longer gets any use, or not the required use, out of him. But the worker, whose only source of income is the sale of his labour-power, cannot leave *the whole class of buyers, i.e., the capitalist class*, unless he gives up his own existence. He does not belong to this or to that capitalist, but to the *capitalist class*; and it is for him to find his man, *i.e.*, to find a buyer in this capitalist class.

Before entering more closely upon the relation of capital to wage-labour, we shall present briefly the most general conditions which come into consideration in the determination of wages.

*Wages*, as we have seen, are the *price* of a certain commodity, labour-power. Wages, therefore, are determined by the same laws that determine the price of every other commodity. The question then is, *How is the price of a commodity determined?*

<sup>1</sup> "Sell" is not a very exact expression, for serfdom in its purity did not involve any relations of buying and selling between the serf and the lord of the manor, the tributes of the former to the latter consisting in *labour* and in *kind*. It is evident that Marx uses here the word "sells" in the general sense of *alienation*.—Translator.



## CHAPTER III

### BY WHAT IS THE PRICE OF A COMMODITY DETERMINED?

*By what is the price of a commodity determined?*

By the competition between buyers and sellers, by the relation of the demand to the supply, of the call to the offer. The competition by which the price of a commodity is determined is threefold.

The same commodity is offered for sale by various sellers. Whoever sells commodities of the same quality most cheaply, is sure to drive the other sellers from the field and to secure the greatest market for himself. The sellers therefore fight among themselves for the sales, for the market. Each one of them wishes to sell, and to sell as much as possible, and if possible to sell alone, to the exclusion of all other sellers. Each one sells cheaper than the other. Thus there takes place a *competition among the sellers* which *forces down* the price of the commodities offered by them.

But there is also a *competition among the buyers*; this upon its side causes the price of the proffered commodities to *rise*.

Finally, there is *competition between the buyers and the sellers*: these wish to purchase as cheaply as possible, those to sell as dearly as possible. The result of this competition between buyers and sellers will depend upon the relations between the two above-mentioned camps of competitors, *i.e.*, upon whether the competition in the army of buyers or the competition in the army of sellers is stronger. Industry leads two great armies into the field against each other, and each of these again is engaged in a battle among its own troops in its own ranks. The army among whose troops there is less fighting carries off the victory over the opposing host.

Let us suppose that there are one hundred bales of cotton in the market and at the same time purchasers for one thousand bales of cotton. In this case the demand is ten times greater than the supply. Competition among the buyers, then, will be very strong; each of them tries to get hold of one bale, if possible, of

the whole one hundred bales. This example is no arbitrary supposition. In the history of commerce we have experienced periods of scarcity of cotton, when some capitalists united together and sought to buy up not one hundred bales, but the whole cotton supply of the world. In the given case, then, one buyer seeks to drive the others from the field by offering a relatively higher price for the bales of cotton. The cotton sellers, who perceive the troops of the enemy in the most violent contention among themselves, and who therefore are fully assured of the sale of their whole one hundred bales, will beware of pulling one another's hair in order to force down the price of cotton at the very moment in which their opponents race with one another to screw it up high. So, all of a sudden, peace reigns in the army of sellers. They stand opposed to the buyers like one man, fold their arms in philosophic contentment and their claims would find no limit did not the offers of even the most importunate of buyers have a very definite limit.

If, then, the supply of a commodity is less than the demand for it, competition among the sellers is very slight, or there may be none at all among them. In the same proportion in which this competition decreases, the competition among the buyers increases. Result: a more or less considerable rise in the prices of commodities.

It is well known that the opposite case, with opposite result, happens more frequently. Great excess of supply over demand; desperate competition among the sellers, and a lack of buyers; forced sales of commodities at ridiculously low prices.

But what is a rise, and what a fall of prices? What is a high, and what a low price? A grain of sand is high when examined through a microscope, and a tower is low when compared with a mountain. And if the price is determined by the relation of supply and demand, by what is the relation of supply and demand determined?

Let us turn to the first worthy citizen we meet. He will not hesitate one moment, but, like another Alexander the Great, will cut this metaphysical knot with his multiplication table. He will say to us: "If the production of the commodities which I sell has cost me one hundred pounds, and out of the sale of these goods I make one hundred and ten pounds—within the year, you under-

stand—that's an honest, sound, reasonable profit. But if in the exchange I receive one hundred and twenty or one hundred and thirty pounds, that's a higher profit; and if I should get as much as two hundred pounds, that would be an extraordinary, an enormous profit." What is it, then, that serves this citizen as the standard of his profit? The *cost of the production* of his commodities. If in exchange for these goods he receives a quantity of other goods whose production has cost less, he has lost. If he receives in exchange for his goods a quantity of other goods whose production has cost more, he has gained. And he reckons the falling or rising of the profit according to the degree at which the exchange value of his goods stands, whether above or below his zero—the *cost of production*.

We have seen how the changing relation of supply and demand causes now a rise, now a fall of prices; now high, now low prices. If the price of a commodity rises considerably owing to a failing supply or a disproportionately growing demand, then the price of some other commodity must have fallen in proportion; for of course the price of a commodity only expresses in money the proportion in which other commodities will be given in exchange for it. If, for example, the price of a yard of silk rises from two to three shillings, the price of silver has fallen in relation to the silk, and in the same way the prices of all other commodities whose prices have remained stationary have fallen in relation to the price of silk. A larger quantity of them must be given in exchange in order to obtain the same amount of silk. Now, what will be the consequence of a rise in the price of a particular commodity? A mass of capital will be thrown into the prosperous branch of industry, and this immigration of capital into the provinces of the favoured industry will continue until it yields no more than the customary profits, or, rather until the price of its products, owing to overproduction, sinks below the cost of production.

Conversely: if the price of a commodity falls below its cost of production, then capital will be withdrawn from the production of this commodity. Except in the case of a branch of industry which has become obsolete and is therefore doomed to disappear, the production of such a commodity (that is, its supply), will, owing to this flight of capital, continue to decrease until it corresponds to the demand, and the price of the commodity rises again

to the level of its cost of production ; or, rather, until the supply has fallen below the demand and its price has again risen above its cost of production, *for the current price of a commodity is always either above or below its cost of production.*

We see how capital continually emigrates out of the province of one industry and immigrates into that of another. The high price produces an excessive immigration, and the low price an excessive emigration.

We could show, from another point of view, how not only the supply, but also the demand, is determined by the cost of production. But this would lead us too far away from our subject.

We have just seen how the fluctuations of supply and demand always bring the price of a commodity back to its cost of production. *The actual price of a commodity, indeed, stands always above or below the cost of production ; but the rise and fall reciprocally balance each other*, so that, within a certain period of time, if the ebbs and flows of the industry are reckoned up together, the commodities will be exchanged for one another in accordance with their cost of production. Their price is thus determined by their cost of production.

The determination of price by the cost of production is not to be understood in the sense of the bourgeois economists. The economists say that the *average price* of commodities equals the cost of production : that this is the *law*. The anarchic movement, in which the rise is compensated for by a fall and the fall by a rise, they regard as an accident. We might just as well consider the fluctuations as the law, and the determination of the price by cost of production as an accident—as is, in fact, done by certain other economists. But it is precisely these fluctuations which, viewed more closely, carry the most frightful devastation in their train, and, like an earthquake, cause bourgeois society to shake to its very foundations—it is precisely these fluctuations that force the price to conform to the cost of production. In the totality of this disorderly movement is to be found its order. In the total course of this industrial anarchy, in this circular movement, competition balances, as it were, the one extravagance by the other.

We thus see that the price of a commodity is indeed determined by its cost of production, but in such wise that the periods in which the price of these commodities rises above the cost of

production are balanced by the periods in which it sinks below the cost of production, and *vice versa*. Of course this does not hold good for a single given product of an industry, but only for that branch of industry. So also it does not hold good for an individual manufacturer, but only for the whole class of manufacturers.

The determination of price by cost of production is tantamount to the determination of price by the labour-time requisite to the production of a commodity, for the cost of production consists, first of raw materials and wear and tear of tools, etc., *i.e.*, of industrial products whose production has cost a certain number of work-days, which therefore represent a certain amount of labour-time, and, secondly, of direct labour, which is also measured by its duration.

## CHAPTER IV

### BY WHAT ARE WAGES DETERMINED?

Now, the same general laws which regulate the price of commodities in general, naturally regulate *wages*, or the *price* of labour-power. Wages will now rise, now fall, according to the relation of supply and demand, according as competition shapes itself between the buyers of labour-power, the capitalists, and sellers of labour-power, the workers. The fluctuations of wages correspond to the fluctuations in the price of commodities in general. *But within the limits of these fluctuations the price of labour-power will be determined by the cost of production, by the labour-time necessary for production of this commodity: labour-power.*

*What, then, is the cost of production of labour-power?*

It is the cost required for the maintenance of the labourer as a labourer, and for his education and training as a labourer.

Therefore, the shorter the time required for training up to a particular sort of work, the smaller is the cost of production of the worker, the lower is the price of his labour-power, his wages. In those branches of industry in which hardly any period of apprenticeship is necessary and the mere bodily existence of the worker is sufficient, the cost of his production is limited almost exclusively to the commodities necessary for keeping him in working condition. *The price of his work* will therefore be determined by the *price of the necessary means of subsistence*.

Here, however, there enters another consideration. The manufacturer who calculates his cost of production and, in accordance with it, the price of the product, takes into account the wear and tear of the instruments of labour. If a machine costs him, for example, one thousand shillings, and this machine is used up in ten years, he adds one hundred shillings annually to the price of the commodities, in order to be able after ten years to replace the worn-out machine with a new one. In the same manner, the cost of production of simple labour-power must include the cost

of propagation, by means of which the race of workers is enabled to multiply itself, and to replace worn-out workers with new ones. The wear and tear of the worker, therefore, is calculated in the same manner as the wear and tear of the machine.

Thus, the cost of production of simple labour-power amounts to the *cost of the existence and propagation of the worker*. The price of this cost of existence and propagation constitutes wages. The wages thus determined are called the *minimum of wages*. This minimum wage, like the determination of the price of commodities in general by cost of production, does not hold good for the *single individual*, but only for the *race*. Individual workers, indeed, millions of workers, do not receive enough to be able to exist and to propagate themselves; but the wages of the whole working class adjust themselves, within the limits of their fluctuations, to this minimum.

Now that we have come to an understanding in regard to the most general laws which govern wages, as well as the price of every other commodity, we can examine our subject more particularly.

## CHAPTER V

### THE NATURE AND GROWTH OF CAPITAL

CAPITAL consists of raw materials, instruments of labour, and means of subsistence of all kinds, which are employed in producing new raw materials, new instruments, and new means of subsistence. All these components of capital are created by labour, products of labour, *accumulated labour*. Accumulated labour that serves as a means to new production is capital. So say the economists. What is a Negro slave? A man of the black race. The one explanation is worthy of the other.

A Negro is a Negro. Only under certain conditions does he become a slave. A cotton-spinning machine is a machine for spinning cotton. Only under certain conditions does it become *capital*. Torn away from these conditions, it is as little capital as gold by itself is money, or as sugar is the price of sugar.

In the process of production, human beings work not only upon nature, but also upon one another. They produce only by working together in a specified manner and reciprocally exchanging their activities. In order to produce, they enter into definite connections and relations to one another, and only within these social connections and relations does their influence upon nature operate, *i.e.*, does production take place.

These social relations between the producers, and the conditions under which they exchange their activities and share in the total act of production, will naturally vary according to the character of the means of production. With the discovery of a new instrument of warfare, the firearm, the whole internal organisation of the army was necessarily altered, the relations within which individuals compose an army and can work as an army were transformed, and the relation of different armies to one another was likewise changed.

We thus see that the *social relations within which individuals produce, the social relations of production, are altered, trans-*



*formed, with the change and development of the material means of production, of the forces of production. The relations of production in their totality constitute what is called the social relations, society, and, moreover, a society at a definite stage of historic development, a society with peculiar, distinctive characteristics. Ancient society, feudal society, bourgeois (or capitalist) society, are such totalities of relations of production, each of which denotes a particular stage of development in the history of mankind.*

*Capital* also is a social relation of production. It is a *bourgeois relation of production*, a relation of production of bourgeois society. The means of subsistence, the instruments of labour, the raw materials, of which capital consists—have they not been produced and accumulated under given social conditions, within definite social relations? Are they not employed for new production, under given social conditions, within definite social relations? And does not just this definite social character stamp the products which serve for new production as *capital*?

Capital consists not only of means of subsistence, instruments of labour, and raw materials, not only of material products; it consists just as much of exchange values. All products of which it consists are *commodities*. *Capital, consequently, is not only a sum of material products, it is a sum of commodities, of exchange values, of social magnitudes.* Capital remains the same whether we put cotton in the place of wool, rice in the place of wheat, steamships in the place of railroads, provided only that the cotton, the rice, the steamships—the body of capital—have the same exchange value, the same price, as the wool, the wheat, the railroads, in which it was previously embodied. The bodily form of capital may transform itself continually, while capital does not suffer the least alteration.

*But though every capital is a sum of commodities, i.e., of exchange values, it does not follow that every sum of commodities, of exchange values, is capital.*

Every sum of exchange values is an exchange value. Each particular exchange value is a sum of exchange values. For example: a house worth £1,000 is an exchange value of £1,000: a piece of paper worth one penny is a sum of exchange values of one hundred one-hundredths of a penny. Products which are

exchangeable for others are *commodities*. The definite proportion in which they are exchangeable forms their *exchange value*, or, expressed in money, their price. The quantity of these products can have no effect on their character as *commodities*, as representing an *exchange value*, as having a certain *price*. Whether a tree be large or small, it remains a tree. Whether we exchange iron in pennyweights or in hundredweights, for other products, does this alter its character: its being a commodity, an exchange value? According to the quantity, it is a commodity of greater or of lesser value, of higher or of lower price.

*How then does a sum of commodities, of exchange values, become capital?*

Thereby, that as an independent social power, i.e., as the power of a part of society, it preserves itself and multiplies by exchange with direct, living labour-power.

The existence of a class which possesses nothing but the ability to work is a necessary presupposition of capital.

*It is only the dominion of past, accumulated, materialised labour over immediate living labour that stamps the accumulated labour with the character of capital.*

Capital does not consist in the fact that accumulated labour serves living labour as a means for new production. It consists in the fact that living labour serves accumulated labour as the means of preserving and multiplying its exchange value.

## CHAPTER VI

### RELATION OF WAGE-LABOUR TO CAPITAL

WHAT is it that takes place in the exchange between the capitalist and the wage-labour?

The labourer receives means of subsistence in exchange for his labour-power; but the capitalist receives, in exchange for his means of subsistence, labour, the productive activity of the labourer, the creative force by which the worker not only replaces what he consumes, but also *gives to the accumulated labour a greater value than it previously possessed*. The labourer gets from the capitalist a portion of the existing means of subsistence. For what purpose do these *means of subsistence* serve him? For immediate consumption. But as soon as I consume means of subsistence, they are irrevocably lost to me, unless I employ the time during which these means sustain my life in producing new means of subsistence, in creating by my labour new values in place of the values lost in consumption. But it is just this noble reproductive power that the labourer surrenders to the capitalist in exchange for means of subsistence received. Consequently, he has lost it for himself.

Let us take an example. For one shilling a labourer works all day long in the fields of a farmer, to whom he thus secures a return of two shillings. The farmer not only receives the replaced value which he has given to the day-labourer; he has doubled it. Therefore he has consumed the one shilling that he gave to the day-labourer in a fruitful, productive manner. For the one shilling he has bought the labour-power of the day-labourer, which creates products of the soil of twice the value, and out of one shilling makes two. The day-labourer, on the contrary, receives in the place of his productive force, whose results he has just surrendered to the farmer, one shilling, which he exchanges for *means of subsistence*, which he consumes more or less

quickly. The one shilling has therefore been consumed in a double manner—*reproductively* for the capitalist, for it has been exchanged for labour-power which brought forth two shillings; *unproductively* for the worker, for it has been exchanged for means of subsistence which are lost for ever, and whose value he can obtain again only by repeating the same exchange with the farmer. *Capital therefore presupposes wage-labour; wage-labour presupposes capital. They condition each other; each brings the other into existence.*

Does a worker in a cotton factory produce only cotton goods? No. He produces capital. He produces values which serve anew to command his work and to create by means of it new values.

Capital can multiply itself only by exchanging itself for labour-power, by calling wage-labour into life. The labour-power of the wage-labourer can exchange itself for capital only by increasing capital, by strengthening that very power whose slave it is. *Increase of capital, therefore, is increase of the proletariat, i.e., of the working class.*

And so, the bourgeoisie and its economists maintain that the interest of the capitalist and of the labourer is the same. And in fact, so they are! The worker perishes if capital does not keep him busy. Capital perishes if it does not exploit labour-power, which, in order to exploit, it must buy. The more quickly the capital destined for production—the productive capital—increases, the more prosperous industry is, the more the bourgeoisie enriches itself, the better business gets, so many more workers does the capitalist need, so much the dearer does the worker sell himself. *The fastest possible growth of productive capital is, therefore, the indispensable condition for a tolerable life to the labourer.*

But what is growth of productive capital? Growth of the power of accumulated labour over living labour; growth of the rule of the bourgeoisie over the working class. When wage-labour produces the alien wealth of dominating it, the power hostile to it, capital, there flow back to it its means of employment, i.e., its means of subsistence, under the condition that it again become a part of capital, that it become again the lever whereby capital is to be forced into an accelerated expansive movement.

*To say that the interests of capital and the interests of the workers are identical, signifies only this, that capital and wage-labour are two sides of one and the same relation. The one conditions the other in the same way that the usurer and the borrower condition each other.*

As long as the wage-labourer remains a wage-labourer, his lot is dependent upon capital. That is what the boasted community of interests between worker and capitalists amounts to.

If capital grows, the mass of wage-labour grows, the number of wage-workers increases; in a word, the sway of capital extends over a greater mass of individuals.

Let us suppose the most favourable case: if productive capital grows, the demand for labour grows. It therefore increases the price of labour-power, wages.

A house may be large or small; as long as the neighbouring houses are likewise small, it satisfies all social requirements for a residence. But let there arise next to the little house a palace, and the little house shrinks into a hut. The little house now makes it clear that its inmate has no social position at all to maintain, or but a very insignificant one; and however high it may shoot up in the course of civilisation, if the neighbouring palace rises in equal or even in greater measure, the occupant of the relatively little house will always find himself more uncomfortable, more dissatisfied, more cramped within his four walls.

An appreciable rise in wages presupposes a rapid growth of productive capital. Rapid growth of productive capital calls forth just as rapid a growth of wealth, of luxury, of social needs and social pleasures. Therefore, although the pleasures of the labourer have increased, the social gratification which they afford has fallen in comparison with the increased pleasures of the capitalist, which are inaccessible to the worker, in comparison with the stage of development of society in general. Our wants and pleasures have their origin in society; we therefore measure them in relation to society; we do not measure them in relation to the objects which serve for their gratification. Since they are of a social nature, they are of a relative nature.

But wages are not at all determined merely by the sum of commodities for which they may be exchanged. Other factors enter into the problem. What the workers directly receive for their

labour-power is a certain sum of money. Are wages determined merely by this money price?

In the sixteenth century the gold and silver circulation in Europe increased in consequence of the discovery of richer and more easily worked mines in America. The value of gold and silver, therefore, fell in relation to other commodities. The workers received the same amount of coined silver for their labour-power as before. The money price of their work remained the same, and yet their wages had fallen, for in exchange for the same amount of silver they obtained a smaller amount of other commodities. This was one of the circumstances which furthered the growth of capital, the rise of the bourgeoisie, in the eighteenth century.

Let us take another case. In the winter of 1847, in consequence of bad harvests, the most indispensable means of subsistence—grains, meat, butter, cheese, etc.—rose greatly in price. Let us suppose that the workers still received the same sum of money for their labour-power as before. Did not their wages fall? To be sure. For the same money they received in exchange less bread, meat, etc. Their wages fell, not because the value of silver was less, but because the value of the means of subsistence had increased.

Finally, let us suppose that the money price of labour-power remained the same, while all agricultural and manufactured commodities had fallen in price because of the employment of new machines, of favourable seasons, etc. For the same money the workers could now buy more commodities of all kinds. Their wages have therefore risen, just because their money value has not changed.

The money price of labour-power, the nominal wages, do not therefore coincide with the actual or real wages, *i.e.*, with the amount of commodities which are actually given in exchange for the wages. If then we speak of a rise or fall of wages, we have to keep in mind not only the money price of labour-power, the nominal wages, but also the real wages.

But neither the nominal wages, *i.e.*, the amount of money for which the labourer sells himself to the capitalist, nor the real wages, *i.e.*, the amount of commodities which he can buy for this

money, exhausts the relations which are comprehended in the term wages.

Wages are determined above all by their relations to the gain, the profit, of the capitalist. In other words, wages are a proportionate, relative quantity.

*Real wages* express the price of labour-power in relation to the price of other commodities; *relative wages*, on the other hand, express the share of immediate labour in the value newly created by it, in relation to the share of it which falls to accumulated labour, to capital.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE GENERAL LAW THAT DETERMINES THE RISE AND FALL OF WAGES AND PROFITS

WE have said: "Wages are not a share of the worker in the commodities produced by him. Wages are that part of already existing commodities with which the capitalist buys a certain amount of productive labour-power." But the capitalist must replace these wages out of the price for which he sells the product made by the worker; he must so replace it that, as a rule, there remains to him a surplus above the cost of production expended by him, that is, he must get a profit.

The selling price of the commodities produced by the worker is divided, from the point of view of the capitalist, into three parts: *First*, the replacement of the price of the raw materials advanced by him, in addition to the replacement of the wear and tear of the tools, machines, and other instruments of labour likewise advanced by him; *second*, the replacement of the wages advanced; and *third*, the surplus left over, *i.e.*, the profit of the capitalist.

While the first part merely replaces *previously existing values*, it is evident that the replacement of the wages and the surplus (the profit of capital) are as a whole taken out of the *new value*, which is *produced by the labour of the worker* and added to the raw materials. And *in this sense* we can view wages as well as profit, for the purpose of comparing them with each other, as shares in the product of the worker.

Real wages may remain the same, they may even rise, nevertheless the relative wages may fall. Let us suppose, for instance, that all means of subsistence have fallen two-thirds in price, while the day's wages have fallen but one-third; for example, from three to two shillings. Although the worker can now get a greater amount of commodities with these two shillings than he formerly did with three shillings, yet his wages have decreased in propor-



tion to the gain of the capitalist. The profit of the capitalist—the manufacturer's for instance—has increased by one shilling, which means that for a smaller amount of exchange values, which he pays to the worker, the latter must produce a greater amount of exchange values than before. The share of capital in proportion to the share of labour has risen. The distribution of social wealth between capital and labour has become still more unequal. The capitalist commands a greater amount of labour with the same capital. The power of the capitalist class over the working class has grown, the social position of the worker has become worse, has been forced down still another degree below that of the capitalist.

*What, then, is the general law that determines the rise and fall of wages and profit in their reciprocal relation?*

*They stand in inverse proportion to each other. The share of (profit) increases in the same proportion in which the share of labour (wages) falls, and vice versa. Profit rises in the same degree in which wages fall; it falls in the same degree in which wages rise.*

It might perhaps be argued that the capitalist can gain by an advantageous exchange of his products with other capitalists, by a rise in the demand for his commodities, whether in consequence of the opening up of new markets, or in consequence of temporarily increased demands in the old markets, and so on; that the profit of the capitalist, therefore, may be multiplied by taking advantage of other capitalists, independently of the rise and fall of wages, of the exchange value of labour-power; or that the profit of the capitalist may also rise through improvements in the instruments of labour, new applications of the forces of nature, and so on.

But in the first place it must be admitted that the result remains the same, although brought about in an opposite manner. Profit, indeed, has not risen because wages have fallen, but wages have fallen because profit has risen. With the same amount of another man's labour the capitalist has bought a larger amount of exchange values without having paid more for the labour on that account, *i.e.*, the work is paid for less in proportion to the net gain which it yields to the capitalist.

In the second place, it must be borne in mind that, despite the

fluctuations in the prices of commodities, the average price of every commodity, the proportion in which it exchanges for other commodities, is determined by its cost of production. The acts of overreaching and taking advantage of one another within the capitalist ranks necessarily equalise themselves. The improvements of machinery, the new applications of the forces of nature in the service of production, make it possible to produce in a given period of time, with the same amount of labour and capital, a larger amount of products, but in no wise a larger amount of exchange values. If by the use of the spinning-machine I can furnish twice as much yarn in an hour as before its invention—for instance, one hundred pounds instead of fifty pounds—in the long run I receive back, in exchange for this one hundred pounds no more commodities than I did before for fifty; because the cost of production has fallen by one-half, or because I can furnish double the product at the same cost.

Finally, in whatsoever proportion the capitalist class, whether of one country or of the entire world-market, distribute the net revenue of production among themselves, the total amount of this net revenue always consists exclusively of the amount by which accumulated labour has been increased from the proceeds of direct labour. This whole amount, therefore, grows in the same proportion in which labour augments capital, *i.e.*, in the same proportion in which profit rises as compared with wages.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE INTERESTS OF CAPITAL AND WAGE-LABOUR ARE DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSED—EFFECT OF GROWTH OF PRODUCTIVE CAPITAL ON WAGES

WE thus see *that, even if we keep ourselves within the relation of capital and wage-labour, the interests of capital and the interests of wage-labour are diametrically opposed to each other.*

A rapid growth of capital is synonymous with a rapid growth of profits. Profits can grow rapidly only when the price of labour—the relative wages—decrease just as rapidly. Relative wages may fall, although real wages rise simultaneously with nominal wages, with the money value of labour, provided only that the real wage does not rise in the same proportion as the profit. If, for instance, in good business years wages rise 5 per cent. while profits rise 30 per cent., the proportional, the relative wage has not *increased*, but *decreased*.

If, therefore, the income of the worker increases with the rapid growth of capital, there is at the same time a widening of the social chasm that divides the worker from the capitalist, an increase in the power of capital over labour, a greater dependence of labour upon capital.

To say that "the worker has an interest in the rapid growth of capital," means only this; that the more speedily the worker augments the wealth of the capitalist, the larger will be the crumbs which fall to him, the greater will be the number of workers that can be called into existence, the more can the mass of slaves dependent upon capital be increased.

We have thus seen that even the *most favourable situation* for the working class, namely, the most rapid growth of capital, however much it may improve the material life of the worker, does not abolish the antagonism between his interests and the interests of the capitalist. *Profit and wages remain as before, in inverse proportion.*

If capital grows rapidly, wages may rise, but the profit of capital rises disproportionately faster. The material position of the worker has improved, but at the cost of his social position. The social chasm that separates him from the capitalist has widened.

Finally, to say that "the most favourable condition for wage-labour is the fastest possible growth of productive capital," is the same as to say: the quicker the working class multiplies and augments the power inimical to it—the wealth of another which lords it over that class—the more favourable will be the conditions under which it will be permitted to toil anew at the multiplication of bourgeois wealth, at the enlargement of the power of capital, content thus to forge for itself the golden chains by which the bourgeoisie drags it in its train.

*Growth of productive capital and rise of wages*, are they really so indissolubly united as the bourgeois economists maintain? We must not believe their mere words. We dare not believe them even when they claim that the fatter capital is the more will its slave be pampered. The bourgeoisie is too much enlightened, it keeps its accounts much too carefully, to share the prejudices of the feudal lord, who makes an ostentatious display of the magnificence of his retinue. The conditions of existence of the bourgeoisie compel it to attend carefully to its bookkeeping. We must therefore examine more closely into the following question:

*In what manner does the growth of productive capital affect wages?*

If as a whole, the productive capital of bourgeois society grows, there takes place a more many-sided accumulation of labour. The individual capitals increase in number and in magnitude. The multiplications of individual capitals *increases the competition among capitalists*. The *increasing magnitude* of individual capitals provides the means for *leading more powerful armies of workers with more gigantic instruments of war upon the industrial battlefield*.

The one capitalist can drive the other from the field and carry off his capital only by selling more cheaply. In order to sell more cheaply without ruining himself, he must produce more cheaply, *i.e.*, increase the productive force of labour as much as possible.

But the productive power of labour is increased above all by a *greater division of labour* and by a more general introduction and

constant improvement of *machinery*. The larger the army of workers among whom the labour is subdivided, the more gigantic the scale upon which machinery is introduced, the more in proportion does the cost of production decrease, the more fruitful is the labour. And so there arises among the capitalists a universal rivalry for the increase of the division of labour and of machinery and for their exploitation upon the greatest possible scale.

If, now, by a greater division of labour, by the application and improvement of new machines, by a more advantageous exploitation of the forces of nature on a larger scale, a capitalist has found the means of producing with the same amount of labour (whether it be direct or accumulated labour) a larger amount of products of commodities than his competitors—if, for instance, he can produce a whole yard of linen in the same labour-time in which his competitors weave half a yard—how will this capitalist act?

He could keep on selling half a yard of linen at the old market price; but this would not have the effect of driving his opponents from the field and enlarging his own market. But his need of a market has increased in the same measure in which his productive power has extended. The more powerful and costly means of production that he has called into existence *enable* him, it is true, to sell his wares more cheaply, but they *compel* him at the same time *to sell more wares*, to get control of a very much *greater* market for his commodities; consequently, this capitalist will sell his half yard of linen more cheaply than his competitors.

But the capitalist will not sell the whole yard so cheaply as his competitors sell the half yard, although the production of the whole yard costs no more to him than does that of the half yard to the others. Otherwise he would make no extra profit, and would get back in exchange only the cost of production. He might obtain a greater income from having set in motion a larger capital, but not from having made a greater profit on his capital than the others. Moreover, he attains the object he is aiming at if he prices his goods only a small percentage lower than his competitors. He drives them off the field, he wrests from them at least a part of their market, by *underselling* them.

And finally, let us remember that the current price always stands either *above or below the cost of production*, according as the sale of a commodity takes place in the favourable or un-

favourable period of the industry. According as the market price of the yard of linen stands above or below its former cost of production, will the percentage vary at which the capitalist who has made use of the new and more fruitful means of production sell above his real cost of production.

But the *privilege* of our capitalist is not of long duration. Other competing capitalists introduce the same machines, the same division of labour, and introduce them upon the same or even upon a greater scale. And finally this introduction becomes so universal that the price of the linen is lowered not only below its old, but even below its new cost of production.

The capitalists therefore find themselves, in their mutual relations, in the same situation in which they were before the introduction of the new means of production; and if they are by these means enabled to offer double the product at the old price, they are now forced to furnish double the product for less than the old price. Having arrived at the new point, the new cost of production, the battle for supremacy in the market has to be fought out anew. Given more division of labour and more machinery, and there results a greater scale upon which division of labour and machinery are exploited. And competition again brings the same reaction against this result.

## CHAPTER IX

### EFFECT OF CAPITALIST COMPETITION ON THE CAPITALIST CLASS, THE MIDDLE CLASS, AND THE WORKING CLASS

WE thus see how the method of production and the means of production are constantly enlarged, revolutionised, how *division of labour necessarily draws after it greater division of labour, the employment of machinery greater employment of machinery, work upon a large scale work upon a still greater scale*. This is the law that continually throws capitalist production out of its old ruts and compels capital to strain ever more the productive forces of labour *for the very reason* that it has already strained them—the law that grants it no respite, and constantly shouts in its ear: March! march! This is no other law than that which, within the periodical fluctuations of commerce, necessarily *adjusts the price of a commodity to its cost of production*.

No matter how powerful the means of production which a capitalist may bring into the field, competition will make their adoption general; and from the moment that they have been generally adopted, the sole result of the greater productiveness of his capital will be that he must furnish *at the same price*, ten, twenty, one hundred times as much as before. But since he must find a market for, perhaps, a thousand times as much, in order to outweigh the lower selling price by the greater quantity of the sales; since now a more extensive sale is necessary not only to gain a greater profit, but also in order to replace the cost of production (the instrument of production itself grows always more costly, as we have seen), and since this more extensive sale has become a question of life and death not only for him, but also for his rivals, the old struggle must begin again, and it is all the more violent the more powerful the means of production already invented are. *The division of labour and the application of machinery will therefore take a fresh start, and upon an even greater scale*.

Whatever be the power of the means of production which are

employed, competition seeks to rob capital of the golden fruits of this power by reducing the price of commodities to the cost of production; in the same measure in which production is cheapened, *i.e.*, in the same measure in which more can be produced with the same amount of labour, it compels by a law which is irresistible a still greater cheapening of production, the sale of ever greater masses of product for smaller prices. Thus the capitalist will have gained nothing more by his efforts than the obligation to furnish a greater product in the same labour-time; in a word, more difficult conditions for the profitable employment of his capital. While competition, therefore, constantly pursues him with its law of the cost of production and turns against himself every weapon that he forges against his rivals, the capitalist continually seeks to get the best of competition by restlessly introducing further subdivision of labour and new machines, which, though more expensive, enable him to produce more cheaply, instead of waiting until the new machines shall have been rendered obsolete by competition.

If we now conceive this feverish agitation as it operates in the *market of the whole world*, we shall be in a position to comprehend how the growth, accumulation, and concentration of capital bring in their train an ever more detailed subdivision of labour, an ever greater improvement of old machines, and a constant application of new machines—a process which goes on uninterruptedly, with feverish haste, and upon an ever more gigantic scale.

*But what effect do these conditions, which are inseparable from the growth of productive capital, have upon the determination of wages?*

The greater *division of labour* enables one labourer to accomplish the work of five, ten, or twenty labourers; it therefore increases competition among the labourers fivefold, tenfold, or twentyfold. The labourers compete not only by selling themselves one cheaper than the other, but also by one doing the work of five, then ten, or twenty; and they are forced to compete in this manner by the division of labour, which is introduced and steadily improved by capital.

Furthermore, to the same degree in which the division of labour increases, is the labour simplified. The special skill of the labourer becomes worthless. He becomes transformed into a



simple monotonous force of production, with neither physical nor mental elasticity. His work becomes accessible to all; therefore competitors press upon him from all sides. Moreover, it must be remembered that the more simple, the more easily learned the work is, so much the less is its cost of production, the expense of its acquisition, and so much the lower must the wages sink—for, like the price of any other commodity, they are determined by the cost of production. Therefore, *in the same measure in which labour becomes more unsatisfactory, more repulsive, do competition increase and wages decrease.*

The labourer seeks to maintain the total of his wages for a given time by performing more labour, either by working a greater number of hours, or by accomplishing more in the same number of hours. Thus, urged on by want, he himself multiplies the disastrous effects of division of labour. The result is: *the more he works, the less wages he receives.* And for this simple reason: the more he works, the more he competes against his fellow workmen, the more he compels them to compete against him, and to offer themselves on the same wretched conditions as he does; so that, in the last analysis, *he competes against himself as a member of the working class.*

Machinery produces the same effects, but upon a much larger scale. It supplants skilled labourers by unskilled, men by women, adults by children; where newly introduced, it throws workers upon the streets in great masses; and as it becomes more highly developed and more productive it discards them in additional though smaller numbers.

We have hastily sketched in broad outlines the *industrial war of capitalists among themselves.* This war has the peculiarity that the battles in it are won less by recruiting than by discharging the army of workers. The generals (the capitalists) vie with one another as to who can discharge the greatest number of industrial soldiers.

The economists tell us, to be sure, that those labourers who have been rendered superfluous by machinery find new avenues of employment. They dare not assert directly that the same labourers that have been discharged find situations in new branches of labour. Facts cry out too loudly against this lie. Strictly speaking, they only maintain that new means of employ-

ment will be found *for other sections of the working class*; for example, for that portion of the young generation of labourers who were about to enter upon that branch of industry which had just been abolished. Of course, this is a great satisfaction to the disabled labourers. There will be no lack of fresh exploitable blood and muscle for the Messrs. Capitalists—the dead may bury their dead. This consolation seems to be intended more for the comfort of the capitalists themselves than of their labourers. If the whole class of the wage-labourer were to be annihilated by machinery, how terrible that would be for capital, *which, without wage-labour, ceases to be capital!*

But even if we assume that all who are directly forced out of employment by machinery, as well as all of the rising generation who were waiting for a chance of employment in the same branch of industry, do actually find some new employment—are we to believe that this new employment will pay as high wages as did the one they have lost? If it did, *it would be in contradiction to all the laws of political economy*. We have seen how modern industry always tends to the substitution of the simpler and more subordinate employments for the higher and more complex ones. How, then, could a mass of workers thrown out of one branch of industry by machinery find refuge in another branch, unless they were to be paid more poorly?

An exception to the law has been adduced, namely, the workers who are employed in the manufacture of machinery itself. As soon as there is in industry a greater demand for and a greater consumption of machinery, it is said that the number of machines must necessarily increase; consequently, also, the manufacture of machines; consequently, also, the employment of workers in machine manufacture;—and the workers employed in this branch of industry are skilled, even educated, workers.

Since the year 1840 this assertion, which even before that date was only half true, has lost all semblance of truth; for the most diverse machines are now applied to the manufacture of the machines themselves on quite as extensive a scale as in the manufacture of cotton yarn, and the labourers employed in machine factories can but play the rôle of very stupid machines alongside of the highly ingenious machines.

But in place of the man who has been dismissed by the ma-

chine, the factory may employ, perhaps, three children and one woman! And must not the wages of the man have previously sufficed for the three children and one woman? Must not the minimum wages have sufficed for the preservation and propagation of the race? What, then, do these beloved bourgeois phrases prove? Nothing more than that now four times as many workers' lives are used up as there were previously, in order to obtain the livelihood of one working family.

To sum up: *the more productive capital grows, the more it extends the division of labour and the application of machinery; the more the division of labour and the application of machinery extend, the more does competition extend among the workers, the more do their wages shrink together.*

In addition, the working class is also recruited from the *higher strata* of society; a mass of small business men and of people living upon the interest of their capitals is precipitated into the ranks of the working class, and they will have nothing else to do than to stretch out their arms alongside of the arms of the workers. Thus the forest of outstretched arms, begging for work, grows ever thicker, while the arms themselves grow ever leaner.

It is evident that the small manufacturer cannot survive in a struggle in which the first condition of success is production upon an ever greater scale. It is evident that the small manufacturer cannot at the same time be a big manufacturer.

That the interest on capital decreases in the same ratio in which the mass and number of capitals increase, that it diminishes with the growth of capital, that therefore the small capitalist can no longer live on his interest, but must consequently throw himself upon industry by joining the ranks of the small manufacturers and thereby increasing the number of candidates for the proletariat—all this requires no further elucidation.

Finally, in the same measure in which the capitalists are compelled, by the movement described above, to exploit the already existing gigantic means of production on an ever-increasing scale, and for this purpose to set in motion all the mainsprings of credit, in the same measure do they increase the industrial earthquakes, in the midst of which the commercial world can preserve itself only by sacrificing a portion of its wealth, its products, and even its forces of production, to the gods of the lower world—in short,

the *crises* increase. They become more frequent and more violent, if for no other reason, than for this alone, that in the same measure in which the mass of products grows, and therefore the needs for extensive markets, in the same measure does the world market shrink ever more, and ever fewer markets remain to be exploited, since every previous crisis has subjected to the commerce of the world a hitherto unconquered or but superficially exploited market.

But capital not only lives upon labour. Like a master, at once distinguished and barbarous, it drags with it into its grave the corpses of its slaves, whole hecatombs of workers, who perish in the crises.

We thus see that *if capital grows rapidly, competition among the workers grows with even greater rapidity, i.e., the means of employment and subsistence for the working class decrease in proportion even more rapidly; but, this notwithstanding, the rapid growth of capital is the most favourable condition for wage-labour.*

MANIFESTO  
OF THE  
COMMUNIST PARTY

BY  
KARL MARX AND FRIEDRICH ENGELS

AUTHORIZED ENGLISH TRANSLATION

EDITED AND ANNOTATED BY FRIEDRICH ENGELS



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## PREFACE

By FRIEDRICH ENGELS

The *Manifesto* was published as the platform of the Communist League, a workingmen's association, first exclusively German, later on international, and, under the political conditions of the Continent before 1848, unavoidably a secret society. At a Congress of the League, held in London in November, 1847, Marx and Engels were commissioned to prepare for publication a complete theoretical and practical party programme. Drawn up in German, in January, 1848, the manuscript was sent to the printer in London a few weeks before the French revolution of February 24th.<sup>1</sup> A French translation was brought out in Paris, shortly before the insurrection of June, 1848.<sup>2</sup> The first English translation, by Miss Helen Macfarlane, appeared in George Julian Harney's *Red Republican*, London, 1850. A Danish and a Polish edition had also been published.

The defeat of the Parisian insurrection of June, 1848—the first great battle between proletariat and bourgeoisie—drove again into the background, for a time, the social and political aspirations of the European working class. Thenceforth, the struggle for supremacy was again, as it had been before the revolution of February, solely between different sections of the propertied class; the working class was reduced to a fight for political elbow-room, and to the position of extreme wing of the middle-class Radicals. Wherever independent proletarian movements continued to show signs of life, they were ruthlessly hunted down. Thus the Prussian police hunted out the Central Board of the Communist League, then located in Cologne. The members were arrested, and, after eighteen months' imprisonment, they were tried in October, 1852. This celebrated "Cologne Communist Trial" lasted from October 4th till November 12th; seven of the prisoners were sentenced to terms of imprison-

ment in a fortress, varying from three to six years. Immediately after the sentence, the League was formally dissolved by the remaining members. As to the *Manifesto*, it seemed thenceforth to be doomed to oblivion.

When the European working class had recovered sufficient strength for another attack on the ruling classes, the International Workingmen's Association sprang up. But this association, formed with the express aim of welding into one body the whole militant proletariat of Europe and America, could not at once proclaim the principles laid down in the *Manifesto*. The International was bound to have a programme broad enough to be acceptable to the English trades unions, to the followers of Proudhon <sup>3</sup> in France, Belgium, Italy, and Spain, and to the Lassalleans <sup>4</sup> in Germany. Marx, who drew up this programme to the satisfaction of all parties, entirely trusted to the intellectual development of the working class, which was sure to result from combined action and mutual discussion. The very events and vicissitudes of the struggle against capital, the defeats even more than the victories, could not help bringing home to men's minds the insufficiency of their various favourite nostrums, and preparing the way for a more complete insight into the true conditions of working-class emancipation. And Marx was right. The International, on its breaking up in 1874, left the workers quite different men from what it had found them in 1864. Proudhonism in France, Lassalleanism in Germany were dying out, and even the conservative English trades unions, though most of them had long since severed their connection with the International, were gradually advancing towards that point at which, last year at Swansea, their president could say in their name "continental Socialism has lost its terrors for us." In fact, the principles of the *Manifesto* had made considerable headway among the workingmen of all countries.

The *Manifesto* itself thus came to the front again. Since 1850 the German text had been reprinted several times in Switzerland, England and America. In 1872, it was translated into English in New York, where the translation was published in *Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly*. From this English version, a French one was made



in *Le Socialiste* of New York. Since then at least two more English translations, more or less mutilated, have been brought out in America, and one of them has been reprinted in England. The first Russian translation, made by Bakunin, was published at Herzen's *Kolokol* office in Geneva, about 1863; a second one, by the heroic Vera Zasulich, also in Geneva, in 1882.<sup>5</sup> A new Danish edition is to be found in *Socialdemokratisk Bibliotek*, Copenhagen, 1885; a fresh French translation in *Le Socialiste*, Paris, 1886. From this latter, a Spanish version was prepared and published in Madrid, in 1886. Not counting the German reprints there had been at least twelve editions. An Armenian translation, which was to be published in Constantinople some months ago, did not see the light, I am told, because the publisher was afraid of bringing out a book with the name of Marx on it, while the translator declined to call it his own production. Of further translations into other languages I have heard, but have not seen. Thus the history of the *Manifesto* reflects, to a great extent, the history of the modern working class movement; at present it is undoubtedly the most widespread, the most international production of all Socialist literature, the common platform acknowledged by millions of workingmen from Siberia to California.

Yet, when it was written, we could not have called it a *Socialist* manifesto. By Socialists, in 1847, were understood, on the one hand, the adherents of the various Utopian systems: Owenites<sup>6</sup> in England, Fourierists<sup>7</sup> in France, both of them already reduced to the position of mere sects, and gradually dying out; on the other hand, the most multifarious social quacks, who, by all manners of tinkering, professed to redress, without any danger to capital and profit, all sorts of social grievances, in both cases men outside the working class movement, and looking rather to the "educated" classes for support. Whatever portion of the working class had become convinced of the insufficiency of mere political revolutions, and had proclaimed the necessity of a total social change, called itself Communist. It was a crude, rough-hewn, purely instinctive sort of Communism; still, it touched the cardinal point and was powerful

enough amongst the working class to produce the Utopian Communism of Cabet<sup>8</sup> in France, and of Weitling<sup>9</sup> in Germany. Thus, in 1847, Socialism was a middle class movement, Communism a working class movement. Socialism was, on the continent at least, "respectable"; Communism was the very opposite. And as our notion, from the very beginning, was that "the emancipation of the working class must be the act of the working class itself," there could be no doubt as to which of the two names we must take. Moreover, we have, ever since, been far from repudiating it.

The *Manifesto* being our joint production, I consider myself bound to state that the fundamental proposition which forms its nucleus, belongs to Marx. That proposition is: That in every historical epoch, the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange, and the social organisation necessarily following from it, form the basis upon which is built up, and from which alone can be explained, the political and intellectual history of that epoch; that consequently the whole history of mankind (since the dissolution of primitive tribal society, holding land in common ownership) has been a history of class struggles, contests between exploiting and exploited, ruling and oppressed classes; that the history of these class struggles form a series of evolutions in which, nowadays, a stage has been reached where the exploited and oppressed class—the proletariat—cannot attain its emancipation from the sway of the exploiting and ruling class—the bourgeoisie—without at the same time, and once and for all, emancipating society at large from all exploitation, oppression, class distinctions and class struggles.

This proposition, which, in my opinion, is destined to do for history what Darwin's theory has done for biology, we, both of us, had been gradually approaching for some years before 1845. How far I had independently progressed towards it, is best shown by my *Condition of the Working Class in England*.<sup>10</sup> But when I again met Marx at Brussels, in spring, 1845, he had it already worked out, and put it before me, in terms almost as clear as those in which I have stated it here.

From our joint preface to the German edition of 1872, I quote:

"However much the state of things may have altered during the last 25 years, the general principles laid down in this *Manifesto* are, on the whole, as correct to-day as ever. Here and there some detail might be improved. The practical application of the principles will depend, as the *Manifesto* itself states, everywhere and at all times, on the historical conditions for the time being existing, and, for that reason, no special stress is laid on the revolutionary measures proposed at the end of Section II. That passage would, in many respects, be very differently worded to-day. In view of the gigantic strides of modern industry since 1848, and of the accompanying improved and extended organisation of the working class, in view of the practical experience gained, first in the February revolution, and then, still more, in the Paris Commune, where the proletariat for the first time held political power for two whole months, this programme has in some details become antiquated. One thing especially was proved by the Commune, *viz.*, that 'the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes.' (See *The Civil War in France; Address by the General Council of the International Workingmen's Association*, 1871, where this point is further developed.) Further, it is self-evident, that the criticism of Socialist literature is deficient in relation to the present time, because it comes down only to 1847; also, that the remarks on the relation of the Communists to the various opposition parties (Section IV), although in principle still correct, yet in practice are antiquated, because the political situation has been entirely changed, and the progress of history has swept from off the earth the greater portion of the political parties there enumerated.

"But then, the *Manifesto* has become a historical document which we have no longer any right to alter."

The present translation is by Mr. Samuel Moore, the translator of the greater portion of Marx's *Capital*. We have revised it in common, and I have added a few notes explanatory of historical allusions.

London, January 30th, 1888.

# MANIFESTO OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

By KARL MARX AND FRIEDRICH ENGELS

A spectre is haunting Europe—the spectre of Communism. All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre: Pope and Czar, Metternich and Guizot, French Radicals <sup>11</sup> and German police-spies.

Where is the party in opposition that has not been decried as communistic by its opponents in power? Where the Opposition that has not hurled back the branding reproach of Communism, against the more advanced opposition parties, as well as against its reactionary adversaries?

Two things result from this fact:

I. Communism is already acknowledged by all European powers to be itself a power.

II. It is high time that Communists should openly, in the face of the whole world, publish their views, their aims, their tendencies, and meet this nursery tale of the spectre of Communism with a manifesto of the party itself.

To this end, Communists of various nationalities have assembled in London, and sketched the following manifesto, to be published in the English, French, German, Italian, Flemish and Danish languages.

## I

### BOURGEOIS AND PROLETARIANS <sup>12</sup>

The history of all hitherto existing society <sup>13</sup> is the history of class struggles.

Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master <sup>14</sup> 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.

In the earlier epochs of history, we find almost everywhere a complicated arrangement of society into various orders, a manifold gradation of social rank. In ancient Rome we have patricians, knights, plebeians, slaves; in the Middle Ages, feudal lords, vassals, guild-masters, journeymen, apprentices, serfs; in almost all of these classes, again, subordinate gradations.

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.

From the serfs of the Middle Ages sprang the chartered burghers <sup>15</sup> of the earliest towns. From these burgesses the first elements of the bourgeoisie were developed.

The discovery of America, the rounding of the Cape, opened

up fresh ground for the rising bourgeoisie. The East-Indian and Chinese markets, the colonisation of America, trade with the colonies, the increase in the means of exchange and in commodities generally, gave to commerce, to navigation, to industry, an impulse never before known, and thereby, to the revolutionary element in the tottering feudal society, a rapid development.

The feudal system of industry, in which industrial production was monopolised by closed guilds,<sup>16</sup> now no longer sufficed for the growing wants of the new markets. The manufacturing system took its place. The guild-masters were pushed aside by the manufacturing middle class; division of labour between the different corporate guilds vanished in the face of division of labour in each single workshop.

Meantime the markets kept ever growing, the demand ever rising. Even manufacture no longer sufficed. Thereupon, steam and machinery revolutionised industrial production. The place of manufacture was taken by the giant, modern industry, the place of the industrial middle class, by industrial millionaires—the leaders of whole industrial armies, the modern bourgeois.

Modern industry has established the world market, for which the discovery of America paved the way. This market has given an immense development to commerce, to navigation, to communication by land. This development has, in its turn, reacted on the extension of industry; and in proportion as industry, commerce, navigation, railways extended, in the same proportion the bourgeoisie developed, increased its capital, and pushed into the background every class handed down from the Middle Ages.

We see, therefore, how the modern bourgeoisie is itself the product of a long course of development, of a series of revolutions in the modes of production and of exchange.

Each step in the development of the bourgeoisie was accompanied by a corresponding political advance of that class. An oppressed class under the sway of the feudal nobility, it became an armed and self-governing association in the mediæval commune;<sup>17</sup> here independent urban republic (as in Italy and Germany), there

taxable "third estate" of the monarchy (as in France); afterwards, in the period of manufacture proper, serving either the semi-feudal or the absolute monarchy as a counterpoise against the nobility, and, in fact, corner-stone of the great monarchies in general—the bourgeoisie has at last, since the establishment of modern industry and of the world market, conquered for itself, in the modern representative state, exclusive political sway. The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.

The bourgeoisie has played a most revolutionary rôle in history.

The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his "natural superiors," and has left no other bond between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous "cash payment." It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervour, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom—Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.

The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honoured and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage-labourers.

The bourgeoisie has torn away from the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation to a mere money relation.

The bourgeoisie has disclosed how it came to pass that the brutal display of vigour in the Middle Ages, which reactionaries so much admire, found its fitting complement in the most slothful indolence. It has been the first to show what man's activity can bring about. It has accomplished wonders far surpassing Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts, and Gothic cathedrals; it has conducted expe-

ditions that put in the shade all former migrations of nations and crusades.

The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. Conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered form, was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes. Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life and his relations with his kind.

The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere.

The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. To the great chagrin of reactionaries, it has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground on which it stood. All old-established national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. They are dislodged by new industries, whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilised nations, by industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material, but raw material drawn from the remotest zones; industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe. In place of the old wants, satisfied by the production of the country, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant lands and climes. In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal



inter-dependence of nations. And as in material, so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures there arises a world literature.

The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all nations, even the most barbarian, into civilisation. The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls, with which it forces the barbarians' intensely obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitulate. It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilisation into their midst, *i.e.*, to become bourgeois themselves. In a word, it creates a world after its own image.

The bourgeoisie has subjected the country to the rule of the towns. It has created enormous cities, has greatly increased the urban population as compared with the rural, and has thus rescued a considerable part of the population from the idiocy of rural life. Just as it has made the country dependent on the towns, so it has made barbarian and semi-barbarian countries dependent on the civilised ones, nations of peasants on nations of bourgeois, the East on the West.

More and more the bourgeoisie keeps doing away with the scattered state of the population, of the means of production, and of property. It has agglomerated population, centralised means of production, and has concentrated property in a few hands. The necessary consequence of this was political centralisation. Independent, or but loosely connected provinces, with separate interests, laws, governments and systems of taxation, became lumped together into one nation, with one government, one code of laws, one national class interest, one frontier and one customs tariff.

The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than

have all preceding generations together. Subjection of nature's forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam-navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalisation of rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground—what earlier century had even a presentiment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labour?

We see then that the means of production and of exchange, which served as the foundation for the growth of the bourgeoisie, were generated in feudal society. At a certain stage in the development of these means of production and of exchange, the conditions under which feudal society produced and exchanged, the feudal organisation of agriculture and manufacturing industry, in a word, the feudal relations of property became no longer compatible with the already developed productive forces; they became so many fetters. They had to be burst asunder; they were burst asunder.

Into their place stepped free competition, accompanied by a social and political constitution adapted to it, and by the economic and political sway of the bourgeois class.

A similar movement is going on before our own eyes. Modern bourgeois society with its relations of production, of exchange and of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells. For many a decade past the history of industry and commerce is but the history of the revolt of modern productive forces against modern conditions of production, against the property relations that are the conditions for the existence of the bourgeoisie and of its rule. It is enough to mention the commercial crises that by their periodical return put the existence of the entire bourgeois society on trial, each time more threateningly. In these crises a great part not only of the existing products, but also of the previously created productive forces, are periodically destroyed. In these crises there breaks out an epidemic that, in all

earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity—the epidemic of over-production. Society suddenly finds itself put back into a state of momentary barbarism; it appears as if a famine, a universal war of devastation had cut off the supply of every means of subsistence; industry and commerce seem to be destroyed. And why? Because there is too much civilisation, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce. The productive forces at the disposal of society no longer tend to further the development of the conditions of bourgeois property; on the contrary, they have become too powerful for these conditions, by which they are fettered, and no sooner do they overcome these fetters than they bring disorder into the whole of bourgeois society, endanger the existence of bourgeois property. The conditions of bourgeois society are too narrow to comprise the wealth created by them. And how does the bourgeoisie get over these crises? On the one hand by enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces; on the other, by the conquest of new markets, and by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones. That is to say, by paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises, and by diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented.

The weapons with which the bourgeoisie felled feudalism to the ground are now turned against the bourgeoisie itself.

But not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons—the modern working class—the proletarians.

In proportion as the bourgeoisie, *i.e.*, capital, is developed, in the same proportion is the proletariat, the modern working class, developed—a class of labourers, who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labour increases capital. These labourers, who must sell themselves piecemeal, are a commodity, like every other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition, to all the fluctuations of the market.

Owing to the extensive use of machinery and to division of

labour, the work of the proletarians has lost all individual character, and, consequently, all charm for the workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine, and it is only the most simple, most monotonous, and most easily acquired knack, that is required of him. Hence, the cost of production of a workman is restricted, almost entirely, to the means of subsistence that he requires for his maintenance, and for the propagation of his race. But the price of a commodity, and therefore also of labour, is equal to its cost of production. In proportion, therefore, as the repulsiveness of the work increases, the wage decreases. Nay more, in proportion as the use of machinery and division of labour increases, in the same proportion the burden of toil also increases, whether by prolongation of the working hours, by increase of the work exacted in a given time, or by increased speed of the machinery, etc.

Modern industry has converted the little workshop of the patriarchal master into the great factory of the industrial capitalist. Masses of labourers, crowded into the factory, are organised like soldiers. As privates of the industrial army they are placed under the command of a perfect hierarchy of officers and sergeants. Not only are they slaves of the bourgeois class, and of the bourgeois state; they are daily and hourly enslaved by the machine, by the over-looker, and, above all, by the individual bourgeois manufacturer himself. The more openly this despotism proclaims gain to be its end and aim, the more petty, the more hateful and the more embittering it is.

The less the skill and exertion of strength implied in manual labour, in other words, the more modern industry develops, the more is the labour of men superseded by that of women. Differences of age and sex have no longer any distinctive social validity for the working class. All are instruments of labour, more or less expensive to use, according to their age and sex.

No sooner has the labourer received his wages in cash, for the moment escaping exploitation by the manufacturer, than he is set upon by the other portions of the bourgeoisie, the landlord, the shop-keeper, the pawnbroker, etc.

The lower strata of the middle class—the small tradespeople, shopkeepers, and retired tradesmen<sup>31</sup> generally, the handicraftsmen and peasants—all these sink gradually into the proletariat, partly because their diminutive capital does not suffice for the scale on which modern industry is carried on, and is swamped in the competition with the large capitalists, partly because their specialised skill is rendered worthless by new methods of production. Thus the proletariat is recruited from all classes of the population.

The proletariat goes through various stages of development. With its birth begins its struggle with the bourgeoisie. At first the contest is carried on by individual labourers, then by the work people of a factory, then by the operatives of one trade, in one locality, against the individual bourgeois who directly exploits them. They direct their attacks not against the bourgeois conditions of production, but against the instruments of production themselves; they destroy imported wares that compete with their labour, they smash machinery to pieces, they set factories ablaze, they seek to restore by force the vanished status of the workman of the Middle Ages.

At this stage the labourers still form an incoherent mass scattered over the whole country, and broken up by their mutual competition. If anywhere they unite to form more compact bodies, this is not yet the consequence of their own active union, but of the union of the bourgeoisie, which class, in order to attain its own political ends, is compelled to set the whole proletariat in motion, and is moreover still able to do so for a time. At this stage, therefore, the proletarians do not fight their enemies, but the enemies of their enemies, the remnants of absolute monarchy, the landowners, the non-industrial bourgeois, the petty bourgeoisie. Thus the whole historical movement is concentrated in the hands of the bourgeoisie; every victory so obtained is a victory for the bourgeoisie.

But with the development of industry the proletariat not only increases in number; it becomes concentrated in greater masses, its strength grows, and it feels that strength more. The various interests and conditions of life within the ranks of the proletariat are more and more equalised, in proportion as machinery obliterates all

distinctions of labour and nearly everywhere reduces wages to the same low level. The growing competition among the bourgeois, and the resulting commercial crises, make the wages of the workers ever more fluctuating. The unceasing improvement of machinery, ever more rapidly developing, makes their livelihood more and more precarious; the collisions between individual workmen and individual bourgeois take more and more the character of collisions between two classes. Thereupon the workers begin to form combinations (trade unions) against the bourgeoisie; they club together in order to keep up the rate of wages; they found permanent associations in order to make provision beforehand for these occasional revolts. Here and there the contest breaks out into riots.

Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever expanding union of the workers. This union is furthered by the improved means of communication which are created by modern industry, and which place the workers of different localities in contact with one another. It was just this contact that was needed to centralise the numerous local struggles, all of the same character, into one national struggle between classes. But every class struggle is a political struggle. And that union, to attain which the burghers of the Middle Ages, with their miserable highways, required centuries, the modern proletarians, thanks to railways, achieve in a few years.

This organisation of the proletarians into a class, and consequently into a political party, is continually being upset again by the competition between the workers themselves. But it ever rises up again, stronger, firmer, mightier. It compels legislative recognition of particular interests of the workers, by taking advantage of the divisions among the bourgeoisie itself. Thus the ten-hour bill<sup>18</sup> in England was carried.

Altogether, collisions between the classes of the old society further the course of development of the proletariat in many ways. The bourgeoisie finds itself involved in a constant battle. At first with the aristocracy; later on, with those portions of the bourgeoisie itself

whose interests have become antagonistic to the progress of industry: at all times with the bourgeoisie of foreign countries. In all these battles it sees itself compelled to appeal to the proletariat, to ask for its help, and thus, to drag it into the political arena. The bourgeoisie itself, therefore, supplies the proletariat with its own elements of political and general education, in other words, it furnishes the proletariat with weapons for fighting the bourgeoisie.

Further, as we have already seen, entire sections of the ruling classes are, by the advance of industry, precipitated into the proletariat, or are at least threatened in their conditions of existence. These also supply the proletariat with fresh elements of enlightenment and progress.

Finally, in times when the class struggle nears the decisive hour, the process of dissolution going on within the ruling class, in fact within the whole range of old society, assumes such a violent, glaring character, that a small section of the ruling class cuts itself adrift, and joins the revolutionary class, the class that holds the future in its hands. Just as, therefore, at an earlier period, a section of the nobility went over to the bourgeoisie, so now a portion of the bourgeoisie goes over to the proletariat, and in particular, a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole.

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 adopt that of the proletariat.

The "dangerous class," the social scum (*Lumpenproletariat*), that passively rotting mass thrown off by the lowest layers of old society, may, here and there, be swept into the movement by a proletarian revolution; its conditions of life, however, prepare it far more for the part of a bribed tool of reactionary intrigue.

The social conditions of the old society no longer exist for the proletariat. The proletarian is without property; his relation to his wife and children has no longer anything in common with bourgeois family relations; modern industrial labour, modern subjection to capital, the same in England as in France, in America as in Germany, has stripped him of every trace of national character. Law, morality, religion, are to him so many bourgeois prejudices, behind which lurk in ambush just as many bourgeois interests.

All the preceding classes that got the upper hand, sought to fortify their already acquired status by subjecting society at large to their conditions of appropriation. The proletarians cannot become masters of the productive forces of society, except by abolishing their own previous mode of appropriation, and thereby also every other previous mode of appropriation. They have nothing of their own to secure and to fortify; their mission is to destroy all previous securities for, and insurances of, individual property.

All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interest of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority. The proletariat, the lowest stratum of our present society, cannot stir, cannot raise itself up, without the whole superincumbent strata of official society being sprung into the air.

Though not in substance, yet in form, the struggle of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie is at first a national struggle. The proletariat of each country must, of course, first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie.

In depicting the most general phases of the development of the proletariat, we traced the more or less veiled civil war, raging within existing society, up to the point where that war breaks out into



open revolution, and where the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat.

Hitherto, every form of society has been based, as we have already seen, on the antagonism of oppressing and oppressed classes. But in order to oppress a class, certain conditions must be assured to it under which it can, at least, continue its slavish existence. The serf, in the period of serfdom, raised himself to membership in the commune, just as the petty bourgeois, under the yoke of feudal absolutism, managed to develop into a bourgeois. The modern labourer, on the contrary, instead of rising with the progress of industry, sinks deeper and deeper below the conditions of existence of his own class. He becomes a pauper, and pauperism develops more rapidly than population and wealth. And here it becomes evident, that the bourgeoisie is unfit any longer to be the ruling class in society, and to impose its conditions of existence upon society as an over-riding law. It is unfit to rule because it is incompetent to assure an existence to its slave within his slavery, because it cannot help letting him sink into such a state, that it has to feed him, instead of being fed by him. Society can no longer live under this bourgeoisie, in other words, its existence is no longer compatible with society.

The essential condition for the existence and sway of the bourgeois class, is the formation and augmentation of capital; the condition for capital is wage-labour. Wage-labour rests exclusively on competition between the labourers. The advance of industry, whose involuntary promoter is the bourgeoisie, replaces the isolation of the labourers, due to competition, by their revolutionary combination, due to association. The development of modern industry, therefore, cuts from under its feet the very foundation on which the bourgeoisie produces and appropriates products. What the bourgeoisie therefore produces, above all, are its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable.

## II

### PROLETARIANS AND COMMUNISTS

In what relation do the Communists stand to the proletarians as a whole?

The Communists do not form a separate party opposed to other working class parties.

They have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole.

They do not set up any sectarian principles of their own, by which to shape and mould the proletarian movement.

The Communists are distinguished from the other working class parties by this only: 1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality. 2. In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole.

The Communists, therefore, are on the one hand, practically, the most advanced and resolute section of the working class parties of every country, that section which pushes forward all others; on the other hand, theoretically, they have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement.

The immediate aim of the Communists is the same as that of all the other proletarian parties: Formation of the proletariat into a class, overthrow of bourgeois supremacy, conquest of political power by the proletariat.

The theoretical conclusions of the Communists are in no way based on ideas or principles that have been invented, or discovered, by this or that would-be universal reformer.

They merely express, in general terms, actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes. The abolition of existing property relations is not at all a distinctive feature of Communism.

All property relations in the past have continually been subject to historical change consequent upon the change in historical conditions.

The French Revolution, for example, abolished feudal property in favour of bourgeois property.

The distinguishing feature of Communism is not the abolition of property generally, but the abolition of bourgeois property. But modern bourgeois private property is the final and most complete expression of the system of producing and appropriating products that is based on class antagonisms, on the exploitation of the many by the few.

In this sense, the theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property.

We Communists have been reproached with the desire of abolishing the right of personally acquiring property as the fruit of a man's own labour, which property is alleged to be the groundwork of all personal freedom, activity and independence.

Hard-won, self-acquired, self-earned property! Do you mean the property of the petty artisan and of the small peasant, a form of property that preceded the bourgeois form? There is no need to abolish that; the development of industry has to a great extent already destroyed it, and is still destroying it daily.

Or do you mean modern bourgeois private property?

But does wage-labour create any property for the labourer? Not a bit. It creates capital, *i.e.*, that kind of property which exploits wage-labour, and which cannot increase except upon condition of begetting a new supply of wage-labour for fresh exploitation. Property, in its present form, is based on the antagonism of capital and wage-labour. Let us examine both sides of this antagonism.

To be a capitalist, is to have not only a purely personal, but a social *status* in production. Capital is a collective product, and only by the united action of many members, nay, in the last resort, only by the united action of all members of society, can it be set in motion.

Capital is therefore not a personal, it is a social, power.

When, therefore, capital is converted into common property, into the property of all members of society, personal property is not thereby transformed into social property. It is only the social character of the property that is changed. It loses its class character.

Let us now take wage-labour.

The average price of wage-labour is the minimum wage, *i.e.*, that quantum of the means of subsistence which is absolutely requisite to keep the labourer in bare existence as a labourer. What, therefore, the wage-labourer appropriates by means of his labour, merely suffices to prolong and reproduce a bare existence. We by no means intend to abolish this personal appropriation of the products of labour, an appropriation that is made for the maintenance and reproduction of human life, and that leaves no surplus wherewith to command the labour of others. All that we want to do away with is the miserable character of this appropriation, under which the labourer lives merely to increase capital, and is allowed to live only insofar as the interest of the ruling class requires it.

In bourgeois society, living labour is but a means to increase accumulated labour. In Communist society, accumulated labour is but a means to widen, to enrich, to promote the existence of the labourer.

In bourgeois society, therefore, the past dominates the present; in Communist society, the present dominates the past. In bourgeois society capital is independent and has individuality, while the living person is dependent and has no individuality.

And the abolition of this state of things is called by the bourgeois, abolition of individuality and freedom! And rightly so. The abolition of bourgeois individuality, bourgeois independence, and bourgeois freedom is undoubtedly aimed at.

By freedom is meant, under the present bourgeois conditions of production, free trade, free selling and buying.

But if selling and buying disappears, free selling and buying disappears also. This talk about free selling and buying, and all the other "brave words" of our bourgeoisie about freedom in general, have a meaning, if any, only in contrast with restricted selling and buying, with the fettered traders of the Middle Ages, but have no meaning when opposed to the Communist abolition of buying and selling, of the bourgeois conditions of production, and of the bourgeoisie itself.

You are horrified at our intending to do away with private property. But in your existing society, private property is already done away with for nine-tenths of the population; its existence for the few is solely due to its non-existence in the hands of those nine-tenths. You reproach us, therefore, with intending to do away with a form of property, the necessary condition for whose existence is the non-existence of any property for the immense majority of society.

In a word, you reproach us with intending to do away with your property. Precisely so; that is just what we intend.

From the moment when labour can no longer be converted into capital, money, or rent, into a social power capable of being monopolised, *i.e.*, from the moment when individual property can no longer be transformed into bourgeois property, into capital, from that moment, you say, individuality vanishes.

You must, therefore, confess that by "individual" you mean no other person than the bourgeois, than the middle class owner of property. This person must, indeed, be swept out of the way, and made impossible.

Communism deprives no man of the power to appropriate the products of society; all that it does is to deprive him of the power to subjugate the labour of others by means of such appropriation.

It has been objected, that upon the abolition of private property all work will cease, and universal laziness will overtake us.

According to this, bourgeois society ought long ago to have gone to the dogs through sheer idleness; for those of its members who

work, acquire nothing, and those who acquire anything, do not work. The whole of this objection is but another expression of the tautology: There can no longer be any wage-labour when there is no longer any capital.

All objections urged against the Communist mode of producing and appropriating material products, have, in the same way, been urged against the Communist modes of producing and appropriating intellectual products. Just as, to the bourgeois, the disappearance of class property is the disappearance of production itself, so the disappearance of class culture is to him identical with the disappearance of all culture.

That culture, the loss of which he laments, is, for the enormous majority, a mere training to act as a machine.

But don't wrangle with us so long as you apply, to our intended abolition of bourgeois property, the standard of your bourgeois notions of freedom, culture, law, etc. Your very ideas are but the outgrowth of the conditions of your bourgeois production and bourgeois property, just as your jurisprudence is but the will of your class made into a law for all, a will whose essential character and direction are determined by the economic conditions of existence of your class.

The selfish misconception that induces you to transform into eternal laws of nature and of reason, the social forms springing from your present mode of production and form of property—historical relations that rise and disappear in the progress of production—this misconception you share with every ruling class that has preceded you. What you see clearly in the case of ancient property, what you admit in the case of feudal property, you are of course forbidden to admit in the case of your own bourgeois form of property.

Abolition of the family! Even the most radical flare up at this infamous proposal of the Communists.

On what foundation is the present family, the bourgeois family, based? On capital, on private gain. In its completely developed form this family exists only among the bourgeoisie. But this state of things finds its complement in the practical absence of the family among the proletarians, and in public prostitution.

The bourgeois family will vanish as a matter of course when its complement vanishes, and both will vanish with the vanishing of capital.

Do you charge us with wanting to stop the exploitation of children by their parents? To this crime we plead guilty.

But, you will say, we destroy the most hallowed of relations, when we replace home education by social.

And your education! Is not that also social, and determined by the social conditions under which you educate, by the intervention of society, direct or indirect, by means of schools, etc.? The Communists have not invented the intervention of society in education; they do but seek to alter the character of that intervention, and to rescue education from the influence of the ruling class.

The bourgeois claptrap about the family and education, about the hallowed co-relation of parent and child, becomes all the more disgusting, the more, by the action of modern industry, all family ties among the proletarians are torn asunder, and their children transformed into simple articles of commerce and instruments of labour.

But you Communists would introduce community of women, screams the whole bourgeoisie in chorus.

The bourgeois sees in his wife a mere instrument of production. He hears that the instruments of production are to be exploited in common, and, naturally, can come to no other conclusion than that the lot of being common to all will likewise fall to the women.

He has not even a suspicion that the real point aimed at is to do away with the status of women as mere instruments of production.

For the rest, nothing is more ridiculous than the virtuous indignation of our bourgeois at the community of women which, they pretend, is to be openly and officially established by the Communists. The Communists have no need to introduce community of women; it has existed almost from time immemorial.

Our bourgeois, not content with having the wives and daughters of their proletarians at their disposal, not to speak of common prostitutes, take the greatest pleasure in seducing each other's wives.

Bourgeois marriage is in reality a system of wives in common and thus, at the most, what the Communists might possibly be reproached with is that they desire to introduce, in substitution for a hypocritically concealed, an openly legalised community of women. For the rest, it is self-evident, that the abolition of the present system of production must bring with it the abolition of the community of women springing from that system, *i.e.*, of prostitution both public and private.

The Communists are further reproached with desiring to abolish countries and nationality.

The workingmen have no country. We cannot take from them what they have not got. Since the proletariat must first of all acquire political supremacy, must rise to be the leading class of the nation, must constitute itself *the* nation, it is, so far, itself national, though not in the bourgeois sense of the word.

National differences and antagonisms between peoples are vanishing gradually from day to day, owing to the development of the bourgeoisie, to freedom of commerce, to the world market, to uniformity in the mode of production and in the conditions of life corresponding thereto.

The supremacy of the proletariat will cause them to vanish still faster. United action, of the leading civilised countries at least, is one of the first conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat.

In proportion as the exploitation of one individual by another is put an end to, the exploitation of one nation by another will also be put an end to. In proportion as the antagonism between classes within the nation vanishes, the hostility of one nation to another will come to an end.

The charges against Communism made from a religious, a philosophical, and, generally, from an ideological standpoint, are not deserving of serious examination.

Does it require deep intuition to comprehend that man's ideas, views, and conceptions, in one word, man's consciousness, changes with every change in the conditions of his material existence, in his social relations and in his social life?



What else does the history of ideas prove, than that intellectual production changes its character in proportion as material production is changed? The ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class.

When people speak of ideas that revolutionise society, they do but express the fact that within the old society the elements of a new one have been created, and that the dissolution of the old ideas keeps even pace with the dissolution of the old conditions of existence.

When the ancient world was in its last throes, the ancient religions were overcome by Christianity. When Christian ideas succumbed in the 18th century to rationalist ideas, feudal society fought its death-battle with the then revolutionary bourgeoisie. The ideas of religious liberty and freedom of conscience, merely gave expression to the sway of free competition within the domain of knowledge.

"Undoubtedly," it will be said, "religion, moral, philosophical and juridical ideas have been modified in the course of historical development. But religion, morality, philosophy, political science, and law, constantly survived this change."

"There are, besides, eternal truths, such as Freedom, Justice, etc., that are common to all states of society. But Communism abolishes eternal truths, it abolishes all religion, and all morality, instead of constituting them on a new basis; it therefore acts in contradiction to all past historical experience."

What does this accusation reduce itself to? The history of all past society has consisted in the development of class antagonisms, antagonisms that assumed different forms at different epochs.

But whatever form they may have taken, one fact is common to all past ages, *viz.*, the exploitation of one part of society by the other. No wonder, then, that the social consciousness of past ages, despite all the multiplicity and variety it displays, moves within certain common forms, or general ideas, which cannot completely vanish except with the total disappearance of class antagonisms.

The Communist revolution is the most radical rupture with traditional property relations; no wonder that its development involves the most radical rupture with traditional ideas.

But let us have done with the bourgeois objections to Communism.

We have seen above, that the first step in the revolution by the working class, is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to establish democracy.

The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the state, *i.e.*, of the proletariat organised as the ruling class; and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible.

Of course, in the beginning, this cannot be effected except by means of despotic inroads on the rights of property, and on the conditions of bourgeois production; by means of measures, therefore, which appear economically insufficient and untenable, but which, in the course of the movement, outstrip themselves, necessitate further inroads upon the old social order, and are unavoidable as a means of entirely revolutionising the mode of production.

These measures will of course be different in different countries.

Nevertheless in the most advanced countries, the following will be pretty generally applicable.

1. Abolition of property in land and application of all rents of land to public purposes.
2. A heavy progressive or graduated income tax.
3. Abolition of all right of inheritance.
4. Confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels.
5. Centralisation of credit in the hands of the state, by means of a national bank with state capital and an exclusive monopoly.
6. Centralisation of the means of communication and transport in the hands of the state.
7. Extension of factories and instruments of production owned by the state; the bringing into cultivation of waste lands, and the improvement of the soil generally in accordance with a common plan.
8. Equal obligation of all to work. Establishment of industrial armies, especially for agriculture.
9. Combination of agriculture with manufacturing industries;

gradual abolition of the distinction between town and country, by a more equable distribution of the population over the country.

10. Free education for all children in public schools. Abolition of child factory labour in its present form. Combination of education with industrial production, etc.

When, in the course of development, class distinctions have disappeared, and all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation, the public power will lose its political character. Political power, properly so called, is merely the organised power of one class for oppressing another. If the proletariat during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled, by the force of circumstances, to organise itself as a class; if, by means of a revolution, it makes itself the ruling class, and, as such sweeps away by force the old conditions of production, then it will, along with these conditions, have swept away the conditions for the existence of class antagonisms, and of classes generally, and will thereby have abolished its own supremacy as a class.

In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.

### III

## SOCIALIST AND COMMUNIST LITERATURE

### 1. REACTIONARY SOCIALISM

#### *a. Feudal Socialism*

Owing to their historical position, it became the vocation of the aristocracies of France and England to write pamphlets against modern bourgeois society. In the French revolution of July, 1830,<sup>19</sup> and in the English reform agitation, these aristocracies again succumbed to the hateful upstart. Thenceforth, a serious political struggle was altogether out of the question. A literary battle alone remained possible. But even in the domain of literature the old cries of the restoration period<sup>20</sup> had become impossible.

In order to arouse sympathy, the aristocracy was obliged to lose sight, apparently, of its own interests, and to formulate its indictment against the bourgeoisie in the interest of the exploited working class alone. Thus the aristocracy took its revenge by singing lampoons against its new master, and whispering in his ears sinister prophecies of coming catastrophe.

In this way arose Feudal Socialism: Half lamentation, half lampoon; half echo of the past, half menace of the future; at times, by its bitter, witty and incisive criticism, striking the bourgeoisie to the very heart's core, but always ludicrous in its effect through total incapacity to comprehend the march of modern history.

The aristocracy, in order to rally the people to them, waved the proletarian alms-bag in front for a banner. But the people, as often as it joined them, saw on their hindquarters the old feudal coats of arms, and deserted with loud and irreverent laughter.

One section of the French Legitimists,<sup>21</sup> and "Young England,"<sup>22</sup> exhibited this spectacle.

In pointing out that their mode of exploitation was different from that of the bourgeoisie, the feudalists forget that they exploited under circumstances and conditions that were quite different, and that are now antiquated. In showing that, under their rule, the modern proletariat never existed, they forget that the modern bourgeoisie is the necessary offspring of their own form of society.

For the rest, so little do they conceal the reactionary character of their criticism, that their chief accusation against the bourgeoisie amounts to this, that under the bourgeois regime a class is being developed, which is destined to cut up root and branch the old order of society.

What they upbraid the bourgeoisie with is not so much that it creates a proletariat, as that it creates a *revolutionary* proletariat.

In political practice, therefore, they join in all coercive measures against the working class; and in ordinary life, despite their highfalutin phrases, they stoop to pick up the golden apples dropped from the tree of industry, and to barter truth, love, and honour for traffic in wool, beetroot-sugar, and potato spirits.<sup>23</sup>

As the parson has ever gone hand in hand with the landlord, so has Clerical Socialism with Feudal Socialism.

Nothing is easier than to give Christian asceticism a Socialist tinge. Has not Christianity declaimed against private property, against marriage, against the state? Has it not preached in the place of these, charity and poverty, celibacy and mortification of the flesh, monastic life and Mother Church? Christian Socialism is but the holy water with which the priest consecrates the heart-burnings of the aristocrat.

### *b. Petty Bourgeois Socialism*

The feudal aristocracy was not the only class that was ruined by the bourgeoisie, not the only class whose conditions of existence pined and perished in the atmosphere of modern bourgeois society.

The mediæval burgesses and the small peasant proprietors were the precursors of the modern bourgeoisie. In those countries which are but little developed, industrially and commercially, these two classes still vegetate side by side with the rising bourgeoisie.

In countries where modern civilisation has become fully developed, a new class of petty bourgeois has been formed, fluctuating between proletariat and bourgeoisie, and ever renewing itself as a supplementary part of bourgeois society. The individual members of this class, however, are being constantly hurled down into the proletariat by the action of competition, and, as modern industry develops, they even see the moment approaching when they will completely disappear as an independent section of modern society, to be replaced, in manufactures, agriculture and commerce, by overlookers, bailiffs and shopmen.

In countries, like France, where the peasants constitute far more than half of the population, it was natural that writers who sided with the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, should use, in their criticism of the bourgeois regime, the standard of the peasant and petty bourgeois, and from the standpoint of these intermediate classes should take up the cudgels for the working class. Thus arose petty bourgeois Socialism. Sismondi<sup>24</sup> was the head of this school, not only in France but also in England.

This school of Socialism dissected with great acuteness the contradictions in the conditions of modern production. It laid bare the hypocritical apologies of economists. It proved, incontrovertibly, the disastrous effects of machinery and division of labour; the concentration of capital and land in a few hands; overproduction and crises; it pointed out the inevitable ruin of the petty bourgeois and peasant, the misery of the proletariat, the anarchy in production, the crying inequalities in the distribution of wealth, the industrial war of extermination between nations, the dissolution of old moral bonds, of the old family relations, of the old nationalities.

In its positive aims, however, this form of Socialism aspires either to restoring the old means of production and of exchange, and with them the old property relations, and the old society, or to cramping

the modern means of production and of exchange within the framework of the old property relations that have been, and were bound to be, exploded by those means. In either case, it is both reactionary and utopian.

Its last words are: Corporate guilds for manufacture; patriarchal relations in agriculture.

Ultimately, when stubborn historical facts had dispersed all intoxicating effects of self-deception, this form of Socialism ended in a miserable fit of the blues.

### *c. German or "True" Socialism*

The Socialist and Communist literature of France, a literature that originated under the pressure of a bourgeoisie in power, and that was the expression of the struggle against this power, was introduced into Germany at a time when the bourgeoisie, in that country, had just begun its contest with feudal absolutism.

German philosophers, would-be philosophers, and men of letters eagerly seized on this literature, only forgetting that when these writings immigrated from France into Germany, French social conditions had not immigrated along with them. In contact with German social conditions, this French literature lost all its immediate practical significance, and assumed a purely literary aspect. Thus, to the German philosophers of the 18th century, the demands of the first French Revolution were nothing more than the demands of "Practical Reason" in general, and the utterance of the will of the revolutionary French bourgeoisie signified in their eyes the laws of pure will, of will as it was bound to be, of true human will generally.

The work of the German *literati* consisted solely in bringing the new French ideas into harmony with their ancient philosophical conscience, or rather, in annexing the French ideas without deserting their own philosophic point of view.

This annexation took place in the same way in which a foreign language is appropriated, namely by translation.

It is well known how the monks wrote silly lives of Catholic saints *over* the manuscripts on which the classical works of ancient heathendom had been written. The German *literati* reversed this process with the profane French literature. They wrote their philosophical nonsense beneath the French original. For instance, beneath the French criticism of the economic functions of money, they wrote "alienation of humanity," and beneath the French criticism of the bourgeois state, they wrote, "dethronement of the category of the general," and so forth.

The introduction of these philosophical phrases at the back of the French historical criticisms they dubbed "Philosophy of Action," "True Socialism," "German Science of Socialism," "Philosophical Foundation of Socialism," and so on.

The French Socialist and Communist literature was thus completely emasculated. And, since it ceased in the hands of the German to express the struggle of one class with the other, he felt conscious of having overcome "French one-sidedness" and of representing, not true requirements, but the requirements of truth; not the interests of the proletariat, but the interests of human nature, of man in general, who belongs to no class, has no reality, who exists only in the misty realm of philosophical phantasy.

This German Socialism, which took its school-boy task so seriously and solemnly, and extolled its poor stock-in-trade in such mountebank fashion, meanwhile gradually lost its pedantic innocence.

The fight of the German and especially of the Prussian bourgeoisie against feudal aristocracy and absolute monarchy, in other words, the liberal movement, became more earnest.

By this, the long-wished-for opportunity was offered to "True" Socialism of confronting the political movement with the Socialist demands, of hurling the traditional anathemas against liberalism, against representative government, against bourgeois competition, bourgeois freedom of the press, bourgeois legislation, bourgeois liberty and equality, and of preaching to the masses that they had nothing to gain, and everything to lose, by this bourgeois movement. German Socialism forgot, in the nick of time, that the French



criticism, whose silly echo it was, presupposed the existence of modern bourgeois society, with its corresponding economic conditions of existence, and the political constitution adapted thereto, the very things whose attainment was the object of the pending struggle in Germany.

To the absolute governments, with their following of parsons, professors, country squires and officials, it served as a welcome scarecrow against the threatening bourgeoisie.

It was a sweet finish after the bitter pills of floggings and bullets, with which these same governments, just at that time, dosed the risings of the German working class.

While this "True" Socialism thus served the governments as a weapon for fighting the German bourgeoisie, it, at the same time, directly represented a reactionary interest, the interest of the German Philistines. In Germany the petty bourgeois class, a relic of the 16th century, and since then constantly cropping up again under various forms, is the real social basis of the existing state of things.

To preserve this class, is to preserve the existing state of things in Germany. The industrial and political supremacy of the bourgeoisie threatens it with certain destruction—on the one hand, from the concentration of capital; on the other, from the rise of a revolutionary proletariat. "True" Socialism appeared to kill these two birds with one stone. It spread like an epidemic.

The robe of speculative cobwebs, embroidered with flowers of rhetoric, steeped in the dew of sickly sentiment, this transcendental robe in which the German Socialists wrapped their sorry "eternal truths," all skin and bone, served to increase wonderfully the sale of their goods amongst such a public.

And on its part, German Socialism recognised, more and more, its own calling as the bombastic representative of the petty bourgeois Philistine.

It proclaimed the German nation to be the model nation, and the German petty Philistine to be the typical man. To every villainous meanness of this model man it gave a hidden, higher, socialistic interpretation, the exact contrary of his real character. It went to

the extreme length of directly opposing the "brutally destructive" tendency of Communism, and of proclaiming its supreme and impartial contempt of all class struggles. With very few exceptions, all the so-called Socialist and Communist publications that now (1847) circulate in Germany belong to the domain of this foul and enervating literature.

## 2. CONSERVATIVE OR BOURGEOIS SOCIALISM

A part of the bourgeoisie is desirous of redressing social grievances, in order to secure the continued existence of bourgeois society.

To this section belong economists, philanthropists, humanitarians, improvers of the condition of the working class, organisers of charity, members of societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals, temperance fanatics, hole-and-corner reformers of every imaginable kind. This form of Socialism has, moreover, been worked out into complete systems.

We may cite Proudhon's *Philosophy of Poverty* as an example of this form.

The socialistic bourgeois want all the advantages of modern social conditions without the struggles and dangers necessarily resulting therefrom. They desire the existing state of society minus its revolutionary and disintegrating elements. They wish for a bourgeoisie without a proletariat. The bourgeoisie naturally conceives the world in which it is supreme to be the best; and bourgeois Socialism develops this comfortable conception into various more or less complete systems. In requiring the proletariat to carry out such a system, and thereby to march straightway into the social New Jerusalem, it but requires in reality, that the proletariat should remain within the bounds of existing society, but should cast away all its hateful ideas concerning the bourgeoisie.

A second and more practical, but less systematic, form of this Socialism sought to depreciate every revolutionary movement in the eyes of the working class, by showing that no mere political reform, but only a change in the material conditions of existence, in eco-

conomic relations, could be of any advantage to them. By changes in the material conditions of existence, this form of Socialism, however, by no means understands abolition of the bourgeois relations of production, an abolition that can be effected only by a revolution, but administrative reforms, based on the continued existence of these relations; reforms, therefore, that in no respect affect the relations between capital and labour, but, at the best, lessen the cost, and simplify the administrative work of bourgeois government.

Bourgeois Socialism attains adequate expression, when, and only when, it becomes a mere figure of speech.

Free trade: For the benefit of the working class. Protective duties: For the benefit of the working class. Prison reform: For the benefit of the working class. These are the last words and the only seriously meant words of bourgeois Socialism.

It is summed up in the phrase: the bourgeois are bourgeois—for the benefit of the working class.

### 3. CRITICAL-UTOPIAN SOCIALISM AND COMMUNISM

We do not here refer to that literature which, in every great modern revolution, has always given voice to the demands of the proletariat, such as the writings of Babeuf<sup>25</sup> and others.

The first direct attempts of the proletariat to attain its own ends—made in times of universal excitement, when feudal society was being overthrown—necessarily failed, owing to the then undeveloped state of the proletariat, as well as to the absence of the economic conditions for its emancipation, conditions that had yet to be produced, and could be produced by the impending bourgeois epoch alone. The revolutionary literature that accompanied these first movements of the proletariat had necessarily a reactionary character. It inculcated universal asceticism and social levelling in its crudest form.

The Socialist and Communist systems properly so called, those of St. Simon,<sup>26</sup> Fourier, Owen and others, spring into existence in the early undeveloped period, described above, of the struggle between

proletariat and bourgeoisie (see Section 1. Bourgeois and Proletarians).

The founders of these systems see, indeed, the class antagonisms, as well as the action of the decomposing elements in the prevailing form of society. But the proletariat, as yet in its infancy, offers to them the spectacle of a class without any historical initiative or any independent political movement.

Since the development of class antagonism keeps even pace with the development of industry, the economic situation, as such Socialists find it, does not as yet offer to them the material conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat. They therefore search after a new social science, after new social laws, that are to create these conditions.

Historical action is to yield to their personal inventive action; historically created conditions of emancipation to phantastic ones; and the gradual, spontaneous class organisation of the proletariat to an organisation of society specially contrived by these inventors. Future history, resolves itself, in their eyes, into the propaganda and the practical carrying out of their social plans.

In the formation of their plans they are conscious of caring chiefly for the interests of the working class, as being the most suffering class. Only from the point of view of being the most suffering class does the proletariat exist for them.

The undeveloped state of the class struggle, as well as their own surroundings, causes Socialists of this kind to consider themselves far superior to all class antagonisms. They want to improve the condition of every member of society, even that of the most favoured. Hence, they habitually appeal to society at large, without distinction of class; nay, by preference, to the ruling class. For how can people, when once they understand their system, fail to see in it the best possible plan of the best possible state of society?

Hence, they reject all political, and especially all revolutionary action; they wish to attain their ends by peaceful means, and endeavour, by small experiments, necessarily doomed to failure, and by the force of example, to pave the way for the new social gospel.

Such phantastic pictures of future society, painted at a time when the proletariat is still in a very undeveloped state and has but a phantastic conception of its own position, correspond with the first instinctive yearnings of that class for a general reconstruction of society.

But these Socialist and Communist writings contain also a critical element. They attack every principle of existing society. Hence they are full of the most valuable materials for the enlightenment of the working class. The practical measures proposed in them—such as the abolition of the distinction between town and country; abolition of the family, of private gain and of the wage-system; the proclamation of social harmony; the conversion of the functions of the state into a mere superintendence of production—all these proposals point solely to the disappearance of class antagonisms which were, at that time, only just cropping up, and which, in these publications, are recognised in their earliest, indistinct and undefined forms only. These proposals, therefore, are of a purely utopian character.

The significance of Critical-Utopian Socialism and Communism bears an inverse relation to historical development. In proportion as the modern class struggle develops and takes definite shape, this phantastic standing apart from the contest, these phantastic attacks on it, lose all practical value and all theoretical justification. Therefore, although the originators of these systems were, in many respects, revolutionary, their disciples have, in every case, formed mere reactionary sects. They hold fast by the original views of their masters, in opposition to the progressive historical development of the proletariat. They, therefore, endeavour, and that consistently, to deaden the class struggle and to reconcile the class antagonisms. They still dream of experimental realisation of their social utopias, of founding isolated *phalanstères*, of establishing "Home Colonies," or setting up a "Little Icaria" <sup>27</sup>—pocket editions of the New Jerusalem—and to realise all these castles in the air, they are compelled to appeal to the feelings and purses of the bourgeois. By degrees they sink into the category of the reactionary conservative Socialists

depicted above, differing from these only by more systematic pedantry, and by their fanatical and superstitious belief in the miraculous effects of their social science.

They, therefore, violently oppose all political action on the part of the working class; such action, according to them, can only result from blind unbelief in the new gospel.

The Owenites in England, and the Fourierists in France, respectively, oppose the Chartists<sup>28</sup> and the *Réformistes*.

#### IV

### POSITION OF THE COMMUNISTS IN RELATION TO THE VARIOUS EXISTING OPPOSITION PARTIES

Section II has made clear the relations of the Communists to the existing working class parties, such as the Chartists in England and the Agrarian Reformers in America.<sup>29</sup>

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. In France the Communists ally themselves with the Social-Democrats,<sup>30</sup> against the conservative and radical bourgeoisie, reserving, however, the right to take up a critical position in regard to phrases and illusions traditionally handed down from the great Revolution.

In Switzerland they support the Radicals, without losing sight of the fact that this party consists of antagonistic elements, partly of Democratic Socialists, in the French sense, partly of radical bourgeois.

In Poland they support the party that insists on an agrarian revolution as the prime condition for national emancipation, that party which fomented the insurrection of Cracow in 1846.

In Germany they fight with the bourgeoisie whenever it acts in a revolutionary way, against the absolute monarchy, the feudal squirearchy, and the petty bourgeoisie.<sup>32</sup>

But they never cease, for a single instant, to instil into the working class the clearest possible recognition of the hostile antagonism between bourgeoisie and proletariat, in order that the German workers may straightway use, as so many weapons against the bourgeoisie, the social and political conditions that the bourgeoisie must

necessarily introduce along with its supremacy, and in order that, after the fall of the reactionary classes in Germany, the fight against the bourgeoisie itself may immediately begin.

The Communists turn their attention chiefly to Germany, because that country is on the eve of a bourgeois revolution that is bound to be carried out under more advanced conditions of European civilisation and with a much more developed proletariat than what existed in England in the 17th and in France in the 18th century, and because the bourgeois revolution in Germany will be but the prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution.

In short, the Communists everywhere support every revolutionary movement against the existing social and political order of things.

In all these movements they bring to the front, as the leading question in each case, the property question, no matter what its degree of development at the time.

Finally, they labour everywhere for the union and agreement of the democratic parties of all countries.

The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.

**Workingmen of all countries, unite!**



## NOTES

(All unsigned notes are those made by Engels to the English edition of 1888; all others were prepared by the editor and are so marked. Where it was found necessary to enlarge upon Engels' notes, the additions appear in brackets.)

1. King Louis Philippe was deposed and a republic proclaimed as result of the revolution in Paris, February 22-24, 1848.—*Ed.*

2. The rising of the Parisian workers, June 23-27, 1848. The insurrection was suppressed by General Cavaignac with great slaughter.—*Ed.*

3. Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865).—French publicist and political economist; leading exponent of petty-bourgeois Socialism.—*Ed.*

4. Lassalle [Ferdinand Lassalle, 1825-1864] always acknowledged himself to us personally to be a disciple of Marx and, as such, stood on the ground of the *Manifesto*. But in his public agitation, 1862-64, he did not go beyond demanding co-operative workshops supported by state credit.

5. The Russian version published at Geneva in 1882 was made by Plekhanov, not by Vera Zasulich. Bakunin's translation appeared in 1870.—*Ed.*

6. The followers of Robert Owen (1771-1858), leading English utopian Socialist. He envisioned a collective economic and social life organised in small communist communes, where property would be owned in common.—*Ed.*

7. The followers of Francois Charles Fourier (1772-1837), leading French utopian Socialist, who urged a system of colonies on a socialist plan. His criticism of bourgeois society was recognised as basic both by Marx and Engels.—*Ed.*

8. Etienne Cabet (1788-1856).—A French utopian, exiled to England for his participation in the July Revolution of 1830. In his book, *Voyage en Icarie*, he pictures life in a Communist society.—*Ed.*

9. Wilhelm Weitling (1808-1871).—A German utopian Socialist who took part in the revolutionary movement of 1848 and exerted great influence among the German workers. He came to America where he carried on socialist agitation among German workers.—*Ed.*

10. *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*, by Friedrich Engels, translated by Florence K. Wischniewsky, who later assumed her

maiden name of Florence Kelley and was a well-known social worker in America.—*Ed.*

11. Metternich (1773-1859).—Chancellor of the Austrian empire and acknowledged leader of the European reaction. Guizot (1787-1874) was the French intellectual protagonist of high finance and of the industrial bourgeoisie and the irreconcilable foe of the proletariat. The French Radicals, Marrast (1802-1852), Carnot (1801-1888), and Marie (1795-1870) waged polemic warfare against the Socialists and Communists.—*Ed.*

12. By bourgeoisie is meant the class of modern capitalists, owners of the means of social production and employers of wage-labour; by proletariat, the class of modern wage-labourers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labour power in order to live.

13. That is, all *written* history. In 1837, the pre-history of society, the social organisation existing previous to recorded history, was all but unknown. Since then Haxthausen [August von, 1792-1866] discovered common ownership of land in Russia, Maurer [Georg Ludwig von] proved it to be the social foundation from which all Teutonic races started in history, and, by and by, village communities were found to be, or to have been, the primitive form of society everywhere from India to Ireland. The inner organisation of this primitive communistic society was laid bare, in its typical form, by Morgan's [Lewis H., 1818-1881] crowning discovery of the true nature of the *gens* and its relation to the *tribe*. With the dissolution of these primæval communities, society begins to be differentiated into separate and finally antagonistic classes. I have attempted to retrace this process of dissolution in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*.

14. Guild-master, that is a full member of a guild, a master within, not a head of a guild.

15. Chartered burghers were freemen who had been admitted to the privileges of a chartered borough thus possessing full political rights.—*Ed.*

16. Craft guilds, made up of exclusive and privileged groups of artisans were, during the feudal period, granted monopoly rights to markets by municipal authorities. The guilds imposed minute regulations on their members controlling such matters as working hours, wages, prices, tools and the hiring of workers.—*Ed.*

17. "Commune" was the name taken in France by the nascent towns even before they had conquered from their feudal lords and masters local self-government and political rights as the "Third Estate." Generally speaking, for the economic development of the bourgeoisie, England is here taken as the typical country, for its political development, France.

18. The 10-Hour Bill, for which the English workers had been fighting for 30 years, was made a law in 1847.—*Ed.*

19. In July, 1830, the Parisians rose in revolt against Charles X. The elder

branch of the Bourbon family was driven out, and Louis Philippe, of the younger or Orleans branch, became "King of the French."—*Ed.*

20. Not the English Restoration, 1660 to 1689, but the French Restoration, 1814 to 1830.

21. The French legitimists favoured the claims of the elder branch of the Bourbon family, as against the Orleanists, the younger branch.—*Ed.*

22. "Young England" included a group of philanthropic Tories and youthful sprigs of the British and Irish aristocracy, who strongly opposed industrial capitalism and wished to restore feudalism.—*Ed.*

23. This applies chiefly to Germany where the landed aristocracy and squirearchy have large portions of their estates cultivated for their own account by stewards, and are, moreover, extensive beetroot-sugar manufacturers and distillers of potato spirits. The wealthier British aristocrats are, as yet, rather above that; but they, too, know how to make up for declining rents by lending their names to floaters of more or less shady joint-stock companies.

24. Jean Charles Leonard (Simonde) Sismondi (1773-1842).—French historian and economist.—*Ed.*

25. Francois Noel Babeuf (1764-1797).—A radical republican (Jacobin) in the Great French Revolution who was guillotined for plotting a revolution aiming at the overthrow of the bourgeois state and the creation of a Communist state.—*Ed.*

26. Claude Henri de Rouvroy Saint-Simon (1760-1825).—French utopian Socialist who saw the labour question as the prime social question of the future and proposed as a solution the organisation of production by "association."—*Ed.*

27. *Phalanstères* were socialist colonies on the plan of Charles Fourier; *Icaria* was the name given by Cabet to his Utopia and, later on, to his American Communist colony.

28. Chartism lasted as a more or less organised radical political movement of the British workers from 1837 to 1848. The People's Charter, for which the Chartists fought, demanded an immediate improvement in the workers' conditions as well as legislative reforms.—*Ed.*

29. Reference is made to the leaders of "Young America" who, during the struggle of the New York farmers against high rents, demanded the nationalisation of the land and limitation of farms to 160 acres. After a few paltry reforms had been obtained in the field of agrarian legislation, the movement petered out.—*Ed.*

30. The party then represented in Parliament by Ledru-Rollin, in literature by Louis Blanc [1811-1882], in the daily press by the *Réforme*. The name of Social-Democracy signifies, with these its inventors, a section of the Democratic or Republican Party more or less tinged with Socialism.

31. *Rentier* in the German original. This signifies a property owner (in this case a small property owner), living on the income of his capital invested in securities, such as domestic and foreign government bonds, or industrial shares.—*Ed.*

32. *Kleinbürgerei* in the German original. Marx and Engels used this term to describe the reactionary elements of the urban petty bourgeoisie who supported the rule of the feudal nobility and the absolute monarchy. The ideal of these elements was the guild system of the Middle Ages. In Germany this section of the population was very numerous in most of the cities and towns.—*Ed.*

# Imperialism

## THE HIGHEST STAGE OF CAPITALISM

A POPULAR OUTLINE

V. I. Lenin

NEW, REVISED TRANSLATION



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## Preface to the Russian Edition

The pamphlet here presented to the reader was written in Zürich in the spring of 1916. In the conditions in which I was obliged to work there I naturally suffered somewhat from a shortage of French and English literature and from a serious dearth of Russian literature. However, I made use of the principal English work, *Imperialism*, J. A. Hobson's book, with all the care that, in my opinion, that work deserves.

This pamphlet was written with an eye to the tsarist censorship. Hence, I was not only forced to confine myself strictly to an exclusively theoretical, mainly economic analysis of facts, but to formulate the few necessary observations on politics with extreme caution, by hints, in that *Æsopian* language—in that cursed *Æsopian* language—to which tsarism compelled all revolutionaries to have recourse whenever they took up their pens to write a “legal” work.<sup>1</sup>

It is very painful, in these days of liberty, to read these cramped passages of the pamphlet, crushed, as they seem, in an iron vise, distorted on account of the censor. Of how imperialism is the eve of the socialist revolution; of how social-chauvinism (socialism in words, chauvinism in deeds) is the utter betrayal of socialism, complete desertion to the side of the bourgeoisie; of how the split in the labour movement is bound up with the objective conditions of imperialism, etc., I had to speak in a “slavish” tongue, and I must refer the reader who is interested in the question to the volume, which is soon to appear, in which are reproduced the articles I wrote abroad in the years 1914-17. Special attention must be drawn, however, to a passage on pages 119-20.<sup>2</sup> In order to show, in a guise acceptable to the censors, how shamefully the

<sup>1</sup> “*Æsopian*,” after the Greek fable writer *Æsop*, was the term applied to the allusive and roundabout style adopted in “legal” publications by revolutionaries in order to evade the censorship.—*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> *Cf.* pp. 121-22 in this volume.—*Ed.*



capitalists and the social-chauvinist deserters (whom Kautsky opposes with so much inconsistency) lie on the question of annexations; in order to show with what cynicism they *screen* the annexations of *their* capitalists, I was forced to quote as an example—Japan! The careful reader will easily substitute Russia for Japan, and Finland, Poland, Courland, the Ukraine, Khiva, Bokhara, Estonia or other regions peopled by non-Great Russians, for Korea.

I trust that this pamphlet will help the reader to understand the fundamental economic question, *viz.*, the question of the economic essence of imperialism, for unless this is studied, it will be impossible to understand and appraise modern war and modern politics

Petrograd, April 26, 1917

# Preface to the French and German Editions

## I

As was indicated in the preface to the Russian edition, this pamphlet was written in 1916, with an eye to the tsarist censorship. I am unable to revise the whole text at the present time, nor, perhaps, is this advisable, since the main purpose of the book was and remains: to present, on the basis of the summarised returns of irrefutable bourgeois statistics, and the admissions of bourgeois scholars of all countries, a *general picture* of the world capitalist system in its international relationships at the beginning of the twentieth century—on the eve of the first world imperialist war.

To a certain extent it will be useful for many Communists in advanced capitalist countries to convince themselves by the example of this pamphlet, *legal, from the standpoint of the tsarist censor*, of the possibility—and necessity—of making use of even the slight remnants of legality which still remain at the disposal of the Communists, say, in contemporary America or France, after the recent wholesale arrests of Communists, in order to explain the utter falsity of social-pacifist views and hopes for “world democracy.” The most essential of what should be added to this censored pamphlet I shall try to present in this preface.

## II

In the pamphlet I proved that the war of 1914-18 was imperialistic (that is, an annexationist, predatory, plunderous war) on the part of both sides; it was a war for the division of the world, for the partition and repartition of colonies, “spheres of influence” of finance capital, etc.

Proof of what was the true social, or rather, the true class character of the war is naturally to be found, not in the diplomatic history of the war, but in an analysis of the *objective* position of the ruling *classes in all* belligerent countries. In order to depict this objective position one must not take examples or isolated data

(in view of the extreme complexity of social life it is always quite easy to select any number of examples or separate data to prove any point one desires), but the *whole* of the data concerning the *basis* of economic life in *all* the belligerent countries and the *whole* world.

It is precisely irrefutable summarised data of this kind that I quoted in describing the *partition of the world* in the period of 1876 to 1914 (in chapter VI) and the distribution of the *railways* all over the world in the period of 1890 to 1913 (in chapter VII). Railways combine within themselves the basic capitalist industries: coal, iron and steel; and they are the most striking index of the development of international trade and bourgeois-democratic civilisation. In the preceding chapters of the book I showed how the railways are linked up with large-scale industry, with monopolies, syndicates, cartels, trusts, banks and the financial oligarchy. The uneven distribution of the railways, their uneven development—sums up, as it were, modern world monopolist capitalism. And this summing up proves that imperialist wars are absolutely inevitable under *such* an economic system, *as long as* private property in the means of production exists.

The building of railways seems to be a simple, natural, democratic, cultural and civilising enterprise; that is what it is in the opinion of bourgeois professors, who are paid to depict capitalist slavery in bright colours, and in the opinion of petty-bourgeois philistines. But as a matter of fact the capitalist threads, which in thousands of different intercrossings bind these enterprises with private property in the means of production in general, have converted this work of construction into an instrument for oppressing *a thousand million* people (in the colonies and semi-colonies), that is, more than half the population of the globe, which inhabits the subject countries, as well as the wage slaves of capitalism in the lands of "civilisation."

Private property based on the labour of the small proprietor, free competition, democracy, *i.e.*, all the catchwords with which the capitalists and their press deceive the workers and the peasants—are things of the past. Capitalism has grown into a world system of colonial oppression and of the financial strangulation of the

overwhelming majority of the people of the world by a handful of "advanced" countries. And this "booty" is shared between two or three powerful world marauders armed to the teeth (America, Great Britain, Japan), who involve the whole world in *their* war over the sharing of *their* booty.

## III

The Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty dictated by monarchist Germany, and later on, the much more brutal and despicable Versailles Treaty dictated by the "democratic" republics of America and France and also by "free" England, have rendered very good service to humanity by exposing both the hired coolies of the pen of imperialism and the petty-bourgeois reactionaries, although they call themselves pacifists and socialists, who sang praises to "Wilsonism," and who insisted that peace and reform were possible under imperialism.

The tens of millions of dead and maimed left by the war—a war for the purpose of deciding whether the British or German group of financial marauders is to receive the lion's share—and the two "peace treaties," mentioned above, open the eyes of the millions and tens of millions of people who are downtrodden, oppressed, deceived and duped by the bourgeoisie with unprecedented rapidity. Thus, out of the universal ruin caused by the war a worldwide revolutionary crisis is arising which, in spite of the protracted and difficult stages it may have to pass, cannot end in any other way than in a proletarian revolution and in its victory.

The Basle Manifesto of the Second International which in 1912 gave an appraisal of the war that ultimately broke out in 1914, and not of war in general (there are all kinds of wars, including revolutionary wars), this Manifesto is now a monument exposing the shameful bankruptcy and treachery of the heroes of the Second International.

That is why I reproduce this Manifesto as a supplement to the present edition<sup>1</sup> and again I call upon the reader to note that the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. V. I. Lenin, *The Imperialist War*, Collected Works, Vol. XVIII, N. Y., pp. 468-72.—Ed.

heroes of the Second International are just as assiduously avoiding the passages of this Manifesto which speak precisely, clearly and definitely of the connection between that impending war and the proletarian revolution, as a thief avoids the place where he has committed a theft.

#### IV

Special attention has been devoted in this pamphlet to a criticism of "Kautskyism," the international ideological trend represented in all countries of the world by the "prominent theoreticians" and leaders of the Second International (Otto Bauer and Co. in Austria, Ramsay MacDonald and others in England, Albert Thomas in France, etc., etc.) and multitudes of socialists, reformists, pacifists, bourgeois-democrats and parsons.

This ideological trend is, on the one hand, a product of the disintegration and decay of the Second International, and, on the other hand, it is the inevitable fruit of the ideology of the petty bourgeoisie, who, by the whole of their conditions of life, are held captive to bourgeois and democratic prejudices.

The views held by Kautsky and his like are a complete renunciation of the very revolutionary principles of Marxism which he championed for decades, especially in his struggle against socialist opportunism (Bernstein, Millerand, Hyndman, Gompers, etc.). It is not a mere accident, therefore, that the "Kautskyans" all over the world have now united in practical politics with the extreme opportunists (through the Second, or the Yellow, International) and with the bourgeois governments (through bourgeois coalition governments in which socialists take part).

The growing world proletarian revolutionary movement in general, and the Communist movement in particular, demands that the theoretical errors of "Kautskyism" be analysed and exposed. The more so since pacifism and "democracy" in general, which have no claim to Marxism whatever, but which, like Kautsky and Co., are obscuring the profundity of the contradictions of imperialism and the inevitable revolutionary crisis to which it gives rise, are still very widespread all over the world. It is the bounden duty of the party of the proletariat to combat these tendencies and to

win away from the bourgeoisie the small proprietors who are duped by them, and the millions of toilers who live in more or less petty-bourgeois conditions of life.

## V

A few words must be said about chapter VIII entitled: "The Parasitism and Decay of Capitalism." As already pointed out in the text, Hilferding, ex-Marxist, and now a comrade-in-arms of Kautsky, one of the chief exponents of bourgeois reformist policy in the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany, has taken a step backward compared with the *frankly* pacifist and reformist Englishman, Hobson, on this question. The international split of the whole labour movement is now quite evident (Second and Third Internationals). Armed struggle and civil war between the two trends is now a recognised fact: the support given to Kolchak and Denikin in Russia by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries against the Bolsheviks; the fight the Scheidemanns, Noskes and Co. have conducted in conjunction with the bourgeoisie against the Spartacists in Germany; the same thing in Finland, Poland, Hungary, etc. What is the economic basis of this historically important world phenomenon?

Precisely the parasitism and decay of capitalism which are the characteristic features of its highest historical stage of development, *i.e.*, imperialism. As has been shown in this pamphlet, capitalism has now brought to the front a *handful* (less than one-tenth of the inhabitants of the globe; less than one-fifth, if the most "generous" and liberal calculations were made) of very rich and very powerful states which plunder the whole world simply by "clipping coupons." Capital exports produce an income of eight to ten billion francs per annum, according to pre-war prices and pre-war bourgeois statistics. Now, of course, they produce much more than that.

Obviously, out of such enormous *super-profits* (since they are obtained over and above the profits which capitalists squeeze out of the workers of their "home" country) it is quite *possible to bribe* the labour leaders and the upper stratum of the labour aristocracy.

And the capitalists of the "advanced" countries are bribing them; they bribe them in a thousand different ways, direct and indirect, overt and covert.

This stratum of bourgeoisified workers, or the "labour aristocracy," who are quite philistine in their mode of life, in the size of their earnings and in their outlook, serves as the principal prop of the Second International, and, in our days, the principal *social* (not military) *prop of the bourgeoisie*. They are the real *agents of the bourgeoisie in the labour movement*, the labour lieutenants of the capitalist class, real channels of reformism and chauvinism. In the civil war between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie they inevitably, and in no small numbers, stand side by side with the bourgeoisie, with the "Versaillese" against the "Communards."

Not the slightest progress can be made toward the solution of the practical problems of the Communist movement and of the impending social revolution unless the economic roots of this phenomenon are understood and unless its political and sociological significance is appreciated.

Imperialism is the eve of the proletarian social revolution. This has been confirmed since 1917 on a world-wide scale.

N. LENIN

July 6, 1920

## Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism

During the last fifteen or twenty years, especially since the Spanish-American War (1898), and the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902), the economic and also the political literature of the two hemispheres has more and more often adopted the term "imperialism" in order to define the present era. In 1902, a book by the English economist, J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism*, was published in London and New York. This author, who adopts the point of view of bourgeois social reformism and pacifism which, in essence, is identical with the present point of view of the ex-Marxist, K. Kautsky, gives an excellent and comprehensive description of the principal economic and political characteristics of imperialism. In 1910, there appeared in Vienna the work of the Austrian Marxist, Rudolf Hilferding, *Finance Capital*. In spite of the mistake the author commits on the theory of money, and in spite of a certain inclination on his part to reconcile Marxism with opportunism, this work gives a very valuable theoretical analysis, as its sub-title tells us, of "the latest phase of capitalist development." Indeed, what has been said of imperialism during the last few years, especially in a great many magazine and newspaper articles, and also in the resolutions, for example, of the Chemnitz and Basle Congresses which took place in the autumn of 1912, has scarcely gone beyond the ideas put forward, or, more exactly, summed up by the two writers mentioned above.

Later on we shall try to show briefly, and as simply as possible, the connection and relationships between the *principal* economic features of imperialism. We shall not be able to deal with non-economic aspects of the question, however much they deserve to be dealt with.<sup>1</sup> We have put references to literature and other notes which, perhaps, would not interest all readers, at the end of this pamphlet.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> By "non-economic" Lenin meant political; the pamphlet was intended for legal publication and so these aspects were left out in order to enable it to pass the tsarist censorship.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> These references are not given in this edition.—Ed.



## CHAPTER I

# Concentration of Production and Monopolies

THE enormous growth of industry and the remarkably rapid process of concentration of production in ever-larger enterprises represent one of the most characteristic features of capitalism. Modern censuses of production give very complete and exact data on this process.

In Germany, for example, for every 1,000 industrial enterprises, large enterprises, *i.e.*, those employing more than 50 workers, numbered three in 1882, six in 1895 and nine in 1907; and out of every 100 workers employed, this group of enterprises employed 22, 30 and 37 respectively. Concentration of production, however, is much more intense than the concentration of workers, since labour in the large enterprises is much more productive. This is shown by the figures available on steam engines and electric motors. If we take what in Germany is called industry in the broad sense of the term, that is, including commerce, transport, etc., we get the following picture: Large-scale enterprises: 30,588 out of a total of 3,265,623, that is to say, 0.9 per cent. These large-scale enterprises employ 5,700,000 workers out of a total of 14,400,000, that is, 39.4 per cent; they use 6,660,000 steam horse power out of a total of 8,800,000, that is, 75.3 per cent and 1,200,000 kilowatts of electricity out of a total of 1,500,000, that is, 77.2 per cent.

Less than one-hundredth of the total enterprises utilise *more than three-fourths* of the steam and electric power! Two million nine hundred and seventy thousand small enterprises (employing up to five workers), representing 91 per cent of the total, utilise only 7 per cent of the steam and electric power. Tens of thousands of large-scale enterprises are everything; millions of small ones are nothing.

In 1907, there were in Germany 586 establishments employing

one thousand and more workers. They employed nearly *one-tenth* (1,380,000) of the total number of workers employed in industry and utilised *almost one-third* (32 per cent) of the total steam and electric power employed.<sup>1</sup> As we shall see, money capital and the banks make this superiority of a handful of the largest enterprises still more overwhelming, in the most literal sense of the word, since millions of small, medium, and even some big "masters" are in fact in complete subjection to some hundreds of millionaire financiers.

In another advanced country of modern capitalism, the United States, the growth of the concentration of production is still greater. Here statistics single out industry in the narrow sense of the word and group enterprises according to the value of their annual output. In 1904 large-scale enterprises with an annual output of one million dollars and over numbered 1,900 (out of 216,180, *i.e.*, 0.9 per cent). These employed 1,400,000 workers (out of 5,500,000, *i.e.*, 25.6 per cent) and their combined annual output was valued at \$5,600,000,000 (out of \$14,800,000,000, *i.e.*, 38 per cent). Five years later, in 1909, the corresponding figures were: large-scale enterprises: 3,060 out of 268,491, *i.e.*, 1.1 per cent; employing: 2,000,000 workers out of 6,600,000, *i.e.*, 30.5 per cent; output: \$9,000,000,000 out of \$20,700,000,000, *i.e.*, 43.8 per cent.<sup>2</sup>

Almost half the total production of all the enterprises of the country was carried on by a *hundredth part* of those enterprises! These 3,000 giant enterprises embrace 268 branches of industry. From this it can be seen that, at a certain stage of its development, concentration itself, as it were, leads right to monopoly; for a score or so of giant enterprises can easily arrive at an agreement, while on the other hand, the difficulty of competition and the tendency towards monopoly arise from the very dimensions of the enterprises. This transformation of competition into monopoly is one of the most important—if not the most important—phenomena of modern capitalist economy, and we must deal with it in greater detail. But first we must clear up one possible misunderstanding.

<sup>1</sup> *Annalen des Deutschen Reichs (Annals of the German Empire)*, 1911, pp. 165-169.

<sup>2</sup> *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1912, p. 202.

American statistics say: 3,000 giant enterprises in 250 branches of industry, as if there were only a dozen large-scale enterprises for each branch of industry.

But this is not the case. Not in every branch of industry are there large-scale enterprises; and, moreover, a very important feature of capitalism in its highest stage of development is so-called "combined production," that is to say, the grouping in a single enterprise of different branches of industry, which either represent the consecutive stages in the working up of raw materials (for example, the smelting of iron ore into pig iron, the conversion of pig iron into steel, and then, perhaps, the manufacture of steel goods)—or are auxiliary to one another (for example, the utilisation of waste or of by-products, the manufacture of packing materials, etc.).

"Combination," writes Hilferding, "levels out the fluctuations of trade and therefore assures to the combined enterprises a more stable rate of profit. Secondly, combination has the effect of eliminating trading. Thirdly, it has the effect of rendering possible technical improvements, and, consequently, the acquisition of superprofits over and above those obtained by the 'pure' (*i.e.*, *non-combined*) enterprises. Fourthly, it strengthens the position of the combined enterprises compared with that of 'pure' enterprises in the competitive struggle in periods of serious depression, when the fall in prices of raw materials does not keep pace with the fall in prices of manufactured articles."<sup>3</sup>

The German bourgeois economist, Heymann, who has written a book especially on "mixed," that is, combined, enterprises in the German iron industry, says: "Pure enterprises perish, crushed between the high price of raw material and the low price of the finished product." Thus we get the following picture:

"There remain, on the one hand, the great coal companies, producing millions of tons yearly, strongly organized in their coal syndicate, and on the other, the great steel works, closely allied to the coal mines, having their own steel syndicate. These giant enterprises, producing 400,000 tons of steel per annum, with correspondingly extensive coal, ore and blast furnace plants, as well as the manufacturing of finished goods, employing 10,000 workers quartered in company houses, some-

<sup>3</sup> Rudolf Hilferding, *Das Finanzkapital* (*Finance Capital*), Vienna, 1910, p. 239.

times owning their own ports and railroads, are today the standard type of German iron and steel plant. And concentration still continues. Individual enterprises are becoming larger and larger. An ever increasing number of enterprises in one given industry, or in several different industries, join together in giant combines, backed up and controlled by half a dozen Berlin banks. In the German mining industry, the truth of the teachings of Karl Marx on concentration is definitely proved, at any rate in a country like ours where it is protected by tariffs and freight rates. The German mining industry is ripe for expropriation.”<sup>4</sup>

Such is the conclusion which a conscientious bourgeois economist, and such are exceptional, had to arrive at. It must be noted that he seems to place Germany in a special category because her industries are protected by high tariffs. But the concentration of industry and the formation of monopolist manufacturers' combines, cartels, syndicates, etc., could only be accelerated by these circumstances. It is extremely important to note that in free-trade England, concentration *also* leads to monopoly, although somewhat later and perhaps in another form. Professor Hermann Levy, in his special work of research entitled *Monopolies, Cartels and Trusts*, based on data on British economic development, writes as follows:

“In Great Britain it is the size of the enterprise and its capacity which harbour a monopolist tendency. This, for one thing, is due to the fact that the great investment of capital per enterprise, once the concentration movement has commenced, gives rise to increasing demands for new capital for the new enterprises and thereby renders their launching more difficult. Moreover (and this seems to us to be the more important point) every new enterprise that wants to keep pace with the gigantic enterprises that have arisen on the basis of the process of concentration would produce such an enormous quantity of surplus goods that it could only dispose of them either by being able to sell them profitably as a result of an enormous increase in demand or by immediately forcing down prices to a level that would be unprofitable both for itself and for the monopoly combines.”

<sup>4</sup> Hans Gideon Heymann, *Die gemischten Werke im deutschen Grosseisengewerbe* (*Combined Plants in the German Big Iron Industry*), Stuttgart, 1904, pp. 256 and 278.

In England, unlike other countries where protective tariffs facilitate the formation of cartels, monopolist alliances of *entrepreneurs*, cartels and trusts arise in the majority of cases only when the number of competing enterprises is reduced to "a couple of dozen or so." "Here the influence of the concentration movement on the formation of large industrial monopolies in a whole sphere of industry stands out with crystal clarity."<sup>5</sup>

- Fifty years ago, when Marx was writing *Capital*, free competition appeared to most economists to be a "natural law." Official science tried, by a conspiracy of silence, to kill the works of Marx, which by a theoretical and historical analysis of capitalism showed that free competition gives rise to the concentration of production, which, in turn, at a certain stage of development, leads to monopoly. Today, monopoly has become a fact. The economists are writing mountains of books in which they describe the diverse manifestations of monopoly, and continue to declare in chorus that "Marxism is refuted." But facts are stubborn things, as the English proverb says, and they have to be reckoned with, whether we like it or not. The facts show that differences between capitalist countries, *e.g.*, in the matter of protection or free trade, only give rise to insignificant variations in the form of monopolies or in the moment of their appearance; and that the rise of monopolies, as the result of the concentration of production, is a general and fundamental law of the present stage of development of capitalism.

For Europe, the time when the new capitalism *definitely* superseded the old can be established with fair precision: it was the beginning of the twentieth century. In one of the latest compilations on the history of the "formation of monopolies," we read:

"A few isolated examples of capitalist monopoly could be cited from the period preceding 1860; in these could be discerned the embryo of the forms that are common today; but all this undoubtedly represents pre-history. The real beginning of modern monopoly goes back, at the earliest, to the 'sixties. The first important period of development of monopoly commenced with the international industrial depression of

<sup>5</sup> Hermann Levy, *Monopole, Kartelle und Trusts (Monopolies, Cartels and Trusts)*, Jena, 1909, pp. 286, 290, 298.

the 'seventies and lasted until the beginning of the 'nineties.... If we examine the question on a European scale, we will find that the development of free competition reached its apex in the 'sixties and 'seventies. Then it was that England completed the construction of its old style capitalist organisation. In Germany, this organisation had entered into a fierce struggle with handicraft and domestic industry, and had begun to create for itself its own forms of existence....

"The great revolutionisation commenced with the crash of 1873, or rather, the depression which followed it and which, with hardly discernible interruptions in the early 'eighties, and the unusually violent, but short-lived boom about 1889, marks twenty-two years of European economic history.... During the short boom of 1889-90, the system of cartels was widely resorted to in order to take advantage of the favourable business conditions. An ill-considered policy drove prices still higher than would have been the case otherwise and nearly all these cartels perished ingloriously in the smash. Another five-year period of bad trade and low prices followed, but a new spirit reigned in industry; the depression was no longer regarded as something to be taken for granted: it was regarded as nothing more than a pause before another boom.

"The cartel movement entered its second epoch: instead of being a transitory phenomenon, the cartels became one of the foundations of economic life. They are winning one field after another, primarily, the raw materials industry. At the beginning of the 'nineties the cartel system had already acquired—in the organisation of the coke syndicate on the model of which the coal syndicate was later formed—a cartel technique which could hardly be improved. For the first time the great boom at the close of the nineteenth century and the crisis of 1900-03 occurred entirely—in the mining and iron industries at least—under the ægis of the cartels. And while at that time it appeared to be something novel, now the general public takes it for granted that large spheres of economic life have been, as a general rule, systematically removed from the realm of free competition."<sup>6</sup>

Thus, the principal stages in the history of monopolies are the

<sup>6</sup> Th. Vogelstein: *Die finanzielle Organisation der kapitalistischen Industrie und die Monopolbildungen* (Financial Organisation of Capitalist Industry and the Formation of Monopolies) in *Grundriss der Sozialökonomik* (Outline of Social Economics), 1914, Tüb., Sec. VI, pp. 222 *et seq.* See also by the same author: *Organisationsformen des Eisenindustrie und der Textilindustrie in England und Amerika*. Bd. I., Lpz. 1910 (*The Organisational Forms of the Iron and Textile Industries of England and America*, Vol. I, Leipzig, 1910).

following: 1) 1860-70, the highest stage, the apex of development of free competition; monopoly is in the barely discernible, embryonic stage. 2) After the crisis of 1873, a wide zone of development of cartels; but they are still the exception. They are not yet durable. They are still a transitory phenomenon. 3) The boom at the end of the nineteenth century and the crisis of 1900-03. Cartels become one of the foundations of the whole of economic life. Capitalism has been transformed into imperialism.

Cartels come to an agreement on the conditions of sale, terms of payment, etc. They divide the markets among themselves. They fix the quantity of goods to be produced. They fix prices. They divide the profits among the various enterprises, etc.

The number of cartels in Germany was estimated at about 250 in 1896 and at 385 in 1905, with about 12,000 firms participating.<sup>7</sup> But it is generally recognised that these figures are underestimations. From the statistics of German industry for 1907 we quoted above, it is evident that even 12,000 large enterprises control certainly more than half the steam and electric power used in the country. In the United States, the number of trusts in 1900 was 185, and in 1907, 250.

American statistics divide all industrial enterprises into three categories, according to whether they belong to individuals, to private firms or to corporations. These latter in 1904 comprised 23.6 per cent, and in 1909, 25.9 per cent (*i.e.*, more than one-fourth of the total industrial enterprises in the country). These employed in 1904, 70.6 per cent, and in 1909, 75.6 per cent (*i.e.*, more than three-fourths) of the total wage earners. Their output amounted at these two dates to \$10,900,000,000 and to \$16,300,000,000, *i.e.*, to 73.7 per cent and 79 per cent of the total respectively.

Not infrequently cartels and trusts concentrate in their hands seven or eight tenths of the total output of a given branch of

<sup>7</sup> Dr. Riesser, *Die deutschen Grossbanken und ihre Konzentration im Zusammenhang mit der Entwicklung der Gesamtwirtschaft in Deutschland* (*The German Big Banks and their Concentration in Connection with the Development of the General Economy in Germany*), fourth ed., 1912, p. 149; cf. also Robert Liefmann, *Kartelle und Trusts und die Weiterbildung der volkswirtschaftlichen Organisation* (*Cartels and Trusts and the Further Development of Economic Organisation*), second ed., 1910, p. 25.

industry. The Rhine-Westphalian Coal Syndicate, at its foundation in 1893, controlled 86.7 per cent of the total coal output of the area. In 1910, it controlled 95.4 per cent.<sup>8</sup> The monopoly so created assures enormous profits, and leads to the formation of technical productive units of formidable magnitude. The famous Standard Oil Company in the United States was founded in 1900:<sup>9</sup>

"It has an authorised capital of \$150,000,000. It issued \$100,000,000 common and \$106,000,000 preferred stock. From 1900 to 1907 the following dividends were paid on this stock: 48, 48, 45, 44, 36, 40, 40, 40 per cent, in the respective years, *i.e.*, in all, \$367,000,000. From 1882 to 1907, out of a total net profits to the amount of \$889,000,000, \$606,000,000 were distributed in dividends, and the rest went to reserve capital.... In 1907 the various works of the United States Steel Corporation employed no less than 210,180 workers and other employees. The largest enterprise in the German mining industry, the Gelsenkirchen Mining Company (*Gelsenkirchner Bergwerksgesellschaft*) employed in 1908 46,048 persons."<sup>10</sup>

In 1902, the United States Steel Corporation had already produced 9,000,000 tons of steel.<sup>11</sup> Its output constituted in 1901, 66.3 per cent, and in 1908, 56.1 per cent of the total output of steel in the United States.<sup>12</sup> The output of mineral ore was 43.9 per cent and 46.3 per cent respectively.

The report of the American Government Commission on Trusts states:

"The superiority of the trust over competitors is due to the magnitude of its enterprises and their excellent technical equipment. Since its

<sup>8</sup> Dr. Fritz Kestner, *Der Organisationszwang. Eine Untersuchung über die Kämpfe zwischen Kartellen und Aussenseitern* (*The Compulsion to Organise. An Investigation of the Struggles between Cartels and Outsiders*), Berlin, 1912, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> Holding company was formed in 1899 to replace trust agreement of 1882.—*Ed.*

<sup>10</sup> Robert Liefmann, *Beteiligungs- und Finanzierungsgesellschaften. Eine Studie über den modernen Kapitalismus und das Effektenwesen* (*Holding and Finance Companies—A Study in Modern Capitalism and Securities*), first ed., Jena, 1909, pp. 212 and 218.

<sup>11</sup> Dr. S. Tschierschky, *Kartelle und Trusts*, Göttingen, 1903, p. 13.

<sup>12</sup> Vogelstein, *Organisationsformen* (*Forms of Organisation*), p. 275.



inception, the Tobacco Trust has devoted all its efforts to the substitution of mechanical for manual labour on an extensive scale. With this end in view, it bought up all patents that had anything to do with the manufacture of tobacco and spent enormous sums for this purpose. Many of these patents at first proved to be of no use, and had to be modified by the engineers employed by the trust. At the end of 1906, two subsidiary companies were formed solely to acquire patents. With the same object in view, the trust built its own foundries, machine shops and repair shops. One of these establishments, that in Brooklyn, employs on the average 300 workers; here experiments are carried out on inventions concerning the manufacture of cigarettes, cheroots, snuff, tinfoil for packing, boxes, etc. Here, also, inventions are perfected.<sup>13</sup>

"Other trusts also employ so-called developing engineers whose business it is to devise new methods of production and to test technical improvements. The United States Steel Corporation grants big bonuses to its workers and engineers for all inventions suitable for raising technical efficiency, or for reducing cost of production."<sup>14</sup>

In German large-scale industry, *e.g.*, in the chemical industry, which has developed so enormously during these last few decades, the promotion of technical improvement is organised in the same way. By 1908, the process of concentration production had already given rise to two main groups which, in their way, were in the nature of monopolies. First these groups represented "dual alliances" of two pairs of big factories, each having a capital of from twenty to twenty-one million marks: on the one hand, the former Meister Factory at Höchst and the Cassella Factory at Frankfort-on-Main; and on the other hand, the aniline and soda factory at Ludwigshafen and the former Bayer Factory at Elberfeld. In 1905, one of these groups, and in 1908 the other group, each concluded a separate agreement with yet another big factory. The result was the formation of two "triple alliances," each with a capital of from forty to fifty million marks. And

<sup>13</sup> *Report of the Commission of Corporations on the Tobacco Industry*, Washington, 1909, p. 266, cited according to Dr. Paul Tafel, *Die nordamerikanischen Trusts und ihre Wirkungen auf den Fortschritt der Technik* (North American Trusts and their Effect on Technical Progress), Stuttgart, 1913, p. 48.

<sup>14</sup> Dr. P. Tafel, *ibid.*, pp. 48-49.

these "alliances" began to come "close" to one another, to reach "an understanding" about prices, etc.<sup>15</sup>

Competition becomes transformed into monopoly. The result is immense progress in the socialisation of production. In particular, the process of technical invention and improvement becomes socialised.

This is no longer the old type of free competition between manufacturers, scattered and out of touch with one another, and producing for an unknown market. Concentration has reached the point at which it is possible to make an approximate estimate of all sources of raw materials (for example, the iron ore deposits) of a country and even, as we shall see, of several countries, or of the whole world. Not only are such estimates made, but these sources are captured by gigantic monopolist combines. An approximate estimate of the capacity of markets is also made, and the combines divide them up amongst themselves by agreement. Skilled labour is monopolised, the best engineers are engaged; the means of transport are captured: railways in America, shipping companies in Europe and America. Capitalism in its imperialist stage arrives at the threshold of the most complete socialisation of production. In spite of themselves, the capitalists are dragged, as it were, into a new social order, a transitional social order from complete free competition to complete socialisation.

Production becomes social, but appropriation remains private. The social means of production remain the private property of a few. The general framework of formally recognised free competition remains, but the yoke of a few monopolists on the rest of the population becomes a hundred times heavier, more burdensome and intolerable.

The German economist, Kestner, has written a book especially on the subject of "the struggle between the cartels and outsiders," i.e., enterprises outside the cartels. He entitled his work *Compulsory Organisation*, although, in order to present capitalism in its true light, he should have given it the title: "Compulsory Sub-

<sup>15</sup> Riesser, *op. cit.*, third ed., pp. 547-48. The newspapers (June 1916) report the formation of a new gigantic trust which is to combine the chemical industry of Germany.

mission to Monopolist Combines." This book is edifying if only for the list it gives of the modern and civilised methods that monopolist combines resort to in their striving towards "organisation."

They are as follows: 1) Stopping supplies of raw materials ("one of the most important methods of compelling adherence to the cartel"); 2) Stopping the supply of labour by means of "alliances" (*i.e.*, of agreements between employers and the trade unions by which the latter permit their members to work only in cartelised enterprises); 3) Cutting off deliveries; 4) Closing of trade outlets; 5) Agreements with the buyers, by which the latter undertake to trade only with the cartels; 6) Systematic price cutting (to ruin "outside" firms, *i.e.*, those which refuse to submit to the monopolists. Millions are spent in order to sell goods for a certain time below their cost price; there were instances when the price of benzine was thus lowered from 40 to 22 marks, *i.e.*, reduced almost by half!); 7) Stopping credits; 8) Boycott.

This is no longer competition between small and large-scale industry, or between technically developed and backward enterprises. We see here the monopolies throttling those which do not submit to them, to their yoke, to their dictation. This is how this process is reflected in the mind of a bourgeois economist:

"Even in the purely economic sphere," writes Kestner, "a certain change is taking place from commercial activity in the old sense of the word towards organisational-speculative activity. The greatest success no longer goes to the merchant whose technical and commercial experience enables him best of all to understand the needs of the buyer, and who is able to discover and effectively awake a latent demand; it goes to the speculative genius [?!] who knows how to estimate, or even only to sense in advance the organisational development and the possibilities of connections between individual enterprises and the banks." <sup>16</sup>

Translated into ordinary human language this means that the development of capitalism has arrived at a stage when, although commodity production still "reigns" and continues to be regarded

<sup>16</sup> Kestner, *op. cit.*, p. 241.—*Ed.*

as the basis of economic life, it has in reality been undermined and the big profits go to the "geniuses" of financial manipulation. At the basis of these swindles and manipulations lies socialised production; but the immense progress of humanity, which achieved this socialisation, goes to benefit the speculators. We shall see later how "on these grounds" reactionary, petty-bourgeois critics of capitalist imperialism dream of going *back* to "free," "peaceful" and "honest" competition.

"The prolonged raising of prices which results from the formation of cartels," says Kestner, "has hitherto been observed only in relation to the most important means of production, particularly coal, iron and potassium, but has never been observed for any length of time in relation to manufactured goods. Similarly, the increase in profits resulting from that has been limited only to the industries which produce means of production. To this observation we must add that the raw materials industry not only has secured advantages from the cartel formation in regard to the growth of income and profitability, to the detriment of the finished goods industry, but that it has secured also a *dominating position* over the latter, which did not exist under free competition."<sup>17</sup>

The words which we have italicised reveal the essence of the case which the bourgeois economists admit so rarely and so unwillingly, and which the modern defenders of opportunism, led by K. Kautsky, so zealously try to evade and brush aside. Domination, and violence that is associated with it, such are the relationships that are most typical of the "latest phase of capitalist development"; this is what must inevitably result, and has resulted, from the formation of all-powerful economic monopolies.

We will give one more example of the methods employed by the cartels. It is particularly easy for cartels and monopolies to arise when it is possible to capture all the sources of raw materials, or at least, the most important of them. It would be wrong, however, to assume that monopolies do not arise in other industries in which it is impossible to corner the sources of raw materials. The cement industry, for instance, can find its raw materials everywhere. Yet in Germany it is strongly cartelised. The cement

<sup>17</sup> Kestner, *op. cit.*, p. 254.

manufacturers have formed regional syndicates: South German, Rhine-Westphalian, etc. The prices fixed are monopoly prices: 230 to 280 marks a carload (at a cost price of 180 marks!). The enterprises pay a dividend of from 12 per cent to 16 per cent—and let us not forget that the “geniuses” of modern speculation know how to pocket big profits besides those they draw by way of dividends. Now, in order to prevent competition in such a profitable industry, the monopolists resort to sundry stratagems. For example, they spread disquieting rumours about the situation in their industry. Anonymous warnings are published in the newspapers, like the following: “Investors, don’t place your capital in the cement industry!” They buy up “outsiders” (those outside the syndicates) and pay them “indemnities” of 60,000, 80,000 and even 150,000 marks.<sup>18</sup> Monopoly everywhere hews a path for itself without scruple as to the means, from “modestly” buying off competitors to the American device of “employing” dynamite against them.

The statement that cartels can abolish crises is a fable spread by bourgeois economists who at all costs desire to place capitalism in a favourable light. On the contrary, when monopoly appears in *certain* branches of industry, it increases and intensifies the anarchy inherent in capitalist production *as a whole*. The disparity between the development of agriculture and that of industry, which is characteristic of capitalism, is increased. The privileged position of the most highly cartelised industry, so-called *heavy* industry, especially coal and iron, causes “a still greater lack of concerted organisation” in other branches of production—as Jeidels, the author of one of the best works on the relationship of the German big banks to industry, puts it.<sup>19</sup>

“The more developed an economic system is,” writes Liefmann, one of the most unblushing apologists of capitalism, “the more it resorts to risky enterprises, or enterprises abroad, to those which need a great

<sup>18</sup> Ludwig Eschwege, *Zement*, in *Die Bank*, 1909, Vol. I, p. 115 *et seq.*

<sup>19</sup> Otto Jeidels, *Das Verhältnis der deutschen Grossbanken zur Industrie, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Eisenindustrie* (*The Relationship of the German Big Banks to Industry, with Special Reference to the Iron Industry*), Leipzig, 1905, p. 271.

deal of time to develop, or finally, to those which are only of local importance.”<sup>20</sup>

The increased risk is connected in the long run with the prodigious increase of capital, which overflows the brim, as it were, flows abroad, etc. At the same time the extremely rapid rate of technical progress gives rise more and more to disturbances in the co-ordination between the various spheres of national economy, to anarchy and crisis. Liefmann is obliged to admit that:

“In all probability mankind will see further important technical revolutions in the near future which will also affect the organisation of the economic system...” (For example, electricity and aviation.) “As a general rule, in such periods of radical economic change, speculation develops on a large scale.”<sup>21</sup>

Crises of every kind—economic crises more frequently, but not only these—in their turn increase very considerably the tendency towards concentration and monopoly. In this connection, the following reflections of Jeidels on the significance of the crisis of 1900, which, as we have already seen, marked the turning point in the history of modern monopoly, are exceedingly instructive.

“Side by side with the giant plants in the basic industries, the crisis of 1900 found many plants organised on lines that today would be considered obsolete, the ‘pure’ [non-combined] plants, which had arisen on the crest of the industrial boom. The fall in prices and the falling off in demand put these ‘pure’ enterprises into a precarious position, which did not affect the big combined enterprises at all, or only affected them for a very short time. As a consequence of this the crisis of 1900 resulted in a far greater concentration of industry than former crises, like that of 1873. The latter crisis also produced a sort of selection of the best equipped enterprises, but owing to the level of technical development at that time, this selection could not place the firms which successfully emerged from the crisis in a position of monopoly. Such a durable monopoly exists to a high degree in the gigantic enterprises in the modern iron and steel and electrical industries, and to a lesser degree, in the engineering industry and certain metal, transport and

<sup>20</sup> Robert Liefmann, *Beteiligungs- und Finanzierungsgesellschaften (Holding and Finance Companies)*, p. 434.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 465-6.

other branches in consequence of their complicated technique, their extensive organisation and the magnitude of their capital.”<sup>22</sup>

Monopoly! This is the last word in the “latest phase of capitalist development.” But we shall only have a very insufficient, incomplete, and poor notion of the real power and the significance of modern monopolies if we do not take into consideration the part played by the banks.

<sup>22</sup> Jeidels, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

## CHAPTER II

### The Banks and Their New Role

THE principal and primary function of banks is to serve as an intermediary in the making of payments. In doing so they transform inactive money capital into active capital, that is, into capital producing a profit; they collect all kinds of money revenues and place them at the disposal of the capitalist class.

As banking develops and becomes concentrated in a small number of establishments the banks become transformed, and instead of being modest intermediaries they become powerful monopolies having at their command almost the whole of the money capital of all the capitalists and small business men and also a large part of the means of production and of the sources of raw materials of the given country and in a number of countries. The transformation of numerous modest intermediaries into a handful of monopolists represents one of the fundamental processes in the transformation of capitalism into capitalist imperialism. For this reason we must first of all deal with the concentration of banking.

In 1907-08, the combined deposits of the German joint stock banks, each having a capital of more than a million marks, amounted to 7,000,000,000 marks, while in 1912-13, they amounted to 9,800,000,000 marks. Thus, in five years their deposits increased by 40 per cent. Of the 2,800,000,000 increase, 2,750,000,000 was divided amongst 57 banks, each having a capital of more than 10,000,000 marks. The distribution of the deposits between big and small banks was as follows:<sup>1</sup>

#### PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL DEPOSITS

| Year    | IN 9 BIG<br>BERLIN<br>BANKS | IN THE OTHER<br>48 BANKS WITH<br>A CAPITAL OF<br>MORE THAN 10<br>MILLION MARKS | IN 115 BANKS<br>WITH A CAPITAL<br>OF 1 TO 10<br>MILLION MARKS | IN THE SMALL<br>BANKS WITH<br>A CAPITAL OF<br>LESS THAN 1<br>MILLION MARKS |
|---------|-----------------------------|--|---|--|
| 1907-08 | 47                          | 32.5   | 16.5  | 4  |
| 1912-13 | 49                          | 36   | 12.   | 3  |

<sup>1</sup> Alfred Lansburgh, *Fünf Jahre deutsches Bankwesen* (Five Years of German Banking), in *Die Bank*, No. 8, 1913, S. 728.



The small banks are being pushed aside by the big banks, of which nine concentrate in their hands almost half the total deposits. But we have left out of account many important details, for instance, the transformation of numerous small banks practically into branches of big banks, etc. Of this we shall speak later on.

At the end of 1913, Schulze-Gaevernitz estimated the deposits in the nine big Berlin banks at 5,100,000,000 marks, out of a total of about 10,000,000,000 marks. Taking into account not only the deposits, but the total resources of these banks, this author wrote:

"At the end of 1909, the nine big Berlin banks, *together* with their *affiliated banks* controlled 11,276,000,000 marks... that is, about 83 per cent of the total German bank capital. The Deutsche Bank, *which together with its affiliated banks* controls nearly 3,000,000,000 marks, represents, parallel with the Prussian State Railway Administration, the biggest and also the most decentralised accumulation of capital in the old world."<sup>2</sup>

We have emphasised the reference to the "affiliated" banks because this is one of the most important features of modern capitalist concentration. Large-scale enterprises, especially the banks, not only completely absorb small ones, but also "join" them to themselves, subordinate them, bring them into their "own" group or *concern* (to use the technical term) by having "holdings" in their capital, by purchasing or exchanging shares, by controlling them through a system of credits, etc., etc. Professor Liefmann has written a voluminous "work" of about 500 pages describing modern "holding and finance companies,"<sup>3</sup> unfortunately adding "theoretical" reflections of a very poor quality to what is frequently partly digested raw material. To what results this "holding" system leads in regard to concentration is best illustrated in the book written

<sup>2</sup> Schulze-Gaevernitz. *Die deutsche Kreditbank, Grundriss der Sozialökonomik* (*The German Credit Bank in Outline of Social Economics*), Sec. V, Part II, Tübingen, 1915, pp. 12 and 137.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Liefmann, *Beteiligungs- und Finanzierungsgesellschaften. Eine Studie über den modernen Kapitalismus und das Effektenwesen* (*Holding and Finance Companies—A Study in Modern Capitalism and Securities*), first ed., Jena, 1909, p. 212.

on the big German banks by the banker Riesser. But before examining his data, we will quote an example of the "holding" system.

The Deutsche Bank group is one of the biggest, if not the biggest banking group. In order to trace the main threads which connect all the banks in this group, it is necessary to distinguish between holdings of the first, second and third degree, or what amounts to the same thing, between dependence (of the lesser establishments on the Deutsche Bank) in the first, second and third degree. We then obtain the following picture:<sup>4</sup>

#### THE DEUTSCHE BANK PARTICIPATES:

|            | PERMANENTLY  | FOR AN<br>INDEFINITE<br>PERIOD | OCCASIONALLY | TOTAL        |
|------------|--------------|--------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1st degree | in 17 banks  | in 5 banks                     | in 8 banks   | in 30 banks  |
|            | of which 9   |                                | of which 5   | of which 14  |
| 2nd degree | participate  |                                | participate  | participate  |
|            | in 34 others |                                | in 14 others | in 48 others |
|            | of which 4   |                                | of which 2   | of which 6   |
| 3rd degree | participate  |                                | participate  | participate  |
|            | in 7 others  |                                | in 2 others  | in 9 others  |

Included in the eight banks dependent on the Deutsche Bank in the "first degree," "occasionally," there are three foreign banks: one Austrian, the Wiener Bankverein, and two Russian, the Siberian Commercial Bank and the Russian Bank for Foreign Trade. Altogether, the Deutsche Bank group comprises, directly and indirectly, partially and totally, no less than 87 banks; and the capital—its own and others which it controls—is estimated at between two and three billion marks.

It is obvious that a bank which stands at the head of such a group, and which enters into agreement with a half dozen other banks only slightly smaller than itself for the purpose of conducting big and profitable operations like floating state loans, is

<sup>4</sup> A. Lansburgh, *Das Beteiligungssystem im deutschen Bankwesen (The Holding System in German Banking)*, in *Die Bank*, 1910, I, p. 500 et seq.

no longer a mere "intermediary" but a combine of a handful of monopolists.

The rapidity with which the concentration of banking proceeded in Germany at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries is shown by the following data which we quote in an abbreviated form from Riesser:

#### SIX BIG BERLIN BANKS

| Year | BRANCHES<br>IN GERMANY | DEPOSIT BANKS<br>AND EXCHANGE<br>OFFICES | CONSTANT HOLD-<br>INGS IN GERMAN<br>JOINT STOCK<br>BANKS | TOTAL<br>ESTABLISH-<br>MENTS |
|------|------------------------|--|--|------------------------------|
| 1895 | 16                     | 14                                       | 1  | 42                           |
| 1900 | 21                     | 40                                       | 8  | 80                           |
| 1911 | 104                    | 276                                      | 63   | 450                          |

We see the rapid extension of a close network of canals which cover the whole country, centralising all capital and all revenues, transforming thousands and thousands of scattered economic enterprises into a single national, capitalist, and then into an international, capitalist, economic unit. The "decentralisation" that Schulze-Gaevernitz, as an exponent of modern bourgeois political economy, speaks of in the passage previously quoted, really means the subordination of an increasing number of formerly relatively "independent," or rather, strictly local economic units, to a single centre. In reality it is *centralisation*, the increase in the role, the importance and the power of monopolist giants.

In the older capitalist countries this "banking network" is still more close. In Great Britain (including Ireland) in 1910, there were in all 7,151 branches of banks. Four big banks had more than 400 branches each (from 447 to 689); four had more than 200 branches each, and eleven more than 100 each.

In France, *three* big banks (Crédit Lyonnais, the Comptoir National d'Escompte and the Société Générale) extended their operations and their network of branches in the following manner:<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Eugen Kaufmann, *Das französische Bankwesen (French Banking)*, Tübingen, 1911, pp. 356 and 362.

*Number of branches and offices*                      *Capital  
in million francs*

| <i>Year</i> | IN THE<br>PROVINCES | IN PARIS | TOTAL | OWN<br>CAPITAL | BORROWED<br>CAPITAL |
|-------------|---------------------|----------|-------|----------------|---------------------|
| 1870        | 47                  | 17       | 64    | 200            | 427                 |
| 1890        | 192                 | 66       | 258   | 265            | 1,245               |
| 1909        | 1,033               | 196      | 1,229 | 887            | 4,363               |

In order to show the "connections" of a big modern bank, Riesser gives the following figures of the number of letters dispatched and received by the Disconto-Gesellschaft, one of the biggest banks in Germany and in the world, the capital of which amounted to 300,000,000 marks in 1914:

| <i>Year</i> | LETTERS<br>RECEIVED | LETTERS<br>DISPATCHED |
|-------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1852        | 6,135               | 6,292                 |
| 1870        | 85,800              | 87,513                |
| 1900        | 533,102             | 626,043               |

In 1875, the big Paris bank, the Crédit Lyonnais, had 28,535 accounts. In 1912 it had 633,539.<sup>6</sup>

These simple figures show perhaps better than long explanations how the concentration of capital and the growth of their turnover is radically changing the significance of the banks. Scattered capitalists are transformed into a single collective capitalist. When carrying the current accounts of a few capitalists, the banks, as it were, transact a purely technical and exclusively auxiliary operation. When, however, these operations grow to enormous dimensions we find that a handful of monopolists control all the operations, both commercial and industrial, of the whole of capitalist society. They can, by means of their banking connections, by running current accounts and transacting other financial operations, first *ascertain exactly* the position of the various capitalists, then *control* them, influence them by restricting or enlarging, facilitating or hindering their credits, and finally they can *entirely determine* their fate, determine their income, deprive them of capi-

<sup>6</sup> Jean Lescure, *L'épargne en France (Savings in France)*, Paris, 1914, p. 52.

tal, or, on the other hand, permit them to increase their capital rapidly and to enormous dimensions, etc.

We have just mentioned the 300,000,000 marks' capital of the Disconto-Gesellschaft of Berlin. The increase of the capital of this bank was one of the incidents in the struggle for hegemony between two of the biggest Berlin banks—the Deutsche Bank and the Disconto.

In 1870, the Deutsche Bank, a new enterprise, had a capital of only 15,000,000 marks, while that of the Disconto was 30,000,000 marks. In 1908, the first had a capital of 200,000,000, while the second had 170,000,000. In 1914, the Deutsche Bank increased its capital to 250,000,000 and the Disconto, by merging with a very important bank, the Schaffhausenscher Bankverein, increased its capital to 300,000,000. And, of course, while this struggle for hegemony goes on the two banks more and more frequently conclude "agreements" of an increasingly durable character with each other. This development of banking compels specialists in the study of banking questions—who regard economic questions from a standpoint which does not in the least exceed the bounds of the most moderate and cautious bourgeois reformism—to arrive at the following conclusions:

The German review, *Die Bank*, commenting on the increase of the capital of the Disconto-Gesellschaft to 300,000,000 marks, writes:

"Other banks will follow this same path and in time the three hundred men, who today govern Germany economically, will gradually be reduced to fifty, twenty-five or still fewer. It cannot be expected that this new move towards concentration will be confined to banking. The close relations that exist between certain banks naturally involve the bringing together of the manufacturing concerns which they favour. . . . One fine morning we shall wake up in surprise to see nothing but trusts before our eyes, and to find ourselves faced with the necessity of substituting state monopolies for private monopolies. However, we have nothing to reproach ourselves with, except with us having allowed things to follow their own course, slightly accelerated by the manipulation of stocks."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> A. Lansburgh, *Die Bank mit den 300 Millionen (The 300 Million Mark Bank)*, in *Die Bank*, 1914, I, p. 426.

This is an example of the impotence of bourgeois journalism which differs from bourgeois science only in that the latter is less sincere and strives to obscure essential things, to conceal the wood by trees. To be "surprised" at the results of concentration, to "reproach" the government of capitalist Germany, or capitalist "society" ("us"), to fear that the introduction of stocks and shares might "accelerate" concentration in the same way as the German "cartel specialist" Tschierschky fears the American trusts and "prefers" the German cartels on the grounds that they may not, like the trusts, "accelerate technical and economic progress to an excessive degree"<sup>8</sup>—is not this impotence?

But facts remain facts. There are no trusts in Germany; there are "only" cartels—but Germany is *governed* by not more than three hundred magnates of capital, and the number of these is constantly diminishing. At all events, banks in all capitalist countries, no matter what the law in regard to them may be, greatly intensify and accelerate the process of concentration of capital and the formation of monopolies.

The banking system, Marx wrote half a century ago in *Capital*, "presents indeed the form of common bookkeeping and distribution of means of production on a social scale, but only the form."<sup>9</sup> The figures we have quoted on the growth of bank capital, on the increase in the number of the branches and offices of the biggest banks, the increase in the number of their accounts, etc., present a concrete picture of this "common bookkeeping" of the *whole* capitalist class; and not only of the capitalists, for the banks collect, even though temporarily, all kinds of financial revenues of small business men, office clerks, and of a small upper stratum of the working class. It is "common distribution of means of production" that, from the formal point of view, grows out of the development of modern banks, the most important of which, numbering from three to six in France, and from six to eight in Germany, control billions and billions. In point of fact, however, the distribution of means

<sup>8</sup> Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III, p. 712, C. H. Kerr edition. In this edition the phrase "*Verteilung der Produktionsmittel*" is wrongly translated as "distribution of products," instead of "distribution of means of production."—*Ed.*

<sup>9</sup> Tschierschky, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

of production is by no means "common," but private, *i.e.*, it conforms to the interests of big capital, and primarily, of very big monopoly capital, which operates in conditions in which the masses of the population live in want, in which the whole development of agriculture hopelessly lags behind the development of industry, and within industry itself the "heavy industries" exact tribute from all other branches of industry.

The savings banks and post offices are beginning to compete with the banks in the matter of socialising capitalist economy; they are more "decentralised," *i.e.*, their influence extends to a greater number of localities, to more remote places, to wider sections of the population. An American commission has collected the following data on the comparative growth of deposits in banks and savings banks:<sup>10</sup>

| Year | ENGLAND |                  | FRANCE |                  | GERMANY |                     |                  |
|------|---------|------------------|--------|------------------|---------|---------------------|------------------|
|      | BANKS   | SAVINGS<br>BANKS | BANKS  | SAVINGS<br>BANKS | BANKS   | CREDIT<br>SOCIETIES | SAVINGS<br>BANKS |
|      |         |                  |        |                  |         |                     |                  |
| 1880 | 8.4     | 1.6              | ?      | 0.9              | 0.5     | 0.4                 | 2.6              |
| 1888 | 12.4    | 2.0              | 1.5    | 2.1              | 1.1     | 0.4                 | 4.5              |
| 1908 | 23.2    | 4.2              | 3.7    | 4.2              | 7.1     | 2.2                 | 13.9             |

As they pay interest at the rate of 4 per cent and  $4\frac{1}{4}$  per cent on deposits, the savings banks must seek "profitable" investments for their capital, they must deal in bills, mortgages, etc. The boundaries between the banks and the savings banks "become more and more obliterated." The Chambers of Commerce at Bochum and Erfurt, for example, demand that savings banks be prohibited from engaging in "purely" banking business, such as discounting bills. They demand the limitation of the "banking" operations of the post office.<sup>11</sup> The banking magnates seem to be afraid that state monopoly will steal upon them from an unexpected quarter. It goes without saying, however, that this fear is no more than the expression, as it were, of the rivalry between two department man-

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *Statistics of the National Monetary Commission*, quoted in *Die Bank*, 1910, I, p. 1200.

<sup>11</sup> *Die Bank*, 1913, I, 817, 1022; 1914, p. 743.

agers in the same office; for, on the one hand, the billions entrusted to the savings banks are in the final analysis actually controlled by *these very same* bank magnates, while, on the other hand, state monopoly in capitalist society is nothing more than a means of increasing and guaranteeing the income of millionaires on the verge of bankruptcy in one branch of industry or another.

The change from the old type of capitalism, in which free competition predominated, to the new capitalism, in which monopoly reigns, is expressed, among other things, by a decrease in the importance of the Stock Exchange. The German review, *Die Bank*, wrote:

"For a long time now, the Stock Exchange has ceased to be the indispensable intermediary of circulation that it was formerly when the banks were not yet able to place the bulk of new issues with their clients."<sup>12</sup>

"Every bank is a Stock Exchange, and the bigger the bank, and the more successful the concentration of banking, the truer does this proverb become."<sup>13</sup>

"While formerly, in the 'seventies, the Stock Exchange, flushed with the exuberance of youth" (a "subtle" allusion to the crash of 1873, and to the company promotion scandals), "opened the era of the industrialisation of Germany, nowadays the banks and industry are able to 'do it alone.' The domination of our big banks over the Stock Exchange...is nothing else than the expression of the completely organised German industrial state. If the domain of the automatically functioning economic laws is thus restricted, and if the domain consciously regulated by the banks is considerably increased, the national economic responsibility of a very small number of guiding heads is infinitely increased,"<sup>14</sup> so wrote Professor Schulze-Gaevernitz, an apologist of German imperialism, who is regarded as an authority by the imperialists of all countries, and who tries to gloss over a "detail," *viz.*, that

<sup>12</sup> *Die Bank*, 1914, I, p. 316.

<sup>13</sup> Oskar Stillich, *Geld und Bankwesen (Money and Banking)*, Berlin, 1907, p. 169.

<sup>14</sup> Schulze-Gaevernitz, *Die deutsche Kreditbank, Grundriss der Sozialökonomik (German Credit Bank in Outline of Social Economics)*, Tübingen, 1915. Schulze-Gaevernitz, *ibid.*, p. 151.



the "conscious regulation" of economic life by the banks consists in the fleecing of the public by a handful of "completely organised" monopolists. For the task of a bourgeois professor is not to lay bare the mechanism of the financial system, or to divulge all the machinations of the finance monopolists, but, rather, to present them in a favourable light.

In the same way, Riesser, a still more authoritative economist and himself a bank man, makes shift with meaningless phrases in order to explain away undeniable facts. He writes:

"... The Stock Exchange is steadily losing the feature which is absolutely essential for national economy as a whole and for the circulation of securities in particular—that of being an exact measuring-rod and an almost automatic regulator of the economic movements which converge on it."<sup>15</sup>

In other words, the old capitalism, the capitalism of free competition, and its indispensable regulator, the Stock Exchange, are passing away. A new capitalism has come to take its place, which bears obvious features of something transitory, which is a mixture of free competition and monopoly. The question naturally arises: to *what* is this new, "transitory" capitalism leading? But the bourgeois scholars are afraid to raise this question.

"Thirty years ago, employers, freely competing against one another, performed nine-tenths of the work connected with their businesses other than manual labour. At the present time, nine-tenths of this business 'brain work' is performed by *officials*. Banking is in the forefront of this evolution."<sup>16</sup>

This admission by Schulze-Gaevernitz brings us once again to the question as to what this new capitalism, capitalism in its imperialist stage, is leading to.

Among the few banks which remain at the head of all capitalist economy as a result of the process of concentration, there is naturally to be observed an increasingly marked tendency towards monopolist agreements, towards a *bank trust*. In America, there are not nine, but *two* big banks, those of the billionaires Rocke-

<sup>15</sup> Riesser, *op. cit.*, fourth ed., p. 629.

<sup>16</sup> *Die Bank*, 1912, p. 435.

feller and Morgan, which control a capital of eleven billion marks.<sup>17</sup> In Germany, the absorption of the Schaffhausenscher Bankverein by the Disconto-Gesellschaft, to which we referred above, was commented on in the following terms by the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, one of the organs of the Stock Exchange interests:

"The concentration movement of the banks is narrowing the circle of establishments from which it is possible to obtain large credits, and is consequently increasing the dependence of big industry upon a small number of banking groups. In view of the internal links between industry and finance, the freedom of movement of manufacturing companies in need of bank capital is restricted. For this reason, big industry is watching the growing trustification of the banks with mixed feelings. Indeed we have repeatedly seen the beginnings of certain agreements between the individual big banking concerns, which aim at limiting competition."<sup>18</sup>

Again, the final word in the development of the banks is monopoly.

The close ties that exist between the banks and industry are the very things that bring out most strikingly the new role of the banks. When a bank discounts a bill for an industrial firm, opens a current account for it, etc., these operations, taken separately, do not in the least diminish the independence of the industrial firm, and the bank plays no other part than that of a modest intermediary. But when such operations are multiplied and become an established practice, when the bank "collects" in its own hands enormous amounts of capital, when the running of a current account for the firm in question enables the bank—and this is what happens—to become better informed of the economic position of the client, then the result is that the industrial capitalist becomes more completely dependent on the bank.

At the same time a very close personal union is established between the banks and the biggest industrial and commercial enterprises the merging of one with another through the acquisition of shares, through the appointment of bank directors to the Supervisory Boards (or Boards of Directors) of industrial and com-

<sup>17</sup> *Die Bank*, 1912, p. 435.

<sup>18</sup> Quoted by Schulze-Gaevernitz, *ibid.*, p. 155.

mercial enterprises, and *vice versa*. The German economist, Jeidels, has compiled very complete data on this form of concentration of capital and of enterprises. Six of the biggest Berlin banks were represented by their directors in 344 industrial companies; and by their board members in 407 other companies. Altogether, they supervised a total of 751 companies. In 289 of these companies they either had two of their representatives on each of the respective Supervisory Boards, or held the posts of chairmen. These industrial and commercial companies are engaged in the most varied branches of industry: in insurance, transport, restaurants, theatres, art industry, etc. On the other hand, there were on the Supervisory Boards of these six banks (in 1910) fifty-one of the biggest manufacturers, among whom were directors of Krupp, of the powerful "Hapag" (Hamburg-American Line), etc. From 1895 to 1910, each of these six banks participated in the share and bond issues of several hundreds of industrial companies (the number ranging from 281 to 419).<sup>19</sup>

The "personal union" between the banks and industry is completed by the "personal union" between both and the state.

"Seats on the Supervisory Board," writes Jeidels, "are freely offered to persons of title, also to ex-civil servants, who are able to do a great deal to facilitate [!!] relations with the authorities.... Usually on the Supervisory Board of a big bank there is a member of parliament or a Berlin city councillor."<sup>20</sup>

The building, so to speak, of the great capitalist monopolies is therefore going on full steam ahead in all "natural" and "super-natural" ways. A sort of division of labour amongst some hundreds of kings of finance who reign over modern capitalist society is being systematically developed.

"Simultaneously with this widening of the sphere of activity of certain big industrialists" (sharing in the management of banks, etc.) "and together with the allocation of provincial bank managers to definite industrial regions, there is a growth of specialisation among the managers of the big banks.... Generally speaking, this specialisation is only

<sup>19</sup> Jeidels, *op. cit.*: Riesser, *op. cit.*—Ed.

<sup>20</sup> Jeidels, *op. cit.*, pp. 149, 152.—Ed.

conceivable when banking is conducted on a large scale, and particularly when it has widespread connections with industry. This division of labour proceeds along two lines: on the one hand, the relations with industry as a whole are entrusted to one manager, as his special function; on the other, each manager assumes the supervision of several isolated enterprises, or enterprises with allied interests, or in the same branch of industry, sitting on their Boards of Directors" (capitalism has reached the stage of organised *control* of individual enterprises). "One specialises in German industry, sometimes even in West German industry alone" (the West is the most industrialised part of Germany). "Others specialise in relations with foreign states and foreign industry, in information about manufacturers, in Stock Exchange questions, etc. Besides, each bank manager is often assigned a special industry or locality, where he has a say as a member of the Board of Directors; one works mainly on the Board of Directors of electric companies, another in the chemical, brewing or sugar beet industry; a third in a few isolated industrial enterprises but at the same time in non-industrial, *i.e.*, insurance companies.... It is certain that, as the extent and diversification of the big banks' operations increase, the division of labour among their directors also spreads, with the object and result of lifting them somewhat out of pure banking and making them better experts, better judges of the general problems of industry and the special problems of each branch of industry, thus making them more capable of action within the respective bank's industrial sphere of influence. This system is supplemented by the banks' endeavours to have elected to their own Board of Directors, or to those of their subsidiary banks, men who are experts in industrial affairs, such as manufacturers, former officials, especially those formerly in the railway service or in mining," etc.<sup>21</sup>

We find the same system, with only slight difference, in French banking. For instance, one of the three biggest French banks, the *Crédit Lyonnais*, has organised a financial research service (*Service des études financières*), which permanently employs over fifty engineers, statisticians, economists, lawyers, etc., at a cost of six or seven hundred thousand francs annually. The service is in turn divided into eight sections, of which one deals with industrial establishments, another with general statistics, a third with railway and

<sup>21</sup> Jéidels, *op. cit.*, pp. 156-57

steamship companies, a fourth with securities, a fifth with financial reports, etc.<sup>22</sup>

The result is twofold: on the one hand the merging, to an ever greater extent, or, as N. Bukhārīn aptly calls it, the coalescence of bank and industrial capital; and on the other hand, a transformation of the banks into institutions of a truly "universal character." On this question we think it necessary to quote the exact terms used by Jeidels, who has best studied the subject:

"An examination of the sum total of industrial relationships reveals the *universal character* of the financial establishments working on behalf of industry. Unlike other kinds of banks and contrary to the requirements often laid down in literature—according to which banks ought to specialise in one kind of business or in one branch of industry in order to maintain a firm footing—the big banks are striving to make their industrial connections as varied and far-reaching as possible, according to locality and branch of business, and are striving to do away with the inequalities in the distribution among localities and branches of business resulting from the historical development of individual banking houses. . . . One tendency is to make the ties with industry general; another tendency is to make these ties durable and close. In the six big banks both these tendencies are realised, not in full, but to a considerable extent and to an equal degree."<sup>23</sup>

Quite often industrial and commercial circles complain of the "terrorism" of the banks. And it is not surprising that such complaints are heard, for the big banks "command," as will be seen from the following example: on November 19, 1901, one of the big Berlin "D" bank (such is the name given to the four biggest banks whose names begin with the letter D<sup>24</sup>) wrote to the Board of Directors of the German Central Northwest Cement Syndicate in the following terms:

<sup>22</sup> Eugen Kaufmann, *Die Organisation der französischen Depositen-Grossbanken* (*Organisation of the Big French Deposit Banks*), in *Die Bank*, 1909, II, pp. 851 *et seq.*

<sup>23</sup> Jeidels, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

<sup>24</sup> *I.e.*, Deutsche Bank, Disconto-Gesellschaft, Dresdner Bank and Darmstädter Bank.—*Ed.*

"As we learn from the notice you published in the *Reichsanzeiger* of the 18th instant, we must reckon with the possibility that the next general meeting of your company, fixed for the 30th of this month, may decide on measures which are likely to effect changes in your undertakings which are unacceptable to us. We deeply regret that, for these reasons, we are obliged henceforth to withdraw the credit which has been hitherto allowed you.... But if the said next general meeting does not decide upon measures which are unacceptable to us and if we receive suitable guarantees on this matter for the future, we shall be quite willing to open negotiations with you on the grant of a new credit."<sup>25</sup>

As a matter of fact, this is small capital's old complaint about being oppressed by big capital, but in this case it was a whole syndicate that fell into the category of "small" capital! The old struggle between big and small capital is being resumed on a new and higher stage of development. It stands to reason that undertakings, financed by big banks handling billions, can accelerate technical progress in a way that cannot possibly be compared with the past. The banks, for example, set up special technical research societies, and only "friendly" industrial enterprises benefit from their work. To this category belong the Electric Railway Research Association and the Central Bureau of Scientific and Technical Research.

The directors of the big banks themselves cannot fail to see that new conditions of national economy are being created. But they are powerless in the face of these phenomena.

"Anyone who has watched, in recent years, the changes of incumbents of directorships and seats on the Supervisory Boards of the big banks, cannot fail to have noticed that power is gradually passing into the hands of men who consider the active intervention of the big banks in the general development of industry to be indispensable and of increasing importance. Between these new men and the old bank directors, disagreements of a business and often of a personal nature are growing on this subject. The question that is in dispute is whether or not the banks, as credit institutions, will suffer from this intervention in industry, whether they are sacrificing tried principles and an assured profit to engage in a field of activity which has nothing in common

<sup>25</sup> Oskar Stöllich, *Geld und Bankwesen*, Berlin, 1907, p. 147.

with their role as intermediaries in providing credit, and which is leading the banks into a field where they are more than ever before exposed to the blind forces of trade fluctuations. This is the opinion of many of the older bank directors, while most of the young men consider active intervention in industry to be a necessity as great as that which gave rise, simultaneously with big modern industry, to the big banks and modern industrial banking. The two parties to this discussion are agreed only on one point: and that is, that as yet there are neither firm principles nor a concrete aim in the new activities of the big banks."<sup>26</sup>

The old capitalism has had its day. The new capitalism represents a transition towards something. It is hopeless, of course, to seek for "firm principles and a concrete aim" for the purpose of "reconciling" monopoly with free competition. The admission of the practical men has quite a different ring from the official praises of the charms of "organised" capitalism sung by its apologists, Schulze-Gaevernitz, Liefmann and similar "theoreticians."

At precisely what period were the "new activities" of the big banks finally established? Jeidels gives us a fairly exact answer to this important question:

"The ties between the banks and industrial enterprises, with their new content, their new forms and their new organs, namely, the big banks which are organised on both a centralised and a decentralised basis, were scarcely a characteristic economic phenomenon before the 'nineties; in one sense, indeed, this initial date may be advanced to the year 1897, when the important 'mergers' took place and when, for the first time, the new form of decentralised organisation was introduced to suit the industrial policy of the banks. This starting point could perhaps be placed at an even later date, for it was the crisis [of 1900] that enormously accelerated and intensified the process of concentration of industry and banking, consolidated that process, for the first time transformed the connection with industry into the monopoly of the big banks, and made this connection much closer and more active."<sup>27</sup>

Thus, the beginning of the twentieth century marks the turning point from the old capitalism to the new, from the domination of capital in general to the domination of finance capital.

<sup>26</sup> Jeidels, *op. cit.*, pp. 183-84.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 181.

## CHAPTER III

# Finance Capital and Financial Oligarchy

"A steadily increasing proportion of capital in industry," Hilferding writes, "does not belong to the industrialists who employ it. They obtain the use of it only through the medium of the banks, which, in relation to them, represent the owners of the capital. On the other hand, the bank is forced to keep an increasing share of its funds engaged in industry. Thus, to an increasing degree the bank is being transformed into an industrial capitalist. This bank capital, *i.e.*, capital in money form which is thus really transformed into industrial capital, I call 'finance capital.'...Finance capital is capital controlled by banks and employed by industrialists."<sup>1</sup>

This definition is incomplete in so far as it is silent on one extremely important fact: the increase of concentration of production and of capital to such an extent that it leads, and has led, to monopoly. But throughout the whole of his work, and particularly in the two chapters which precede the one from which this definition is taken, Hilferding stresses the part played by *capitalist monopolies*.

The concentration of production; the monopoly arising therefrom; the merging or coalescence of banking with industry—this is the history of the rise of finance capital and what gives the term "finance capital" its content.

We now have to describe how, under the general conditions of commodity production and private property, the "domination" of capitalist monopolies inevitably becomes the domination of a financial oligarchy. It should be noted that the representatives of German bourgeois science—and not only of German science—like Riesser, Schulze-Gaevernitz, Liefmann and others are all apologists of imperialism and of finance capital. Instead of revealing the "mechanics" of the formation of an oligarchy, its methods, its revenues "innocent and sinful," its connections with parliaments, etc., they

<sup>1</sup> R. Hilferding, *Das Finanzkapital*, 1912, p. 283.



conceal, obscure and embellish them. They evade these "vexed questions" by a few vague and pompous phrases: appeals to the "sense of responsibility" of bank directors, praising "the sense of duty" of Prussian officials; by giving serious study to petty details, to ridiculous bills of parliament—for the "supervision" and "regulation" of monopolies; by playing with theories, like, for example, the following "scientific" definition, arrived at by Professor Liefmann: "*Commerce is an occupation having for its object: collecting goods, storing them and making them available.*" (The Professor's boldface italics.) From this it would follow that commerce existed in the time of primitive man, who knew nothing about exchange, and that it will exist under socialism!

But the monstrous facts concerning the monstrous rule of the financial oligarchy are so striking that in all capitalist countries, in America, France and Germany, a whole literature has sprung up, written from the *bourgeois* point of view, but which, nevertheless, gives a fairly accurate picture and criticism—petty-bourgeois, naturally—of this oligarchy.

The "holding system," to which we have already briefly referred above, should be placed at the corner-stone. The German economist, Heymann, probably the first to call attention to this matter, describes it in this way:

"The head of the concern controls the parent company; the latter reigns over the subsidiary companies which in their turn control still other subsidiaries. Thus, it is possible with a comparatively small capital to dominate immense spheres of production. As a matter of fact, if holding 50 per cent of the capital is always sufficient to control a company, the head of the concern needs only one million to control eight millions in the second subsidiaries. And if this "interlocking" is extended, it is possible with one million to control sixteen, thirty-two or more millions."<sup>2</sup>

Experience shows that it is sufficient to own 40 per cent of the shares of a company in order to direct its affairs,<sup>3</sup> since a certain number of small, scattered shareholders find it impossible, in prac-

<sup>2</sup> Heymann, *Die gemischten Werke im deutschen Grosseisengewerbe*, Stuttgart 1904, pp. 268-69.

<sup>3</sup> R. Liefmann, *Beteiligungsgesellschaften*, p. 258.

tice, to attend general meetings, etc. The "democratisation" of the ownership of shares, from which the bourgeois sophists and opportunist "would-be" Social-Democrats expect (or declare that they expect) the "democratisation of capital," the strengthening of the role and significance of small-scale production, etc., is, in fact, one of the ways of increasing the power of financial oligarchy. Incidentally, this is why, in the more advanced, or in the older and more "experienced" capitalist countries, the law allows the issue of shares of very small denomination. In Germany, it is not permitted by the law to issue shares of less value than one thousand marks, and the magnates of German finance look with an envious eye at England, where the issue of one-pound shares is permitted. Siemens, one of the biggest industrialists and "financial kings" in Germany, told the Reichstag on June 7, 1900, that "the one-pound share is the basis of British imperialism."<sup>4</sup> This merchant has a much deeper and more "Marxian" understanding of imperialism than a certain disreputable writer, generally held to be one of the founders of Russian Marxism, who believes that imperialism is a bad habit of a certain nation....

But the "holding system" not only serves to increase enormously the power of the monopolists; it also enables them to resort with impunity to all sorts of shady tricks to cheat the public, for the directors of the parent company are not legally responsible for the subsidiary companies, which are supposed to be "independent," and *through the medium* of which they can "pull off" *anything*. Here is an example taken from the German review, *Die Bank*, for May 1914:

"The Spring Steel Company of Kassel was regarded some years ago as being one of the most profitable enterprises in Germany. Through bad management its dividends fell within the space of a few years from 15 per cent to nil. It appears that the Board, without consulting the shareholders, had loaned *six million marks* to one of the subsidiary companies, the Hassia, Ltd., which had a nominal capital of only some hundreds of thousands of marks. This commitment, amounting to nearly treble the capital of the parent company, was never mentioned

<sup>4</sup> Schulze-Gaevernitz in "Grdr. d. S.-Oek.," V, 2, p. 110.

in its balance sheets. This omission was quite legal, and could be kept up for two whole years because it did not violate any provision of company law. The chairman of the Supervisory Board, who as the responsible head had signed the false balance sheets, was, and still is, the president of the Kassel Chamber of Commerce. The shareholders only heard of the loan to the Hassia, Ltd., long afterwards, when it had long been proved to have been a mistake" (this word the writer should have put in quotation marks), "and when Spring Steel shares had dropped nearly 100 points, because those in the know had got rid of them....

*"This typical example of balance-sheet jugglery, quite common in joint stock companies,* explains why their Boards of Directors are more willing to undertake risky transactions than individual dealers. Modern methods of drawing up balance sheets not only make it possible to conceal doubtful undertakings from the average shareholder, but also allow the people most concerned to escape the consequence of unsuccessful speculation by selling their shares in time while the individual dealer risks his own skin in everything he does.

"The balance sheets of many joint stock companies put us in mind of the palimpsests of the Middle Ages from which the visible inscription had first to be erased in order to discover beneath it another inscription giving the real meaning of the document." (Palimpsests are parchment documents from which the original inscription has been obliterated and another inscription imposed.)

"The simplest and, therefore, most common procedure for making balance sheets indecipherable is to divide a single business into several parts by setting up subsidiary companies—or by annexing such. The advantages of this system for various objects—legal and illegal—are so evident that it is now quite unusual to find an important company in which it is not actually in use."<sup>5</sup>

As an example of an important monopolist company widely employing this system, the author quotes the famous General Electric Company (Allgemeine Elektrizitäts Gesellschaft—A.E.G.) to which we shall refer below. In 1912, it was calculated that this company held shares in from 175 to 200 other companies, controlling them,

<sup>5</sup> Ludwig Eschwege, *Tochtergesellschaften (Subsidiary Companies)*, in *Die Bank*, 1914, I, pp. 544-46.

of course, and thus having control of a total capital of 1,500,000,000 marks!<sup>6</sup>

All rules of control, the publication of balance sheets, the drawing up of balance sheets according to a definite form, the public auditing of accounts, etc., the things about which well-intentioned professors and officials—that is, those imbued with the good intention of defending and embellishing capitalism—discourse to the public, are of no avail. For private property is sacred, and no one can be prohibited from buying, selling, exchanging or mortgaging shares, etc.

The extent to which this “holding system” has developed in the big Russian banks may be judged by the figures given by E. Agahd, who was for fifteen years an official of the Russo-Chinese Bank and who, in May 1914, published a book, not altogether correctly entitled *Big Banks and the World Market*.<sup>7</sup> The author divides the big Russian banks into two main categories: a) banks that come under a “holding system,” and b) “independent” banks—“independence,” however, being arbitrarily taken to mean independence of *foreign* banks. The author divides the first group into three sub-groups: 1) German participation, 2) British participation, and 3) French participation, having in view the “participation” and domination of the big foreign banks of the particular country mentioned. The author divides the capital of the banks into “productively” invested capital (in industrial and commercial undertakings), and “speculatively” invested capital (in Stock Exchange and financial operations), assuming, from his petty-bourgeois reformist point of view, that it is possible, under capitalism, to separate the first form of investment from the second and to abolish the second form.

Here are the figures he supplies:

<sup>6</sup> Kurt Heinig, *Der Weg des Elektrotrusts (The Path of the Electric Trust)*, in *Die Neue Zeit*, 1911-1912, Vol. II, p. 484.

<sup>7</sup> E. Agahd, *Grossbanken und Weltmarkt. Die wirtschaftliche und politische Bedeutung der Grossbanken im Weltmarkt unter Berücksichtigung ihres Einflusses auf Russlands Volkswirtschaft und die deutsch-russischen Beziehungen*. Berl. (“Big Banks and the World Market. The economic and political significance of the big banks on the world market, with reference to their influence on Russia’s national economy and German-Russian relations.” Berlin, 1914, pp. 11-17.)

## IMPERIALISM

## BANK ASSETS

(According to reports for October-November, 1913, in millions of rubles)

| GROUPS OF RUSSIAN BANKS  | CAPITAL INVESTED |             |         |
|--|------------------|-------------|---------|
|  | PRODUCTIVE       | SPECULATIVE | TOTAL   |
| A. 1) Four banks: Siberian Commercial Bank, Russian Bank, International Bank, and Discount Bank  | 413.7            | 859.1       | 1,272.8 |
| 2) Two banks: Commercial and Industrial and Russo-British  | 239.3            | 169.1       | 408.4   |
| 3) Five banks: Russian-Asiatic, St. Petersburg Private, Azov-Don, Union Moscow, Russo-French Commercial  | 711.8            | 661.2       | 1,373.0 |
| Total: (11 banks)  | 1,364.8          | 1,689.4     | 3,054.2 |
| B. Eight banks: Moscow Merchants, Volga-Kama, Junker and Co., St. Petersburg Commercial (formerly Wawelberg), Bank of Moscow (formerly Riabushinsky), Moscow Discount, Moscow Commercial, Private Bank of Moscow | 504.2            | 391.1       | 895.3   |
| Total: (19 banks)  | 1,869.0          | 2,080.5     | 3,949.5 |

According to these figures, of the approximately four billion rubles making up the "working" capital of the big banks, *more than three-fourths*, more than three billion, belonged to banks which in reality were only "subsidiary companies" of foreign banks, and chiefly of the Paris banks (the famous trio: Union Parisien, Paris et Pays-Bas and Société Générale), and of the Berlin banks (particularly the Deutsche Bank and Disconto-Gesellschaft). Two of the most important Russian banks, the Russian Bank for Foreign Trade and the St. Petersburg International Commercial, between 1906 and 1912 increased their capital from 44,000,000 to 98,000,000 rubles, and their reserve from 15,000,000 to 39,000,000 "employing three-fourths German capital." The first belongs to the Deutsche Bank group and the second to the Disconto-Gesellschaft. The worthy Agahd is indignant at the fact that the ma-

jority of the shares are held by the Berlin banks, and that, therefore, the Russian shareholders are powerless. Naturally, the country which exports capital skims the cream: for example, the Deutsche Bank, while introducing the shares of the Siberian Commercial Bank on the Berlin market, kept them in its portfolio for a whole year, and then sold them at the rate of 193 for 100, that is, at nearly twice their nominal value, "earning" a profit of nearly 6,000,000 rubles, which Hilferding calls "promoters' profits."

Our author puts the total "resources" of the principal St. Petersburg banks at 8,235,000,000 rubles, about  $8\frac{1}{4}$  billions and the "holdings," or rather, the extent to which foreign banks dominated them, he estimates as follows: French banks, 55 per cent; English, 10 per cent; German, 35 per cent. The author calculates that of the total of 8,235,000,000 rubles of functioning capital, 3,687,000,000 rubles, or over 40 per cent, fall to the share of the syndicates, Produgol and Prodamet<sup>8</sup>—and the syndicates in the oil, metallurgical and cement industries. Thus, the merging of bank and industrial capital has also made great strides in Russia owing to the formation of capitalist monopolies.

Finance capital, concentrated in a few hands and exercising a virtual monopoly, exacts enormous and ever-increasing profits from the floating of companies, issue of stock, state loans, etc., tightens the grip of financial oligarchies and levies tribute upon the whole of society for the benefit of monopolists. Here is an example, taken from a multitude of others, of the methods of "business" of the American trusts, quoted by Hilferding: in 1887, Havemeyer founded the Sugar Trust by amalgamating fifteen small firms, whose total capital amounted to \$6,500,000. Suitably "watered," as the Americans say, the capital of the trust was increased to \$50,000,000. This "over-capitalisation" anticipated the monopoly profits, in the same way as the United States Steel Corporation anticipated its profits by buying up as many iron fields as possible. In fact, the Sugar Trust set up monopoly prices on the market, which secured it such profits that it could pay 10 per

<sup>8</sup> Abbreviated names of the syndicates, "Russian Society for Trade in the Mineral Fuels of the Donetz Basin," and "Society for the Sale of the Products of Russian Metallurgical Works," organized in 1906 and 1901 respectively.—*Ed.*

cent dividend on capital "watered" *sevenfold, or about 70 per cent on the capital actually invested at the time of the creation of the trust!* In 1909, the capital of the Sugar Trust was increased to \$90,000,000. In twenty-two years, it had increased its capital more than tenfold.

In France the role of the "financial oligarchy" (*Against the Financial Oligarchy in France*, the title of the well-known book by Lysis, the fifth edition of which was published in 1908) assumed a form that was only slightly different. Four of the most powerful banks enjoy, not a relative, but an "absolute monopoly" in the issue of bonds. In reality, this is a "trust of the big banks." And their monopoly ensures the monopolist profits from bond issues. Usually a country borrowing from France does not get more than 90 per cent of the total of the loan, the remaining 10 per cent goes to the banks and other middlemen. The profit made by the banks out of the Russo-Chinese loans of 400,000,000 francs amounted to 8 per cent; out of the Russian (1904) loan of 800,000,000 francs the profit amounted to 10 per cent; and out of the Moroccan (1904) loan of 62,500,000 francs, to 18.75 per cent. Capitalism, which began its development with petty usury capital, ends its development with gigantic usury capital. "The French," says Lysis, "are the usurers of Europe." All the conditions of economic life are being profoundly modified by this transformation of capitalism. With a stationary population, and stagnant industry, commerce and shipping, the "country" can grow rich by usury. "Fifty persons, representing a capital of 8,000,000 francs, can control 2,000,000,000 francs deposited in four banks." The "holding system," with which we are already familiar, leads to the same result. One of the biggest banks, the Société Générale, for instance, issues 64,000 bonds for one of its subsidiary companies, the Egyptian Sugar Refineries. The bonds are issued at 150 per cent, *i.e.*, the bank gaining 50 centimes on the franc. The dividends of the new company are then found to be fictitious. The "public" lost from 90 to 100 million francs. One of the directors of the Société Générale was a member of the board of directors of the Egyptian Sugar Refineries. Hence it is not surprising that the author is driven to the conclusion that "the French Republic is a financial

monarchy"; "it is the complete domination of the financial oligarchy; the latter controls the press and the government."<sup>9</sup>

The extraordinarily high rate of profit obtained from the issue of securities, which is one of the principal functions of finance capital, plays a large part in the development and consolidation of the financial oligarchy.

"There is not within the country a single business of this type that brings in profits even approximately equal to those obtained from the flotation of foreign loans,"<sup>10</sup> says the German magazine, *Die Bank*.

"No banking operation brings in profits comparable with those obtained from the issue of securities!"<sup>11</sup>

According to the *German Economist*, the average annual profits made on the issue of industrial securities were as follows:

|      | PER CENT |      | PER CENT |
|------|----------|------|----------|
| 1895 | 38.6     | 1898 | 67.7     |
| 1896 | 36.1     | 1899 | 66.9     |
| 1897 | 66.7     | 1900 | 55.2     |

"In the ten years from 1891 to 1900, *more than a billion* marks of profits were 'earned' by issuing German industrial securities."<sup>12</sup>

While, during periods of industrial boom, the profits of finance capital are disproportionately large, during periods of depression, small and unsound businesses go out of existence, while the big banks take "holdings" in their shares, which are bought up cheaply or in profitable schemes for their "reconstruction" and "reorganisation." In the "reconstruction" of undertakings which have been running at a loss,

"the share capital is written down, that is, profits are distributed on a smaller capital and subsequently are calculated on this smaller basis. If the income has fallen to zero, new capital is called in, which, com-

<sup>9</sup> Lysis, *Contre l'oligarchie financière en France (Against the Financial Oligarchy in France)* fifth ed., Paris, 1908, pp. 11, 12, 26, 39, 40, 47-48.

<sup>10</sup> *Die Bank*, 1913, II, p. 630.

<sup>11</sup> Stillich, *op. cit.*, p. 143.—Ed.

<sup>12</sup> Stillich, *ibid.*; also Werner Sombart, *Die deutsche Volkswirtschaft im 19. Jahrhundert (German National Economy in the Nineteenth Century)*, second ed., Berlin, 1909, p. 526, Appendix.



bined with the old and less remunerative capital, will bring in an adequate return."

"Incidentally," adds Hilferding, "these reorganisations and reconstructions have a twofold significance for the banks: first, as profitable transactions; and secondly, as opportunities for securing control of the companies in difficulties."<sup>13</sup>

Here is an instance. The Union Mining Company of Dortmund, founded in 1872, with a share capital of nearly 40,000,000 marks, saw the market price of shares rise to 170 after it had paid a 12 per cent dividend in its first year. Finance capital skimmed the cream and earned a "trifle" of something like 28,000,000 marks. The principal sponsor of this company was that very big German Disconto-Gesellschaft which so successfully attained a capital of 300,000,000 marks. Later, the dividends of the Union declined to nil: the shareholders had to consent to a "writing down" of capital, that is, to losing some of it in order not to lose it all. By a series of "reconstructions," more than 73,000,000 marks were written off the books of the Union in the course of thirty years.

"At the present time, the original shareholders of this company possess only 5 per cent of the nominal value of their shares."<sup>14</sup>

But the bank "made a profit" out of every "reconstruction."

Speculation in land situated in the suburbs of rapidly growing towns is a particularly profitable operation for finance capital. The monopoly of the banks merges here with the monopoly of ground rent and with monopoly in the means of communication, since the increase in the value of the land and the possibility of selling it profitably in allotments, etc., is mainly dependent on good means of communication with the centre of the town; and these means of communication are in the hands of large companies which are connected by means of the holding system and by the distribution of positions on the directorates, with the interested banks. As a result we get what the German writer, L. Eschwege, a contributor to *Die Bank*, who has made a special study of real estate business and mortgages, etc., calls the formation of a "bog." Frantic specu-

<sup>13</sup> Hilferding, *op. cit.*, pp. 142-143.

<sup>14</sup> Stille, *op. cit.*, p. 138, and Liefmann, p. 51.

lation in suburban building lots: collapse of building enterprises (like that of the Berlin firm of Boswau and Knauer, which grabbed 100,000,000 marks with the help of the "sound and solid" Deutsche Bank—the latter acting, of course, discreetly behind the scenes through the holding system and getting out of it by losing "only" 12,000,000 marks), then the ruin of small proprietors and of workers who get nothing from the fraudulent building firms, underhand agreements with the "honest" Berlin police and the Berlin administration for the purpose of getting control of the issue of building sites, tenders, building licenses, etc.<sup>15</sup>

"American ethics," which the European professors and well-meaning bourgeois so hypocritically deplore, have, in the age of finance capital, become the ethics of literally every large city, no matter what country it is in.

At the beginning of 1914, there was talk in Berlin of the proposed formation of a "transport trust," *i. e.*, of establishing "community of interests" between the three Berlin passenger transport undertakings: the Metropolitan electric railway, the tramway company and the omnibus company.

"We know," wrote *Die Bank*, "that this plan has been contemplated since it became known that the majority of the shares in the bus company has been acquired by the other two transport companies.... We may believe those who are pursuing this aim when they say that by uniting the transport services, they will secure economies part of which will in time benefit the public. But the question is complicated by the fact that behind the transport trust that is being formed are the banks, which, if they desire, can subordinate the means of transportation, which they have monopolised, to the interests of their real estate business. To be convinced of the reasonableness of such a conjecture, we need only recall that at the very formation of the Elevated Railway Company the traffic interests became interlocked with the real estate interests of the big bank which financed it, and this interlocking even created the prerequisites for the formation of the transport enterprise. Its eastern line, in fact, was to run through land which, when it became certain the line was to be laid down, this bank sold to a real estate

<sup>15</sup> Ludwig Eschwege, *Der Sumpf (The Bog)*, in *Die Bank*, 1913, II, p. 952, *et seq.*; *ibid.*, 1912, I, p. 223 *et seq.*

firm at an enormous profit for itself and for several partners in the transactions." <sup>16</sup>

A monopoly, once it is formed and controls thousands of millions, inevitably penetrates into *every* sphere of public life, regardless of the form of government and all other "details." In the economic literature of Germany one usually comes across the servile praise of the integrity of the Prussian bureaucracy, and allusions to the French Panama scandal and to political corruption in America. But the fact is that *even* the bourgeois literature devoted to German banking matters constantly has to go far beyond the field of purely banking operations and to speak, for instance, of "the attraction of the banks" in reference to the increasing frequency with which public officials take employment with the banks.

"How about the integrity of a state official who in his inmost heart is aspiring to a soft job in the Behrenstrasse?" <sup>17</sup> (the street in Berlin in which the head office of the Deutsche Bank is situated).

In 1909, the publisher of *Die Bank*, Alfred Lansburgh, wrote an article entitled "The Economic Significance of Byzantinism," in which he incidentally referred to Wilhelm II's tour of Palestine, and to "the immediate result of this journey," the construction of the Bagdad railway, that fatal "standard product of German enterprise, which is more responsible for the 'encirclement' than all our political blunders put together." <sup>18</sup> (By encirclement is meant the policy of Edward VII to isolate Germany by surrounding her with an imperialist anti-German alliance.) In 1912, another contributor to this magazine, Eschwege, to whom we have already referred, wrote an article entitled "Plutocracy and Bureaucracy," in which he exposes the case of a German official named Volker, who was a zealous member of the Cartel Committee and who, some time later, obtained a lucrative post in the biggest cartel, *i.e.*, the Steel Syndicate. <sup>19</sup> Similar cases, by no means casual, forced

<sup>16</sup> *Verkehrstrust (Transport Trust)*, in *Die Bank*, 1914, I, pp. 89-90.

<sup>17</sup> *Der Zug zur Bank (The Attraction of the Banks)*, in *Die Bank*, 1909, I, p. 79.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 307.

<sup>19</sup> *Die Bank*, 1912, II, p. 825.—Ed.

this bourgeois author to admit that "the economic liberty guaranteed by the German Constitution has become in many departments of economic life, a meaningless phrase" and that under the existing rule of the plutocracy, "even the widest political liberty cannot save us from being converted into a nation of unfree people."<sup>20</sup>

As for Russia, we will content ourselves by quoting one example. Some years ago, all the newspapers announced that Davidov, the director of the Credit Department of the Treasury, had resigned his post to take employment with a certain big bank at a salary which, according to the contract, was to amount to over one million rubles in the course of several years. The function of the Credit Department is to "co-ordinate the activities of all the credit institutions of the country"; it also grants subsidies to banks in St. Petersburg and Moscow amounting to between 800 and 1,000 million rubles.<sup>21</sup>

It is characteristic of capitalism in general that the ownership of capital is separated from the application of capital to production, that money capital is separated from industrial or productive capital, and that the rentier, who lives entirely on income obtained from money capital, is separated from the entrepreneur and from all who are directly concerned in the management of capital. Imperialism, or the domination of finance capital, is that highest stage of capitalism in which this separation reaches vast proportions. The supremacy of finance capital over all other forms of capital means the predominance of the rentier and of the financial oligarchy; it means the crystallisation of a small number of financially "powerful" states from among all the rest. The extent to which this process is going on may be judged from the statistics on emissions, *i.e.*, the issue of all kinds of securities.

In the Bulletin of the International Statistical Institute, A. Neymarck<sup>22</sup> has published very comprehensive and complete compara-

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 1913, II, p. 962.

<sup>21</sup> E. Agahd, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

<sup>22</sup> A. Neymarck, *Bulletin de l'institut international de statistique* (*Bulletin of the International Statistical Institute*), Vol. XIX, Book II, The Hague, 1912. Data concerning small states, second column, are approximately calculated by adding 20 per cent to the 1902 figures.

tive figures covering the issue of securities all over the world, which have been repeatedly quoted in economic literature. The following are the totals he gives for four decades:

TOTAL ISSUES IN BILLIONS OF FRANCS (*Decades*)

|           |       |
|-----------|-------|
| 1871-1880 | 76.1  |
| 1881-1890 | 64.5  |
| 1891-1900 | 100.4 |
| 1901-1910 | 197.8 |

In the 1870's, the total amount of issues for the whole world was high, owing particularly to the loans floated in connection with the Franco-Prussian War, and the company-promoting boom which set in in Germany after the war. In general, the increase is not very rapid during the three last decades of the nineteenth century, and only in the first ten years of the twentieth century is an enormous increase observed of almost 100 per cent. Thus the beginning of the twentieth century marks the turning point, not only in regard to the growth of monopolies (cartels, syndicates, trusts), of which we have already spoken, but also in regard to the development of finance capital.

Neymarck estimates the total amount of issued securities current in the world in 1910 at about 815,000,000,000 francs. Deducting from this amounts which might have been duplicated, he reduces the total to 575-600,000,000,000, which is distributed among the various countries as follows (we will take 600,000,000,000):

FINANCIAL SECURITIES CURRENT IN 1910

(*In billions of francs*)

|                 |     |       |                               |      |
|-----------------|-----|-------|-------------------------------|------|
| Great Britain   | 142 | } 479 | Japan                         | 12   |
| United States   | 132 |       | Holland                       | 12.5 |
| France          | 110 |       | Belgium                       | 7.5  |
| Germany         | 95  |       | Spain                         | 7.5  |
| Russia          | 31  |       | Switzerland                   | 6.25 |
| Austria-Hungary | 24  |       | Denmark                       | 3.75 |
| Italy           | 14  |       | Sweden, Norway, Rumania, etc. | 2    |

Total 600.00

From these figures we at once see standing out in sharp relief four of the richest capitalist countries, each of which controls securities to amounts ranging from 100 to 150 billion francs. Two of these countries, England and France, are the oldest capitalist countries, and, as we shall see, possess the most colonies; the other two, the United States and Germany, are in the front rank as regards rapidity of development and the degree of extension of capitalist monopolies in industry. Together, these four countries own 479,000,000,000 francs, that is, nearly 80 per cent of the world's finance capital. Thus, in one way or another, nearly the whole world is more or less the debtor to and tributary of these four international banker countries, the four "pillars" of world finance capital.

It is particularly important to examine the part which export of capital plays in creating the international network of dependence and ties of finance capital.

## CHAPTER IV

### The Export of Capital

UNDER the old capitalism, when free competition prevailed, the export of *goods* was the most typical feature. Under modern capitalism, when monopolies prevail, the export of *capital* has become the typical feature.

Capitalism is commodity production at the highest stage of development, when labour power itself becomes a commodity. The growth of internal exchange, and particularly of international exchange, is the characteristic distinguishing feature of capitalism. The uneven and spasmodic character of the development of individual enterprises, of individual branches of industry and individual countries, is inevitable under the capitalist system. England became a capitalist country before any other, and in the middle of the nineteenth century, having adopted free trade, claimed to be the "workshop of the world," the great purveyor of manufactured goods to all countries, which in exchange were to keep her supplied with raw materials. But in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, *this* monopoly was already undermined. Other countries, protecting themselves by tariff walls, had developed into independent capitalist states. On the threshold of the twentieth century, we see a new type of monopoly coming into existence. Firstly, there are monopolist capitalist combines in all advanced capitalist countries; secondly, a few rich countries, in which the accumulation of capital reaches gigantic proportions, occupy a monopolist position. An enormous "superabundance of capital" has accumulated in the advanced countries.

It goes without saying that if capitalism could develop agriculture, which today lags far behind industry everywhere, if it could raise the standard of living of the masses, who are everywhere still poverty-stricken and underfed, in spite of the amazing advance in technical knowledge, there could be no talk of a superabundance

of capital. This "argument" the petty-bourgeois critics of capitalism advance on every occasion. But if capitalism did these things it would not be capitalism; for uneven development and wretched conditions of the masses are fundamental and inevitable conditions and premises of this mode of production. As long as capitalism remains what it is, surplus capital will never be utilised for the purpose of raising the standard of living of the masses in a given country, for this would mean a decline in profits for the capitalists; it will be used for the purpose of increasing those profits by exporting capital abroad to the backward countries. In these backward countries profits are usually high, for capital is scarce, the price of land is relatively low, wages are low, raw materials are cheap. The possibility of exporting capital is created by the fact that numerous backward countries have been drawn into international capitalist intercourse; main railways have either been built or are being built there; the elementary conditions for industrial development have been created, etc. The necessity for exporting capital arises from the fact that in a few countries capitalism has become "over-ripe" and (owing to the backward state of agriculture and the impoverished state of the masses) capital cannot find "profitable" investment.

Here are approximate figures showing the amount of capital invested abroad by the three principal countries:<sup>1</sup>

## CAPITAL INVESTED ABROAD

(In billions of francs)

| Year | GREAT BRITAIN | FRANCE    | GERMANY |
|------|---------------|-----------|---------|
| 1862 | 3.6           | —         | —       |
| 1872 | 15.0          | 10 (1869) | —       |
| 1882 | 22.0          | 15 (1880) | ?       |
| 1893 | 42.0          | 20 (1890) | ?       |
| 1902 | 62.0          | 27-37     | 12.5    |
| 1914 | 75-100        | 60        | 44.0    |

<sup>1</sup> Hobson, *Imperialism*, London, 1902, p. 58; Riesser, *op. cit.*, pp. 395 and 404; P. Arndt in *Weltwirtschaftliches Archiv* (World Economic Archive), Vol. VII, 1916, p. 35; Neymarck in *Bulletin de l'institut international de statistique*; Hilferding, *Finanzkapital*, p. 437; Lloyd George, Speech in the House of Commons, May 4, 1915, reported in *Daily Telegraph*, May 5, 1915; B. Harms, *Probleme der Welt-*



This table shows that the export of capital reached formidable dimensions only in the beginning of the twentieth century. Before the war the capital invested abroad by the three principal countries amounted to between 175,000,000,000 and 200,000,000,000 francs. At the modest rate of 5 per cent, this sum should have brought in from 8 to 10 billions a year. This provided a solid basis for imperialist oppression and the exploitation of most of the countries and nations of the world; a solid basis for the capitalist parasitism of a handful of wealthy states!

How is this capital invested abroad distributed among the various countries? *Where* does it go? Only an approximate answer can be given to this question, but sufficient to throw light on certain general relations and ties of modern imperialism.

#### APPROXIMATE DISTRIBUTION OF FOREIGN CAPITAL

(ABOUT 1910)

(In billions of marks)

| CONTINENT                  | GT. BRITAIN | FRANCE | GERMANY | TOTAL |
|----------------------------|-------------|--------|---------|-------|
| Europe                     | 4           | 23     | 18      | 45    |
| America                    | 37          | 4      | 10      | 51    |
| Asia, Africa and Australia | 29          | 8      | 7       | 44    |
|                            | —           | —      | —       | —     |
| Total                      | 70          | 35     | 35      | 140   |

The principal spheres of investment of British capital are the British colonies, which are very large also in America (for example, Canada) not to mention Asia, etc. In this case, enormous exports of capital are bound up with the possession of enormous colonies, of the importance of which for imperialism we shall speak later. In regard to France, the situation is quite different. French capital exports are invested mainly in Europe, particularly in Russia (at

*wirtschaft* (Problems of World Economy), Jena, 1912, p. 235 et seq.; Dr. Sigmund Schilder, *Entwicklungstendenzen der Weltwirtschaft* (Trends of Development of World Economy), Berlin, 1912, Vol. I, p. 150; George Paish, Great Britain's Capital Investments, etc., in *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, Vol. LXXIV, 1910-11, p. 167; Georges Diouritch, *L'expansion des banques allemandes à l'étranger, ses rapports avec le développement économique de l'Allemagne* (Expansion of German Banks Abroad, in Connection with the Economic Development of Germany), Paris, 1909, p. 84.

least ten billion francs). This is mainly *loan* capital, in the form of government loans and not investments in industrial undertakings. Unlike British colonial imperialism, French imperialism might be termed usury imperialism. In regard to Germany, we have a third type; the German colonies are inconsiderable, and German capital invested abroad is divided fairly evenly between Europe and America.

The export of capital greatly affects and accelerates the development of capitalism in those countries to which it is exported. While, therefore, the export of capital may tend to a certain extent to arrest development in the countries exporting capital, it can only do so by expanding and deepening the further development of capitalism throughout the world.

The countries which export capital are nearly always able to obtain "advantages," the character of which throws light on the peculiarities of the epoch of finance capital and monopoly. The following passage, for instance, occurred in the Berlin review, *Die Bank*, for October 1913:

"A comedy worthy of the pen of Aristophanes is being played just now on the international capital market. Numerous foreign countries, from Spain to the Balkan states, from Russia to the Argentine, Brazil and China, are openly or secretly approaching the big money markets demanding loans, some of which are very urgent. The money market is not at the moment very bright and the political outlook is not yet promising. But not a single money market dares to refuse a foreign loan for fear that its neighbour might first anticipate it and so secure some small reciprocal service. In these international transactions the creditor nearly always manages to get some special advantages: an advantage of a commercial-political nature, a coaling station, a contract to construct a harbour, a fat concession, or an order for guns."<sup>2</sup>

Finance capital has created the epoch of monopolies, and monopolies introduce everywhere monopolist methods: the utilisation of "connections" for profitable transactions takes the place of competition on the open market. The most usual thing is to stipulate that part of the loan that is granted shall be spent on purchases in the country of issue, particularly on orders for war materials,

<sup>2</sup> *Die Bank*, 1913, pp. 1024-25.

or for ships, etc. In the course of the last two decades (1890-1910), France often resorted to this method. The export of capital abroad thus becomes a means for encouraging the export of commodities. In these circumstances transactions between particularly big firms assume a form "bordering on corruption," as Schilder<sup>3</sup> "delicately" puts it. Krupp in Germany, Schneider in France, Armstrong in England are instances of firms which have close connections with powerful banks and governments and cannot be "ignored" when arranging a loan.

France granted loans to Russia in 1905 and by the commercial treaty of September 16, 1905, she "squeezed" concessions out of her to run till 1917. She did the same thing when the Franco-Japanese commercial treaty was concluded on August 19, 1911. The tariff war between Austria and Serbia, which lasted with a seven months' interval, from 1906 to 1911, was partly caused by competition between Austria and France for supplying Serbia with war materials. In January 1912, Paul Deschanel stated in the Chamber of Deputies that from 1908 to 1911 French firms had supplied war materials to Serbia to the value of 45,000,000 francs.

A report from the Austro-Hungarian Consul at Sao-Paulo (Brazil) states:

"The construction of the Brazilian railways is being carried out chiefly by French, Belgian, British and German capital. In the financial operations connected with the construction of these railways the countries involved also stipulate for orders for the necessary railway materials."

Thus, finance capital, almost literally, one might say, spreads its net over all countries of the world. Banks founded in the colonies, or their branches, play an important part in these operations. German imperialists look with envy on the "old" colonising nations which are "well established" in this respect. In 1904, Great Britain had 50 colonial banks with 2,279 branches (in 1910 there were 72 banks with 5,449 branches); France had 20 with 136 branches; Holland 16 with 68 branches; and Germany had a "mere" 13 with

<sup>3</sup> Schilder, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 346, 350 and 371.

70 branches.<sup>4</sup> The American capitalists, in their turn, are jealous of the English and German: "In South America," they complained in 1915, "five German banks have forty branches and five English banks have seventy branches....England and Germany have invested in Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay in the last twenty-five years approximately four thousand million dollars, and as a result enjoy together 46 per cent of the total trade of these three countries."<sup>5</sup>

The capital exporting countries have divided the world among themselves in the figurative sense of the term. But finance capital has also led to the *actual* division of the world.

<sup>4</sup> Riesser, *op. cit.*, fourth edition, pp. 374-75; Diouritch, p. 283.

<sup>5</sup> *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. LIX, May 1915, p. 301. In the same volume on p. 331, we read that the well-known statistician Paish, in the last annual issue of the financial magazine *Statist*, estimated the amount of capital exported by England, Germany, France, Belgium and Holland at 40,000,000,000 dollars, *i.e.*, 200,000,000,000 francs.

## CHAPTER V

# The Division of the World Among Capitalist Combines

MONOPOLIST capitalist combines—cartels, syndicates, trusts—divide among themselves, first of all, the whole internal market of a country, and impose their control, more or less completely, upon the industry of that country. But under capitalism the home market is inevitably bound up with the foreign market. Capitalism long ago created a world market. As the export of capital increased, and as the foreign and colonial relations and the “spheres of influence” of the big monopolist combines expanded, things “naturally” gravitated towards an international agreement among these combines, and towards the formation of international cartels.

This is a new stage of world concentration of capital and production, incomparably higher than the preceding stages. Let us see how this super-monopoly develops.

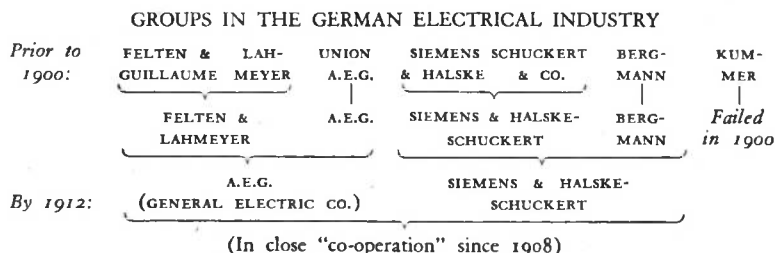
The electrical industry is the most typical of the modern technical achievements of capitalism of the *end* of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. This industry has developed most in the two most advanced of the new capitalist countries, the United States and Germany. In Germany, the crisis of 1900 gave a particularly strong impetus to its concentration. During the crisis, the banks, which by this time had become fairly well merged with industry, greatly accelerated and deepened the collapse of relatively small firms and their absorption by the large ones.

“The banks,” writes Juidels, “in refusing a helping hand to the very companies which are in greatest need of capital bring on first a frenzied boom and then the hopeless failure of the companies which have not been attached to them closely long enough.”<sup>1</sup>

As a result, after 1900, concentration in Germany proceeded by leaps and bounds. Up to 1900 there had been seven or eight

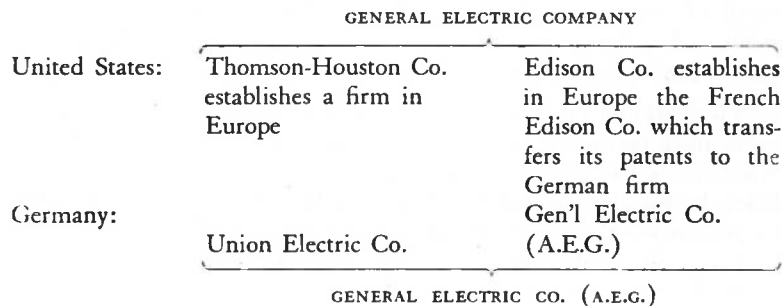
<sup>1</sup> Juidels, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

"groups" in the electrical industry. Each was formed of several companies (altogether there were twenty-eight) and each was supported by from two to eleven banks. Between 1908 and 1912 all the groups were merged into two, or possibly one. The diagram below shows the process:



The famous A.E.G. (General Electric Company), which grew up in this way, controls 175 to 200 companies (through shareholdings), and a total capital of approximately 1,500,000,000 marks. Abroad, it has thirty-four direct agencies, of which twelve are joint stock companies, in more than ten countries. As early as 1904 the amount of capital invested abroad by the German electrical industry was estimated at 233,000,000 marks. Of this sum, 62,000,000 were invested in Russia. Needless to say, the A.E.G. is a huge combine. Its manufacturing companies alone number no less than sixteen, and their factories make the most varied articles, from cables and insulators to motor cars and aeroplanes.

But concentration in Europe was a part of the process of concentration in America, which developed in the following way:



Thus, *two* "Great Powers" in the electrical industry were formed. "There are no other electric companies in the world *completely* independent of them," wrote Heinig in his article "The Path of the Electric Trust." An idea, although far from complete, of the turnover and the size of the enterprises of the two "trusts" can be obtained from the following figures:

|                      |      | TURNOVER<br>(mill. marks) | NO. OF<br>EMPLOYEES | NET PROFITS<br>(mill. marks) |
|----------------------|------|---------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| AMERICA:             |      |                           |                     |                              |
| General Electric Co. | 1907 | 252                       | 28,000              | 35.4                         |
|                      | 1910 | 298                       | 32,000              | 45.6                         |
| GERMANY: A.E.G.      | 1907 | 216                       | 30,700              | 14.5                         |
|                      | 1911 | 362                       | 60,800              | 21.7                         |

In 1907, the German and American trusts concluded an agreement by which they divided the world between themselves. Competition between them ceased. The American General Electric Company "got" the United States and Canada. The A.E.G. "got" Germany, Austria, Russia, Holland, Denmark, Switzerland, Turkey and the Balkans. Special agreements, naturally secret, were concluded regarding the penetration of "subsidiary" companies into new branches of industry, into "new" countries formally not yet allotted. The two trusts were to exchange inventions and experiments.<sup>2</sup>

It is easy to understand how difficult competition has become against this trust, which is practically world-wide, which controls a capital of several billion, and has its "branches," agencies, representatives, connections, etc., in every corner of the world. But the division of the world between two powerful trusts does not remove the possibility of *redivision*, if the relation of forces changes as a result of uneven development, war, bankruptcy, etc.

The oil industry provides an instructive example of attempts at such a redivision, or rather of a struggle for redivision.

"The world oil market," wrote Jeidels in 1905, "is even today divided in the main between two great financial groups—Rockefeller's American Standard Oil Co., and the controlling interests of the Russian oil-fields in Baku, Rothschild and Nobel. The two groups are in close alliance. But for several years, five enemies have been threatening their monopoly:"<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Riesser, *op. cit.*; Diouritch, *op. cit.* p. 239; Kurt Heinig, *op. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> Jeidels, *op. cit.*, pp. 192-93.

1) The exhaustion of the American oil wells; <sup>4</sup> 2) the competition of the firm of Mantashev of Baku; 3) the Austrian wells; 4) the Rumanian wells; 5) the overseas oilfields, particularly in the Dutch colonies (the extremely rich firms, Samuel and Shell, also connected with British capital). The three last groups are connected with the great German banks, principally, the Deutsche Bank. These banks independently and systematically developed the oil industry in Rumania, in order to have a foothold of their "own." In 1907, 185,000,000 francs of foreign capital were invested in the Rumanian oil industry, of which 74,000,000 came from Germany.<sup>5</sup>

A struggle began, which in economic literature is fittingly called "the struggle for the division of the world." On one side, the Rockefeller trust, wishing to conquer *everything*, formed a subsidiary company *right in* Holland, and bought up oil wells in the Dutch Indies, in order to strike at its principal enemy, the Anglo-Dutch Shell trust. On the other side, the Deutsche Bank and the other German banks aimed at "retaining" Rumania "for themselves" and at uniting it with Russia against Rockefeller. The latter controlled far more capital and an excellent system of oil transport and distribution. The struggle had to end, and did end in 1907, with the utter defeat of the Deutsche Bank, which was confronted with the alternative: either to liquidate its oil business and lose millions, or to submit. It chose to submit, and concluded a very disadvantageous agreement with the American trust. The Deutsche Bank agreed "not to attempt anything which might injure American interests." Provision was made, however, for the annulment of the agreement in the event of Germany establishing a state oil monopoly.

Then the "comedy of oil" began. One of the German finance kings, von Gwinner, a director of the Deutsche Bank, began through his private secretary, Strauss, a campaign *for* a state oil monopoly. The gigantic machine of the big German bank and all its wide "connections" were set in motion. The press bubbled over with "patriotic" indignation against the "yoke" of the American trust, and, on March 15, 1911, the Reichstag by an almost unanimous vote, adopted a motion asking the government to intro-

<sup>4</sup> In Pennsylvania, chief oil region in U. S. at time of Jeidel's study.—*Ed.*

<sup>5</sup> Diouritch, *op. cit.*, p. 245.



duce a bill for the establishment of an oil monopoly. The government seized upon this "popular" idea, and the game of the Deutsche Bank, which hoped to cheat its American partner and improve its business by a state monopoly, appeared to have been won. The German oil magnates saw visions of wonderful profits, which would not be less than those of the Russian sugar refiners. ... But, firstly, the big German banks quarrelled among themselves over the division of the spoils. The Disconto-Gesellschaft exposed the covetous aims of the Deutsche Bank; secondly, the government took fright at the prospect of a struggle with Rockefeller; it was doubtful whether Germany could be sure of obtaining oil from other sources. (The Rumanian output was small.) Thirdly, just at that time the 1913 credits of a billion marks were voted for Germany's war preparations. The project of the oil monopoly was postponed. The Rockefeller trust came out of the struggle, for the time being, victorious.

The Berlin review, *Die Bank*, said in this connection that Germany could only fight the oil trust by establishing an electricity monopoly and by converting water power into cheap electricity.

"But," the author added, "the electricity monopoly will come when the producers need it, that is to say, on the eve of the next great crash in the electrical industry, and when the powerful, expensive electric stations which are now being put up at great cost everywhere by private electrical concerns, which obtain partial monopolies from the state, from towns, etc., can no longer work at a profit. Water power will then have to be used. But it will be impossible to convert it into cheap electricity at state expense; it will have to be handed over to a 'private monopoly controlled by the state,' because of the immense compensation and damages that would have to be paid to private industry.... So it was with the nitrate monopoly, so it is with the oil monopoly; so it will be with the electric power monopoly. It is time for our state socialists, who allow themselves to be blinded by beautiful principles, to understand once and for all that in Germany monopolies have never pursued the aim, nor have they had the result, of benefiting the consumer, or of handing over to the state part of the *entrepreneurs'* profits; they have served only to facilitate, at the expense of the state, the recovery of private industries which were on the verge of bankruptcy."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *Die Bank*, 1912, p. 1036; cf. also *ibid.*, p. 629 *et seq.*; 1913, I, p. 388.

Such are the valuable admissions which the German bourgeois economists are forced to make. We see plainly here how private monopolies and state monopolies are bound up together in the age of finance capital; how both are but separate links in the imperialist struggle between the big monopolists for the division of the world.

In mercantile shipping, the tremendous development of concentration has ended also in the division of the world. In Germany two powerful companies have raised themselves to first rank, the Hamburg-Amerika and the Norddeutscher Lloyd, each having a capital of 200,000,000 marks (in stocks and bonds) and possessing 185 to 189 million marks worth of shipping tonnage. On the other side, in America, on January 1, 1903, the Morgan trust, the International Mercantile Marine Co., was formed which united nine British and American steamship companies, and which controlled a capital of 120,000,000 dollars (480,000,000 marks). As early as 1903, the German giants and the Anglo-American trust concluded an agreement and divided the world in accordance with the division of profits. The German companies undertook not to compete in the Anglo-American traffic. The ports were carefully "allotted" to each; a joint committee of control was set up, etc. This contract was concluded for twenty years, with the prudent provision for its annulment in the event of war.<sup>7</sup>

Extremely instructive also is the story of the creation of the International Rail Cartel. The first attempt of the British, Belgian and German rail manufacturers to create such a cartel was made as early as 1884, at the time of a severe industrial depression. The manufacturers agreed not to compete with one another for the home markets of the countries involved, and they divided the foreign markets in the following quotas: Great Britain 66 per cent; Germany 27 per cent; Belgium 7 per cent. India was reserved entirely for Great Britain. Joint war was declared against a British firm which remained outside the cartel. The cost of this economic war was met by a percentage levy on all sales. But in 1886 the cartel collapsed when two British firms retired from it. It is characteristic that agreement could not be achieved in the period of industrial prosperity which followed.

<sup>7</sup> Riesser, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

At the beginning of 1904, the German steel syndicate was formed. In November 1904, the International Rail Cartel was revived, with the following quotas for foreign trade: England 53.5 per cent; Germany 28.83 per cent; Belgium 17.67 per cent. France came in later with 4.8 per cent, 5.8 per cent and 6.4 per cent in the first, second and third years respectively, in excess of the 100 per cent limit, *i.e.*, when the total was 104.8 per cent, etc. In 1905, the United States Steel Corporation entered the cartel; then Austria; then Spain.

"At the present time," wrote Vogelstein in 1910, "the division of the world is completed, and the big consumers, primarily the state railways—since the world has been parcelled out without consideration for their interests—can now dwell like the poet in the heaven of Jupiter."<sup>8</sup>

We will mention also the International Zinc Syndicate, established in 1909, which carefully apportioned output among three groups of factories: German, Belgian, French, Spanish and British. Then there is the International Dynamite Trust, of which Liefmann says that it is

"quite a modern, close alliance of all the manufacturers of explosives who, with the French and American dynamite manufacturers who have organised in a similar manner, have divided the whole world among themselves, so to speak."<sup>9</sup>

Liefmann calculated that in 1897 there were altogether about forty international cartels in which Germany had a share, while in 1910 there were about a hundred.

Certain bourgeois writers (with whom K. Kautsky, who has completely abandoned the Marxist position he held, for example, in 1909, has now associated himself) express the opinion that international cartels are the most striking expressions of the internationalisation of capital, and, therefore, give the hope of peace among nations under capitalism. Theoretically, this opinion is absurd, while in practice it is sophistry and a dishonest defence of the worst opportunism. International cartels show to what point

<sup>8</sup> Th. Vogelstein, *Organisationsformen (Forms of Organisation)*, p. 100.

<sup>9</sup> R. Liefmann, *Kartelle und Trusts*, second ed., p. 161.

capitalist monopolies have developed, and they *reveal the object* of the struggle between the various capitalist groups. This last circumstance is the most important; it alone shows us the historico-economic significance of events; for the *forms* of the struggle may and do constantly change in accordance with varying, relatively particular, and temporary causes, but the *essence* of the struggle, its class *content*, *cannot* change while classes exist. It is easy to understand, for example, that it is in the interests of the German bourgeoisie, whose theoretical arguments have now been adopted by Kautsky (we will deal with this later), to obscure the *content* of the present economic struggle (the division of the world) and to emphasise this or that *form* of the struggle. Kautsky makes the same mistake. Of course, we have in mind not only the German bourgeoisie, but the bourgeoisie all over the world. The capitalists divide the world, not out of any particular malice, but because the degree of concentration which has been reached forces them to adopt this method in order to get profits. And they divide it in proportion to "capital," in proportion to "strength," because there cannot be any other system of division under commodity production and capitalism. But strength varies with the degree of economic and political development. In order to understand what takes place, it is necessary to know what questions are settled by this change of forces. The question as to whether these changes are "purely" economic or *non-economic* (e.g., military) is a secondary one, which does not in the least affect the fundamental view on the latest epoch of capitalism. To substitute for the question of the *content* of the struggle and agreements between capitalist combines the question of the *form* of these struggles and agreements (today peaceful, tomorrow war-like, the next day war-like again) is to sink to the role of a sophist.

The epoch of modern capitalism shows us that certain relations are established between capitalist alliances, *based* on the economic division of the world; while parallel with this fact and in connection with it, certain relations are established between political alliances, between states, on the basis of the territorial division of the world, of the struggle for colonies, of the "struggle for economic territory."

## CHAPTER VI

# The Division of the World Among the Great Powers

IN his book, *The Territorial Development of the European Colonies*, A. Supan,<sup>1</sup> the geographer, gives the following brief summary of this development at the end of the nineteenth century:

### PERCENTAGE OF TERRITORIES BELONGING TO THE EUROPEAN COLONIAL POWERS (*Including United States*)

|           | 1876  | 1900  | INCREASE OR<br>DECREASE |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------------------------|
| Africa    | 10.8  | 90.4  | + 79.6                  |
| Polynesia | 56.8  | 98.9  | + 42.1                  |
| Asia      | 51.5  | 56.6  | + 5.1                   |
| Australia | 100.0 | 100.0 | —                       |
| America   | 27.5  | 27.2  | — 0.3                   |

"The characteristic feature of this period," he concludes, "is therefore, the division of Africa and Polynesia."

As there are no unoccupied territories—that is, territories that do not belong to any state—in Asia and America, Mr. Supan's conclusion must be carried further, and we must say that the characteristic feature of this period is the final partition of the globe—not in the sense that a *new* partition is impossible—on the contrary, new partitions are possible and inevitable—but in the sense that the colonial policy of the capitalist countries has *completed* the seizure of the unoccupied territories on our planet. For the first time the world is completely divided up, so that in the future *only* redivision is possible; territories can only pass from one "owner" to another, instead of passing as unowned territory to an "owner."

Hence, we are passing through a peculiar period of world colonial

<sup>1</sup> A. Supan, *Die territoriale Entwicklung der europäischen Kolonien*, Gotha, 1906. p. 254.

policy, which is closely associated with the "latest stage in the development of capitalism," with finance capital. For this reason, it is essential first of all to deal in detail with the facts, in order to ascertain exactly what distinguishes this period from those preceding it, and what the present situation is. In the first place, two questions of fact arise here. Is an intensification of colonial policy, an intensification of the struggle for colonies, observed precisely in this period of finance capital? And how, in this respect, is the world divided at the present time?

The American writer, Morris, in his book on the history of colonisation,<sup>2</sup> has made an attempt to compile data on the colonial possessions of Great Britain, France and Germany during different periods of the nineteenth century. The following is a brief summary of the results he has obtained:

### COLONIAL POSSESSIONS

(*Million square miles and million inhabitants*)

|         | GREAT BRITAIN |       | FRANCE |      | GERMANY |      |
|---------|---------------|-------|--------|------|---------|------|
|         | AREA          | POP.  | AREA   | POP. | AREA    | POP. |
| 1815-30 | ?             | 126.4 | 0.02   | 0.5  | —       | —    |
| 1860    | 2.5           | 145.1 | 0.2    | 3.4  | —       | —    |
| 1880    | 7.7           | 267.9 | 0.7    | 7.5  | —       | —    |
| 1899    | 9.3           | 309.0 | 3.7    | 56.4 | 1.0     | 14.7 |

For Great Britain, the period of the enormous expansion of colonial conquests is that between 1860 and 1880, and it was also very considerable in the last twenty years of the nineteenth century. For France and Germany this period falls precisely in these last twenty years. We saw above that the apex of pre-monopoly capitalist development, of capitalism in which free competition was predominant, was reached in the 'sixties and 'seventies of the last century. We now see that it is *precisely after that period* that the "boom" in colonial annexations begins, and that the struggle for the territorial division of the world becomes extraordinarily keen. It is beyond doubt, therefore, that capitalism's transition to the

<sup>2</sup> Henry C. Morris, *The History of Colonisation*, New York, 1900, II, p. 88; I, pp. 304, 412.

stage of monopoly capitalism, to finance capital, is *bound up* with the intensification of the struggle for the partition of the world.

Hobson, in his work on imperialism, marks the years 1884-1900 as the period of the intensification of the colonial "expansion" of the chief European states. According to his estimate, Great Britain during these years acquired 3,700,000 square miles of territory with a population of 57,000,000; France acquired 3,600,000 square miles with a population of 36,500,000; Germany 1,000,000 square miles with a population of 16,700,000; Belgium 900,000 square miles with 30,000,000 inhabitants; Portugal 800,000 square miles with 9,000,000 inhabitants. The quest for colonies by all the capitalist states at the end of the nineteenth century and particularly since the 1880's is a commonly known fact in the history of diplomacy and of foreign affairs.

When free competition in Great Britain was at its zenith, *i.e.*, between 1840 and 1860, the leading British bourgeois politicians were opposed to colonial policy and were of the opinion that the liberation of the colonies and their complete separation from Britain was inevitable and desirable. M. Beer, in an article, "Modern British Imperialism,"<sup>3</sup> published in 1898, shows that in 1852, Disraeli, a statesman generally inclined towards imperialism, declared: "The colonies are millstones round our necks." But at the end of the nineteenth century the heroes of the hour in England were Cecil Rhodes and Joseph Chamberlain, open advocates of imperialism, who applied the imperialist policy in the most cynical manner.

It is not without interest to observe that even at that time these leading British bourgeois politicians fully appreciated the connection between what might be called the purely economic and the politico-social roots of modern imperialism. Chamberlain advocated imperialism by calling it a "true, wise and economical policy," and he pointed particularly to the German, American and Belgian competition which Great Britain was encountering in the world market. Salvation lies in monopolies, said the capitalists as they formed cartels, syndicates and trusts. Salvation lies in monopolies, echoed the political leaders of the bourgeoisie, hastening to appro-

<sup>3</sup> *Die Neue Zeit*, XVI, I, 1898, p. 302.

prate the parts of the world not yet shared out. The journalist, Stead, relates the following remarks uttered by his close friend Cecil Rhodes, in 1895, regarding his imperialist ideas:

"I was in the East End of London yesterday and attended a meeting of the unemployed. I listened to the wild speeches, which were just a cry for 'bread,' 'bread,' 'bread,' and on my way home I pondered over the scene and I became more than ever convinced of the importance of imperialism.... My cherished idea is a solution for the social problem, *i.e.*, in order to save the 40,000,000 inhabitants of the United Kingdom from a bloody civil war, we colonial statesmen must acquire new lands to settle the surplus population, to provide new markets for the goods produced by them in the factories and mines. The Empire, as I have always said, is a bread and butter question. If you want to avoid civil war, you must become imperialists."<sup>4</sup>

This is what Cecil Rhodes, millionaire, king of finance, the man who was mainly responsible for the Boer War, said in 1895. His defence of imperialism is just crude and cynical, but in substance it does not differ from the "theory" advocated by Messrs. Maslov, Südekum, Potresov, David, and the founder of Russian Marxism and others. Cecil Rhodes was a somewhat more honest social-chauvinist.

To tabulate as exactly as possible the territorial division of the world, and the changes which have occurred during the last decades, we will take the data furnished by Supan in the work already quoted on the colonial possessions of all the powers of the world. Supan examines the years 1876 and 1900; we will take the year 1876—a year aptly selected, for it is precisely at that time that the pre-monopolist stage of development of West European capitalism can be said to have been completed, in the main, and we will take the year 1914, and in place of Supan's figures we will quote the more recent statistics of Hübner's *Geographical and Statistical Tables*. Supan gives figures only for colonies: we think it useful in order to present a complete picture of the division of the world to add brief figures on non-colonial and semi-colonial countries like Persia, China and Turkey. Persia is already almost

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 304.



completely a colony; China and Turkey are on the way to becoming colonies. We thus get the following summary:

### COLONIAL POSSESSIONS OF THE GREAT POWERS

*(Million square kilometres and million inhabitants)*

|   | COLONIES |       |      |       | HOME COUNTRIES |       | TOTAL |       |
|---|----------|-------|------|-------|----------------|-------|-------|-------|
|   | 1876     |       | 1914 |       | 1914           |       | 1914  |       |
|   | AREA     | POP.  | AREA | POP.  | AREA           | POP.  | AREA  | POP.  |
| Great Britain                                     | 22.5     | 251.9 | 33.5 | 393.5 | 0.3            | 46.5  | 33.8  | 440.0 |
| Russia  | 17.0     | 15.9  | 17.4 | 33.2  | 5.4            | 136.2 | 22.8  | 169.4 |
| France  | 0.9      | 6.0   | 10.6 | 55.5  | 0.5            | 39.6  | 11.1  | 95.1  |
| Germany   | —        | —     | 2.9  | 12.3  | 0.5            | 64.9  | 3.4   | 77.2  |
| U.S.A.  | —        | —     | 0.3  | 9.7   | 9.4            | 97.0  | 9.7   | 106.7 |
| Japan   | —        | —     | 0.3  | 19.2  | 0.4            | 53.0  | 0.7   | 72.2  |
| Total   | 40.4     | 273.8 | 65.0 | 523.4 | 16.5           | 437.2 | 81.5  | 960.6 |
| Colonies of other powers (Belgium, Holland, etc.) |          |       |      |       |                |       | 9.9   | 45.3  |
| Semi-colonial countries (Persia, China, Turkey)   |          |       |      |       |                |       | 14.5  | 361.2 |
| Other countries                                   |          |       |      |       |                |       | 28.0  | 289.9 |

Total area and population of the world

133.9 1,657.0

We see from these figures how "complete" was the partition of the world at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. After 1876 colonial possessions increased to an enormous degree, more than one and a half times, from 40,000,000 to 65,000,000 square kilometres in area for the six biggest powers, an increase of 25,000,000 square kilometres, that is, one and a half times greater than the area of the "home" countries, which have a total of 16,500,000 square kilometres. In 1876 three powers had no colonies, and a fourth, France, had scarcely any. In 1914 these four powers had 14,100,000 square kilometres of colonies, or an area one and a half times greater than that of Europe, with a population of nearly 100,000,000. The unevenness in the rate of expansion of colonial possessions is very marked. If, for instance, we compare France, Germany and Japan, which do not differ very much in area and population, we will see that the first has annexed almost three times as much colonial territory as the other two combined. In regard to finance capital, also, France, at the beginning of the period we are considering, was perhaps several times richer

than Germany and Japan put together. In addition to, and on the basis of, purely economic causes, geographical conditions and other factors also affect the dimensions of colonial possessions. However strong the process of levelling the world, of levelling the economic and living conditions in different countries, may have been in the past decades as a result of the pressure of large-scale industry, exchange and finance capital, great differences still remain; and among the six powers, we see, firstly, young capitalist powers (America, Germany, Japan) which progressed very rapidly; secondly, countries with an old capitalist development (France and Great Britain), which, of late, have made much slower progress than the previously mentioned countries, and, thirdly, a country (Russia) which is economically most backward, in which modern capitalist imperialism is enmeshed, so to speak, in a particularly close network of pre-capitalist relations.

Alongside the colonial possessions of these great powers, we have placed the small colonies of the small states, which are, so to speak, the next possible and probable objects of a new colonial "share-out." Most of these little states are able to retain their colonies only because of the conflicting interests, frictions, etc., among the big powers, which prevent them from coming to an agreement in regard to the division of the spoils. The "semi-colonial states" provide an example of the transitional forms which are to be found in all spheres of nature and society. Finance capital is such a great, it may be said, such a decisive force in all economic and international relations, that it is capable of subordinating to itself, and actually does subordinate to itself, even states enjoying complete political independence. We shall shortly see examples of this. Naturally, however, finance capital finds it most "convenient," and is able to extract the greatest profit from a subordination which involves the loss of the political independence of the subjected countries and peoples. In this connection, the semi-colonial countries provide a typical example of the "middle stage." It is natural that the struggle for these semi-dependent countries should have become particularly bitter during the period of finance capital, when the rest of the world had already been divided up.

Colonial policy and imperialism existed before this latest stage

of capitalism, and even before capitalism. Rome, founded on slavery, pursued a colonial policy and achieved imperialism. But "general" arguments about imperialism, which ignore, or put into the background the fundamental difference of social-economic systems, inevitably degenerate into absolutely empty banalities, or into grandiloquent comparisons like "Greater Rome and Greater Britain."<sup>5</sup> Even the colonial policy of capitalism in its *previous* stages is essentially different from the colonial policy of finance capital.

The principal feature of modern capitalism is the domination of monopolist combines of the big capitalists. These monopolies are most firmly established when *all* the sources of raw materials are controlled by the one group. And we have seen with what zeal the international capitalist combines exert every effort to make it impossible for their rivals to compete with them; for example, by buying up mineral lands, oil fields, etc. Colonial possession alone gives complete guarantee of success to the monopolies against all the risks of the struggle with competitors, including the risk that the latter will defend themselves by means of a law establishing a state monopoly. The more capitalism is developed, the more the need for raw materials is felt, the more bitter competition becomes, and the more feverishly the hunt for raw materials proceeds throughout the whole world, the more desperate becomes the struggle for the acquisition of colonies.

Schilder writes:

"It may even be asserted, although it may sound paradoxical to some, that in the more or less discernible future the growth of the urban industrial population is more likely to be hindered by a shortage of raw materials for industry than by a shortage of food."

For example, there is a growing shortage of timber—the price of which is steadily rising—of leather, and raw materials for the textile industry.

<sup>5</sup> A reference to the book by C. P. Lucas, *Greater Rome and Greater Britain*, Oxford 1912, or the Earl of Cromer's *Ancient and Modern Imperialism*, London, 1910.

"As instances of the efforts of associations of manufacturers to create an equilibrium between industry and agriculture in world economy as a whole, we might mention the International Federation of Cotton Spinners' Associations in the most important industrial countries, founded in 1904, and the European Federation of Flax Spinners' Associations, founded on the same model in 1910."<sup>6</sup>

The bourgeois reformists, and among them particularly the present-day adherents of Kautsky, of course, try to belittle the importance of facts of this kind by arguing that it "would be possible" to obtain raw materials in the open market without a "costly and dangerous" colonial policy; and that it would be "possible" to increase the supply of raw materials to an enormous extent "simply" by improving agriculture. But these arguments are merely an apology for imperialism, an attempt to embellish it, because they ignore the principal feature of modern capitalism: monopoly. Free markets are becoming more and more a thing of the past; monopolist syndicates and trusts are restricting them more and more every day, and "simply" improving agriculture reduces itself to improving the conditions of the masses, to raising wages and reducing profits. Where, except in the imagination of the sentimental reformists, are there any trusts capable of interesting themselves in the condition of the masses instead of the conquest of colonies?

Finance capital is not only interested in the already known sources of raw materials; it is also interested in potential sources of raw materials, because present-day technical development is extremely rapid, and because land which is useless today may be made fertile tomorrow if new methods are applied (to devise these new methods a big bank can equip a whole expedition of engineers, agricultural experts, etc.), and large amounts of capital are invested. This also applies to prospecting for minerals, to new methods of working up and utilising raw materials, etc., etc. Hence, the inevitable striving of finance capital to extend its economic territory and even its territory in general. In the same way that the trusts capitalise their property by estimating it at two or three times its value, taking into account its "potential" (and

<sup>6</sup> Schilder, *op. cit.*, pp. 38 and 42.

not present) returns, and the further results of monopoly, so finance capital strives to seize the largest possible amount of land of all kinds and in any place it can, and by any means, counting on the possibilities of finding raw materials there, and fearing to be left behind in the insensate struggle for the last available scraps of undivided territory, or for the repartition of that which has been already divided.

The British capitalists are exerting every effort to develop cotton growing in *their* colony, Egypt (in 1904, out of 2,300,000 hectares of land under cultivation, 600,000, or more than one-fourth, were devoted to cotton growing); the Russians are doing the same in *their* colony, Turkestan; and they are doing so because in this way they will be in a better position to defeat their foreign competitors, to monopolise the sources of raw materials and form a more economical and profitable textile trust in which *all* the processes of cotton production and manufacturing will be "combined" and concentrated in the hands of a single owner.

The necessity of exporting capital also gives an impetus to the conquest of colonies, for in the colonial market it is easier to eliminate competition, to make sure of orders, to strengthen the necessary "connections," etc., by monopolist methods (and sometimes it is the only possible way).

The non-economic superstructure which grows up on the basis of finance capital, its politics and its ideology, stimulates the striving for colonial conquest. "Finance capital does not want liberty, it wants domination," as Hilferding very truly says. And a French bourgeois writer, developing and supplementing, as it were, the ideas of Cecil Rhodes, which we quoted above, writes that social causes should be added to the economic causes of modern colonial policy.

"Owing to the growing difficulties of life which weigh not only on the masses of the workers, but also on the middle classes, impatience, irritation and hatred are accumulating in all the countries of the old civilisation and are becoming a menace to public order; employment must be found for the energy which is being hurled out of the definite

class channel; it must be given an outlet abroad in order to avert an explosion at home."<sup>7</sup>

Since we are speaking of colonial policy in the period of capitalist imperialism, it must be observed that finance capital and its corresponding foreign policy, which reduces itself to the struggle of the Great Powers for the economic and political division of the world, give rise to a number of *transitional* forms of national dependence. The division of the world into two main groups—of colony-owning countries on the one hand and colonies on the other—is not the only typical feature of this period; there is also a variety of forms of dependent countries; countries which, officially, are politically independent, but which are, in fact, enmeshed in the net of financial and diplomatic dependence. We have already referred to one form of dependence—the semi-colony. Another example is provided by Argentina.

"South America, and especially Argentina," writes Schulze-Gaevernitz in his work on British imperialism, "is so dependent financially on London that it ought to be described as almost a British commercial colony."<sup>8</sup>

Basing himself on the report of the Austro-Hungarian consul at Buenos Aires for 1909, Schilder estimates the amount of British capital invested in Argentina at 8,750,000,000 francs. It is not difficult to imagine the solid bonds that are thus created between British finance capital (and its faithful "friend," diplomacy) and the Argentine bourgeoisie, with the leading businessmen and politicians of that country.

A somewhat different form of financial and diplomatic dependence, accompanied by political independence, is presented by Portugal. Portugal is an independent sovereign state. In actual fact, however, for more than two hundred years, since the war of the

<sup>7</sup> Wahl, *La France aux colonies* (*France in the Colonies*), quoted by Henri Bussier, *Le partage de l'Océanie* (*The Partition of Oceania*), Paris, 1905, pp. 165-66.

<sup>8</sup> Schulze-Gaevernitz, *Britischer Imperialismus und englischer Freihandel zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts* (*British Imperialism and English Free Trade at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century*), Leipzig, 1906, p. 318. Sartorius von Waltershausen says the same in *Das volkswirtschaftliche System der Kapitalanlage im Auslande* (*The National Economic System of Capital Investments Abroad*), Berlin, 1907, p. 46.

Spanish Succession (1700-14), it has been a British protectorate. Great Britain has protected Portugal and her colonies in order to fortify her own positions in the fight against her rivals, Spain and France. In return she has received commercial advantages, preferential import of goods, and, above all, of capital into Portugal and the Portuguese colonies, the right to use the ports and islands of Portugal, her telegraph cables, etc.<sup>9</sup> Relations of this kind have always existed between big and little states. But during the period of capitalist imperialism they become a general system, they form part of the process of "dividing the world"; they become a link in the chain of operations of world finance capital.

In order to complete our examination of the question of the division of the world, we must make the following observation. This question was raised quite openly and definitely not only in American literature after the Spanish-American War, and in English literature after the Boer War, at the very end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth; not only has German literature, which always "jealously" watches "British imperialism," systematically given its appraisal of this fact, but it has also been raised in French bourgeois literature in terms as wide and clear as they can be made from the bourgeois point of view. We will quote Driault, the historian, who, in his book, *Political and Social Problems at the End of the Nineteenth Century*, in the chapter "The Great Powers and the Division of the World," wrote the following:

"During recent years, all the free territory of the globe, with the exception of China, has been occupied by the powers of Europe and North America. Several conflicts and displacements of influence have already occurred over this matter, which foreshadow more terrible outbreaks in the near future. For it is necessary to make haste. The nations which have not yet made provisions for themselves run the risk of never receiving their share and never participating in the tremendous exploitation of the globe which will be one of the essential features of the next century" (*i.e.*, the twentieth). "That is why all Europe and America has lately been afflicted with the fever of colonial

<sup>9</sup> Schilder, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 159-61.

expansion, of 'imperialism,' that most characteristic feature of the end of the nineteenth century."

And the author added:

"In this partition of the world, in this furious pursuit of the treasures and of the big markets of the globe, the relative power of the empires founded in this nineteenth century is totally out of proportion to the place occupied in Europe by the nations which founded them. The dominant powers in Europe, those which decide the destinies of the Continent, are *not* equally preponderant in the whole world. And, as colonial power, the hope of controlling hitherto unknown wealth, will obviously react to influence the relative strength of the European powers, the colonial question—'imperialism,' if you will—which has already modified the political conditions of Europe, will modify them more and more."<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Ed. Driault, *Problèmes politiques et sociaux*, Paris, 1907, p. 289.



## CHAPTER VII

# Imperialism as a Special Stage of Capitalism

WE must now try to sum up and put together what has been said above on the subject of imperialism. Imperialism emerged as the development and direct continuation of the fundamental attributes of capitalism in general. But capitalism only became capitalist imperialism at a definite and very high stage of its development, when certain of its fundamental attributes began to be transformed into their opposites, when the features of a period of transition from capitalism to a higher social and economic system began to take shape and reveal themselves all along the line. Economically, the main thing in this process is the substitution of capitalist monopolies for capitalist free competition. Free competition is the fundamental attribute of capitalism, and of commodity production generally. Monopoly is exactly the opposite of free competition; but we have seen the latter being transformed into monopoly before our very eyes, creating large-scale industry and eliminating small industry, replacing large-scale industry by still larger-scale industry, finally leading to such a concentration of production and capital that monopoly has been and is the result: cartels, syndicates and trusts, and merging with them, the capital of a dozen or so banks manipulating thousands of millions. At the same time monopoly, which has grown out of free competition, does not abolish the latter, but exists over it and alongside of it, and thereby gives rise to a number of very acute, intense antagonisms, friction and conflicts. Monopoly is the transition from capitalism to a higher system.

If it were necessary to give the briefest possible definition of imperialism we should have to say that imperialism is the monopoly stage of capitalism. Such a definition would include what is most

important, for, on the one hand, finance capital is the bank capital of a few big monopolist banks, merged with the capital of the monopolist combines of manufacturers; and, on the other hand, the division of the world is the transition from a colonial policy which has extended without hindrance to territories unoccupied by any capitalist power, to a colonial policy of monopolistic possession of the territory of the world which has been completely divided up.

But very brief definitions, although convenient, for they sum up the main points, are nevertheless inadequate, because very important features of the phenomenon that has to be defined have to be especially deduced. And so, without forgetting the conditional and relative value of all definitions, which can never include all the concatenations of a phenomenon in its complete development, we must give a definition of imperialism that will embrace the following five essential features:

- 1) The concentration of production and capital developed to such a high stage that it created monopolies which play a decisive role in economic life.
- 2) The merging of bank capital with industrial capital, and the creation, on the basis of this "finance capital," of a "financial oligarchy."
- 3) The export of capital, which has become extremely important, as distinguished from the export of commodities.
- 4) The formation of international capitalist monopolies which share the world among themselves.
- 5) The territorial division of the whole world among the greatest capitalist powers is completed.

Imperialism is capitalism in that stage of development in which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital has established itself; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun; in which the division of all territories of the globe among the great capitalist powers has been completed.

We shall see later that imperialism can and must be defined differently if consideration is to be given, not only to the basic, purely economic factors—to which the above definition is limited—

but also to the historical place of this stage of capitalism in relation to capitalism in general, or to the relations between imperialism and the two main trends in the working class movement. The point to be noted just now is that imperialism, as interpreted above, undoubtedly represents a special stage in the development of capitalism. In order to enable the reader to obtain as well grounded an idea of imperialism as possible, we deliberately quoted largely from *bourgeois* economists who are obliged to admit the particularly incontrovertible facts regarding modern capitalist economy. With the same object in view, we have produced detailed statistics which reveal the extent to which bank capital, etc., has developed, showing how the transformation of quantity into quality, of developed capitalism into imperialism, has expressed itself. Needless to say, all boundaries in nature and in society are conditional and changeable, and, consequently, it would be absurd to discuss the exact year or the decade in which imperialism "definitely" became established.

In this matter of defining imperialism, however, we have to enter into controversy, primarily, with K. Kautsky, the principal Marxian theoretician of the epoch of the so-called Second International—that is, of the twenty-five years between 1889 and 1914.

Kautsky, in 1915 and even in November 1914, very emphatically attacked the fundamental ideas expressed in our definition of imperialism. Kautsky said that imperialism must not be regarded as a "phase" or stage of economy, but as a policy; a definite policy "preferred" by finance capital; that imperialism cannot be "identified" with "contemporary capitalism"; that if imperialism is to be understood to mean "all the phenomena of contemporary capitalism"—cartels, protection, the domination of the financiers and colonial policy—then the question as to whether imperialism is necessary to capitalism becomes reduced to the "flattest tautology"; because, in that case, "imperialism is naturally a vital necessity for capitalism," and so on. The best way to present Kautsky's ideas is to quote his own definition of imperialism, which is diametrically opposed to the substance of the ideas which we have set forth (for the objections coming from the camp of the German Marxists, who have been advocating such ideas for many years already, have

been long known to Kautsky as the objections of a definite trend in Marxism).

Kautsky's definition is as follows:

"Imperialism is a product of highly developed industrial capitalism. It consists in the striving of every industrial capitalist nation to bring under its control and to annex increasingly big *agrarian*" (Kautsky's italics) "regions irrespective of what nations inhabit those regions."<sup>1</sup>

This definition is utterly worthless because it one-sidedly, *i.e.*, arbitrarily, brings out the national question alone (although this is extremely important in itself as well as in its relation to imperialism), it arbitrarily and *inaccurately* relates this question *only* to industrial capital in the countries which annex other nations, and in an equally arbitrary and inaccurate manner brings out the annexation of agrarian regions.

Imperialism is a striving for annexations—this is what the *political* part of Kautsky's definition amounts to. It is correct, but very incomplete, for politically, imperialism is, in general, a striving towards violence and reaction. For the moment, however, we are interested in the *economic* aspect of the question, which Kautsky *himself* introduced into *his* definition. The inaccuracy of Kautsky's definition is strikingly obvious. The characteristic feature of imperialism is *not* industrial capital, *but* finance capital. It is not an accident that in France it was precisely the extraordinarily rapid development of *finance* capital, and the weakening of industrial capital, that, from 1880 onwards, gave rise to the extreme extension of annexationist (colonial) policy. The characteristic feature of imperialism is precisely that it strives to annex *not only* agricultural regions, but even highly industrialised regions (German appetite for Belgium; French appetite for Lorraine), because 1) the fact that the world is already divided up obliges those contemplating a *new* division to reach out for *any kind* of territory, and 2) because an essential feature of imperialism is the rivalry between a number of great powers in the striving for hegemony, *i.e.*, for the conquest of territory, not so much directly

<sup>1</sup> *Die Neue Zeit*, 32nd year (1913-14), II, p. 909; *cf.* also 34th year (1915-16), II, p. 107 *et seq.*

for themselves as to weaken the adversary and undermine *his* hegemony. (Belgium is chiefly necessary to Germany as a base for operations against England; England needs Bagdad as a base for operations against Germany, etc.)

Kautsky refers especially—and repeatedly—to English writers who, he alleges, have given a purely political meaning to the word “imperialism” in the sense that Kautsky understands it. We take up the work by the Englishman Hobson, *Imperialism*, which appeared in 1902, and therein we read:

“The new imperialism differs from the older, first, in substituting for the ambition of a single growing empire the theory and the practice of competing empires, each motivated by similar lusts of political aggrandisement and commercial gain; secondly, in the dominance of financial or investing over mercantile interests.”<sup>2</sup>

We see, therefore, that Kautsky is absolutely wrong in referring to English writers generally (unless he meant the vulgar English imperialist writers, or the avowed apologists for imperialism). We see that Kautsky, while claiming that he continues to defend Marxism, as a matter of fact takes a step backward compared with the *social-liberal* Hobson, who *more correctly* takes into account two “historically concrete” (Kautsky’s definition is a mockery of historical concreteness) features of modern imperialism: 1) the competition between *several* imperialisms, and 2) the predominance of the financier over the merchant. If it were chiefly a question of the annexation of agrarian countries by industrial countries, the role of the merchant would be predominant.

Kautsky’s definition is not only wrong and un-Marxian. It serves as a basis for a whole system of views which run counter to Marxian theory and Marxian practice all along the line. We shall refer to this again later. The argument about words which Kautsky raises as to whether the modern stage of capitalism should be called “imperialism” or “the stage of finance capital” is of no importance. Call it what you will, it matters little. The fact of the matter is that Kautsky detaches the politics of imperialism from its economics, speaks of annexations as being a policy “preferred”

<sup>2</sup> J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism—a Study*, London, 1902, p. 324.

by finance capital, and opposes to it another bourgeois policy which, he alleges, is possible on this very basis of finance capital. According to his argument, monopolies in economics are compatible with non-monopolistic, non-violent, non-annexationist methods in politics. According to his argument, the territorial division of the world, which was completed precisely during the period of finance capital, and which constitutes the basis of the present peculiar forms of rivalry between the biggest capitalist states, is compatible with a non-imperialist policy. The result is a slurring-over and a blunting of the most profound contradictions of the latest stage of capitalism, instead of an exposure of their depth; the result is bourgeois reformism instead of Marxism.

Kautsky enters into controversy with the German apologist of imperialism and annexations, Cunow, who clumsily and cynically argues that: imperialism is modern capitalism, the development of capitalism is inevitable and progressive; therefore imperialism is progressive; therefore, we should cringe before and eulogise it. This is something like the caricature of Russian Marxism which the Narodniki drew in 1894-95. They used to argue as follows: if the Marxists believe that capitalism is inevitable in Russia, that it is progressive, then they ought to open a public-house and begin to implant capitalism! Kautsky's reply to Cunow is as follows: imperialism is not modern capitalism. It is only one of the forms of the policy of modern capitalism. This policy we can and should fight; we can and should fight against imperialism, annexations, etc.

The reply seems quite plausible, but in effect it is a more subtle and more disguised (and therefore more dangerous) propaganda of conciliation with imperialism; for unless it strikes at the economic basis of the trusts and banks, the "struggle" against the policy of the trusts and banks reduces itself to bourgeois reformism and pacifism, to an innocent and benevolent expression of pious hopes. Kautsky's theory means refraining from mentioning existing contradictions, forgetting the most important of them, instead of revealing them in their full depth; it is a theory that has nothing in common with Marxism. Naturally, such a "theory" can only serve the purpose of advocating unity with the Cunows.

Kautsky writes: "from the purely economic point of view it is

not impossible that capitalism will yet go through a new phase, that of the extension of the policy of the cartels to foreign policy, the phase of ultra-imperialism,"<sup>3</sup> *i.e.*, of a super-imperialism, a union of world imperialisms and not struggles among imperialisms; a phase when wars shall cease under capitalism, a phase of "the joint exploitation of the world by internationally combined finance capital."<sup>4</sup>

We shall have to deal with this "theory of ultra-imperialism" later on in order to show in detail how definitely and utterly it departs from Marxism. In keeping with the plan of the present work, we shall examine the exact economic data on this question. Is "ultra-imperialism" possible "from the purely economic point of view" or is it ultra-nonsense?

If, by purely economic point of view a "pure" abstraction is meant, then all that can be said reduces itself to the following proposition: evolution is proceeding towards monopoly; therefore the trend is towards a single world monopoly, to a universal trust. This is indisputable, but it is also as completely meaningless as is the statement that "evolution is proceeding" towards the manufacture of foodstuffs in laboratories. In this sense the "theory" of ultra-imperialism is no less absurd than a "theory of ultra-agriculture" would be.

If, on the other hand, we are discussing the "purely economic" conditions of the epoch of finance capital as an historically concrete epoch which opened at the beginning of the twentieth century, then the best reply that one can make to the lifeless abstractions of "ultra-imperialism" (which serve an exclusively reactionary aim: that of diverting attention from the depth of *existing* antagonisms) is to contrast them with the concrete economic realities of present-day world economy. Kautsky's utterly meaningless talk about ultra-imperialism encourages, among other things, that profoundly mistaken idea which only brings grist to the mill of the apologists of imperialism, *viz.*, that the rule of finance capital *lessens* the

<sup>3</sup> *Die Neue Zeit*, 32nd year (1913-14), II, Sept. 11, 1914, p. 909; *cf.* also 34th year (1915-16), II, p. 107 *et seq.*

<sup>4</sup> *Die Neue Zeit*, 33rd year, II (April 30, 1915), p. 144.

unevenness and contradictions inherent in world economy, whereas in reality it *increases* them.

R. Calwer, in his little book, *An Introduction to World Economics*,<sup>5</sup> attempted to compile the main, purely economic, data required to understand in a concrete way the internal relations of world economy at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. He divides the world into five "main economic areas," as follows: 1) Central Europe (the whole of Europe with the exception of Russia and Great Britain); 2) Great Britain; 3) Russia; 4) Eastern Asia; 5) America; he includes the colonies in the "areas" of the state to which they belong and "leaves out" a few countries not distributed according to areas, such as Persia, Afghanistan and Arabia in Asia; Morocco and Abyssinia in Africa, etc.

Here is a brief summary of the economic data he quotes on these regions:

|                                | Area                        | Pop.         | Transport                | Trade                                 | Industry                                     |                                     |   |  |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|---|--|
|                                |                             |              |                          |                                       |  |                                     |   |  |
| PRINCIPAL<br>ECONOMIC<br>AREAS | MILLION<br>SQ. KM.          | MILLIONS     | RAILWAYS<br>(THOUS. KM.) | MERCANTILE<br>FLEET<br>(MILLION TONS) | IMPORTS AND<br>EXPORTS<br>(BILLION<br>MARKS) | OUTPUT OF<br>COAL (MILLION<br>TONS) | OUTPUT OF PIG<br>IRON<br>(MILLION TONS) | NO. OF COTTON<br>SPINDLES<br>(MILLION) |
| 1) Central<br>European         | 27.6<br>(23.6) <sup>6</sup> | 388<br>(146) | 204                      | 8                                     | 41   | 251                                 | 15                                      | 26                                     |
| 2) British                     | 28.9<br>(28.6) <sup>6</sup> | 398<br>(355) | 140                      | 11                                    | 25   | 249                                 | 9                                       | 51                                     |
| 3) Russian                     | 22                          | 131          | 63                       | 1                                     | 3  | 16                                  | 3                                       | 7                                      |
| 4) East Asian                  | 12                          | 389          | 8                        | 1                                     | 2  | 8                                   | 0.02                                    | 2                                      |
| 5) American                    | 30                          | 148          | 379                      | 6                                     | 14   | 245                                 | 14                                      | 19                                     |

We notice three areas of highly developed capitalism with a high development of means of transport, of trade and of industry, the Central European, the British and the American areas. Among these are three states which dominate the world: Germany, Great Britain, the United States. Imperialist rivalry and the struggle between these countries have become very keen because Germany

<sup>5</sup> R. Calwer, *Einführung in die Weltwirtschaft*, Berlin, 1906.

<sup>6</sup> The figures in parentheses show the area and population of the colonies.



has only a restricted area and few colonies (the creation of "Central Europe" is still a matter for the future; it is being born in the midst of desperate struggles). For the moment the distinctive feature of Europe is political disintegration. In the British and American areas, on the other hand, political concentration is very highly developed, but there is a tremendous disparity between the immense colonies of the one and the insignificant colonies of the other. In the colonies, capitalism is only beginning to develop. The struggle for South America is becoming more and more acute.

There are two areas where capitalism is not strongly developed: Russia and Eastern Asia. In the former, the density of population is very low, in the latter it is very high; in the former political concentration is very high, in the latter it does not exist. The partition of China is only beginning, and the struggle between Japan, U.S.A., etc., in connection therewith is continually gaining in intensity.

Compare this reality, the vast diversity of economic and political conditions, the extreme disparity in the rate of development of the various countries, etc., and the violent struggles of the imperialist states, with Kautsky's silly little fable about "peaceful" ultra-imperialism. Is this not the reactionary attempt of a frightened philistine to hide from stern reality? Are not the international cartels which Kautsky imagines are the embryos of "ultra-imperialism" (with as much reason as one would have for describing the manufacture of tabloids in a laboratory as ultra-agriculture in embryo) an example of the division and the *redivision* of the world, the transition from peaceful division to non-peaceful division and *vice versa*? Is not American and other finance capital, which divided the whole world peacefully, with Germany's participation, for example, in the international rail syndicate, or in the international mercantile shipping trust, now engaged in *redividing* the world on the basis of a new relation of forces, which has been changed by methods *by no means* peaceful?

Finance capital and the trusts are increasing instead of diminishing the differences in the rate of development of the various parts of world economy. When the relation of forces is changed, how else, *under capitalism*, can the solution of contradictions be found,

except by resorting to *violence*? Railway statistics<sup>7</sup> provide remarkably exact data on the different rates of development of capitalism and finance capital in world economy. In the last decades of imperialist development, the total length of railways has changed as follows:

RAILWAYS (*thousand kilometres*)

|   | 1890 | 1913  | INCREASE |
|---|------|-------|----------|
| Europe  | 224  | 346   | 122      |
| U.S.A.  | 268  | 411   | 143      |
| Colonies (total)  | 82   | 210   | 128      |
| Independent and semi-dependent states of Asia and America | 43   | 137   | 94       |
|   | 125  | 347   | 222      |
| Total   | 617  | 1,104 |          |

Thus, the development of railways has been more rapid in the colonies and in the independent (and semi-dependent) states of Asia and America. Here, as we know, the finance capital of the four or five biggest capitalist states reigns undisputed. Two hundred thousand kilometres of new railways in the colonies and in the other countries of Asia and America represent more than 40,000,000,000 marks in capital, newly invested on particularly advantageous terms, with special guarantees of a good return and with profitable orders for steel works, etc., etc.

Capitalism is growing with the greatest rapidity in the colonies and in overseas countries. Among the latter, *new* imperialist powers are emerging (*e.g.*, Japan). The struggle of world imperialism is becoming more acute. The tribute levied by finance capital on the most profitable colonial and overseas enterprises is increasing. In sharing out this "booty," an exceptionally large part goes to countries which, as far as the development of productive forces is concerned, do not always stand at the top of the list. In the case

<sup>7</sup> *Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich* (Statistical Yearbook for the German Empire), 1915, Appendix pp. 46, 47, *Archiv für Eisenbahnwesen* (Railroad Archive), 1892. Minor detailed figures for the distribution of railways among the colonies of the various countries in 1890 had to be estimated approximately.

of the biggest countries, considered with their colonies, the total length of railways was as follows (in thousands of kilometres):

|                | 1890  | 1913  | INCREASE |
|----------------|-------|-------|----------|
| U.S.A.         | 268   | 413   | 145      |
| British Empire | 107   | 208   | 101      |
| Russia         | 32    | 78    | 46       |
| Germany        | 43    | 68    | 25       |
| France         | 41    | 63    | 22       |
|                | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/>    |
| Total          | 491   | 830   | 339      |

Thus, about 80 per cent of the total existing railways are concentrated in the hands of the five Great Powers. But the concentration of the *ownership* of these railways, of finance capital, is much greater still: French and English millionaires, for example, own an enormous amount of stocks and bonds in American, Russian and other railways.

Thanks to her colonies, Great Britain has increased the length of "her" railways by 100,000 kilometres, four times as much as Germany. And yet, it is well known that the development of productive forces in Germany, and especially the development of the coal and iron industries, has been much more rapid during this period than in England—not to mention France and Russia. In 1892, Germany produced 4,900,000 tons of pig iron and Great Britain produced 6,800,000 tons; in 1912, Germany produced 17,600,000 tons and Great Britain 9,000,000 tons. Germany, therefore, had an overwhelming superiority over England in this respect.<sup>8</sup> We ask, is there *under capitalism* any means of removing the disparity between the development of productive forces and the accumulation of capital on the one side, and the division of colonies and "spheres of influence" for finance capital on the other side—other than by resorting to war?

<sup>8</sup> Cf. also Edgar Crummond, "The Economic Relation of the British and German Empires," in *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, July 1914, p. 777, *et seq.*

## CHAPTER VIII

# The Parasitism and Decay of Capitalism

WE have to examine yet another very important aspect of imperialism to which, usually, too little importance is attached in most of the arguments on this subject. One of the shortcomings of the Marxist Hilferding is that he takes a step backward compared with the non-Marxist Hobson. We refer to parasitism, which is a feature of imperialism.

As we have seen, the most deep-rooted economic foundation of imperialism is monopoly. This is capitalist monopoly, *i.e.*, monopoly which has grown out of capitalism and exists in the general environment of capitalism, commodity production and competition, and remains in permanent and insoluble contradiction to this general environment. Nevertheless, like all monopoly, this capitalist monopoly inevitably gives rise to a tendency to stagnation and decay. As monopoly prices become fixed, even temporarily, so the stimulus to technical and, consequently, to all progress, disappears to a certain extent, and to that extent, also, the *economic* possibility arises of deliberately retarding technical progress. For instance, in America, a certain Mr. Owens invented a machine which revolutionised the manufacture of bottles. The German bottle manufacturing cartel purchased Owens' patent, but pigeonholed it, refrained from utilising it. Certainly, monopoly under capitalism can never completely, and for a long period of time, eliminate competition in the world market (and this, by the by, is one of the reasons why the theory of ultra-imperialism is so absurd). Certainly the possibility of reducing cost of production and increasing profits by introducing technical improvements operates in the direction of change. Nevertheless, the *tendency* to stagnation and decay, which is the feature of monopoly, continues, and in certain branches of

industry, in certain countries, for certain periods of time, it becomes predominant.

The monopoly of ownership of very extensive, rich or well-situated colonies, operates in the same direction.

Further, imperialism is an immense accumulation of money capital in a few countries, which, as we have seen, amounts to 100-150 billion francs in various securities. Hence the extraordinary growth of a class, or rather of a category, of *bondholders (rentiers)*, i.e., people who live by "clipping coupons," who take no part whatever in production, whose profession is idleness. The export of capital, one of the most essential economic bases of imperialism, still more completely isolates the *rentiers* from production and sets the seal of parasitism on the whole country that lives by the exploitation of the labour of several overseas countries and colonies.

"In 1893," writes Hobson, "the British capital invested abroad represented about 15 per cent of the total wealth of the United Kingdom."<sup>1</sup>

Let us remember that by 1915 this capital had increased about two and a half times.

"Aggressive imperialism," says Hobson further on, "which costs the taxpayer so dear, which is of so little value to the manufacturer and trader... is a source of great gain to the investor... The annual income Great Britain derives from commissions in her whole foreign and colonial trade, import and export, is estimated by Sir R. Giffen at £18,000,000 for 1899, taken at 2½ per cent, upon a turnover of £800,000,000."<sup>2</sup>

Great as this sum is, it does not explain the aggressive imperialism of Great Britain. This is explained by the 90 to 100 million pounds sterling income from "invested" capital, the income of the rentiers.

The income of the bondholders is *five times greater* than the income obtained from the foreign trade of the greatest "trading" country in the world. This is the essence of imperialism and imperialist parasitism.

For that reason the term, "rentier state" (*Rentnerstaat*), or

<sup>1</sup> *Op cit.*, p. 59.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 62-3.—Ed.

usurer state, is passing into current use in the economic literature that deals with imperialism. The world has become divided into a handful of usurer states on the one side, and a vast majority of debtor states on the other.

"The premier place among foreign investments," says Schulze-Gaevernitz, "is held by those placed in politically dependent or closely allied countries. Great Britain grants loans to Egypt, Japan, China and South America. Her navy plays here the part of bailiff in case of necessity. Great Britain's political power protects her from the indignation of her debtors."<sup>3</sup>

Sartorius von Waltershausen in his book, *The National Economic System of Foreign Investments*, cites Holland as the model "rentier state" and points out that Great Britain and France have taken the same road.<sup>4</sup> Schilder believes that five industrial nations have become "pronounced creditor nations": Great Britain, France, Germany, Belgium and Switzerland. Holland does not appear on this list simply because she is "industrially less developed."<sup>5</sup> The United States is creditor only of the other American countries.

"Great Britain," says Schulze-Gaevernitz, "is gradually becoming transformed from an industrial state into a creditor state. Notwithstanding the absolute increase in industrial output and the export of manufactured goods, the relative importance of income from interest and dividends, issues of securities, commissions and speculation is on the increase in the whole of the national economy. In my opinion it is precisely this that forms the economic basis of imperialist ascendancy. The creditor is more permanently attached to the debtor than the seller is to the buyer."<sup>6</sup>

In regard to Germany, A. Lansburgh, the editor of *Die Bank*, in 1911, in an article entitled "Germany—a Rentier State," wrote the following:

<sup>3</sup> Schulze-Gaevernitz, *Britischer Imperialismus*, p. 320 *et seq.*

<sup>4</sup> Sartorius von Waltershausen, *Das volkswirtschaftliche System, etc. (The National Economic System, etc.)*, Book IV, B. 1907.

<sup>5</sup> Schilder, *op. cit.*, pp. 392-93.

<sup>6</sup> Schulze-Gaevernitz, *op. cit.*, p. 122.—Ed.

"People in Germany are ready to sneer at the yearning to become rentiers that is observed among the people in France. But they forget that as far as the middle class is concerned the situation in Germany is becoming more and more like that in France."<sup>7</sup>

The rentier state is a state of parasitic, decaying capitalism, and this circumstance cannot fail to influence all the social-political conditions of the countries affected generally, and the two fundamental trends in the working class movement, in particular. To demonstrate this in the clearest possible manner we will quote Hobson, who will be regarded as a more "reliable" witness, since he cannot be suspected of leanings towards "orthodox Marxism"; moreover, he is an Englishman who is very well acquainted with the situation in the country which is richest in colonies, in finance capital, and in imperialist experience.

With the Boer War fresh in his mind, Hobson describes the connection between imperialism and the interests of the "financiers," the growing profits from contracts, etc., and writes:

"While the directors of this definitely parasitic policy are capitalists, the same motives appeal to special classes of the workers. In many towns, most important trades are dependent upon government employment or contracts; the imperialism of the metal and shipbuilding centres is attributable in no small degree to this fact."<sup>8</sup>

In this writer's opinion there are two causes which weakened the older empires: 1) "economic parasitism," and 2) the formation of armies composed of subject races.

"There is first 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."<sup>9</sup>

And we would add that the economic possibility of such corruption, whatever its form may be, requires high monopolist profits.

As for the second cause, Hobson writes:

<sup>7</sup> *Die Bank*, 1911, I, pp. 10-11.

<sup>8</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 103.—*Ed.*

<sup>9</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 205.

"One of the strangest symptoms of the blindness of imperialism 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."<sup>10</sup>

Hobson gives the following economic appraisal of the prospect of the partition of China:

"The greater part of Western Europe might then assume the appearance and character already exhibited by tracts of country in the South of England, in the Riviera, and in the tourist-ridden or residential parts of Italy and Switzerland, little clusters of wealthy aristocrats drawing dividends and 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 tribute from Asia and Africa."<sup>11</sup>

"We have foreshadowed the possibility of even a larger alliance of Western States, a European federation of great powers which, so far from forwarding the cause of world civilisation, might introduce the gigantic peril of a Western parasitism, a group of advanced industrial nations, whose upper classes drew vast tribute from Asia and Africa, with which they supported great, tame masses of retainers, no longer engaged in the staple industries of agriculture and manufacture, but kept in the performance of personal or minor industrial services under the control of a new financial aristocracy. Let those who would scout such a theory 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 reser-

<sup>10</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 144.

<sup>11</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 335.



voir 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."<sup>12</sup>

Hobson is quite right. *Unless* the forces of imperialism are counteracted they will lead precisely to what he has described. He correctly appraises the significance of a "United States of Europe" in the present conditions of imperialism. He should have added, however, that, *even within* the working class movement, the opportunists, who are for the moment predominant in most countries, are "working" systematically and undeviatingly in this very direction. Imperialism, which means the partition of the world, and the exploitation of other countries besides China, which means high monopoly profits for a handful of very rich countries, creates the economic possibility of corrupting the upper strata of the proletariat, and thereby fosters, gives form to, and strengthens opportunism. However, we must not lose sight of the forces which counteract imperialism in general, and opportunism in particular, which, naturally, the social-liberal Hobson is unable to perceive.

The German opportunist, Gerhard Hildebrand, who was expelled from the Party for defending imperialism, and who would today make a leader of the so-called "Social-Democratic" Party of Germany, serves as a good supplement to Hobson by his advocacy of a "United States of Western Europe" (without Russia) for the purpose of "joint" action ... against the African Negroes, against the "great Islamic movement," for the upkeep of a "powerful army and navy," against a "Sino-Japanese coalition," etc.<sup>13</sup>

The description of "British imperialism" in Schulze-Gaevernitz's book reveals the same parasitical traits. The national income of Great Britain approximately doubled from 1865 to 1898, while the income "from abroad" increased *ninefold* in the same period. While the "merit" of imperialism is that it "trains the Negro to

<sup>12</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 385-86.

<sup>13</sup> Gerhard Hildebrand, *Die Erschütterung der Industrieherrschaft und des Industriesozialismus*, Jena, 1910, p. 229 et seq.

habits of industry" (not without coercion of course...), the "danger" of imperialism is that:

"Europe...will shift the burden of physical toil—first agricultural and mining, then the more arduous toil in industry—on to the coloured races, and itself be content with the role of rentier, and in this way, perhaps, pave the way for the economic, and later, the political emancipation of the coloured races."

An increasing proportion of land in Great Britain is being taken out of cultivation and used for sport, for the diversion of the rich.

"Scotland," says Schulze-Gaevernitz, "is the most aristocratic playground in the world—it lives...on its past and on Mr. Carnegie."

On horse-racing and fox-hunting alone Britain annually spends £14,000,000. The number of rentiers in England is about one million. The percentage of the productively employed population to the total population is becoming smaller.

| Year | POPULATION | NO. OF WORK-<br>ERS IN BASIC<br>INDUSTRIES | PER CENT OF<br>TOTAL<br>POPULATION |
|------|------------|--|------------------------------------|
|      | (millions) |  |                                    |
| 1851 | 17.9       | 4.1  | 23                                 |
| 1901 | 32.5       | 4.9  | 15                                 |

And in speaking of the British working class the bourgeois student of "British imperialism at the beginning of the twentieth century" is obliged to distinguish systematically between the "*upper stratum*" of the workers and the "*lower stratum of the proletariat proper*." The upper stratum furnishes the main body of members of co-operatives, of trade unions, of sporting clubs and of numerous religious sects. The electoral system, which in Great Britain is still "*sufficiently restricted to exclude the lower stratum of the proletariat proper*," is adapted to their level!! In order to present the condition of the British working class in the best possible light, only this upper stratum—which constitutes only a *minority* of the proletariat—is generally spoken of. For instance, "the problem of unemployment is mainly a London problem and that of the lower

proletarian stratum, *which is of little political moment* for politicians." <sup>14</sup> It would be better to say: which is of little political moment for the bourgeois politicians and the "socialist" opportunists.

Another special feature of imperialism, which is connected with the facts we are describing, is the decline in emigration from imperialist countries, and the increase in immigration into these countries from the backward countries where lower wages are paid. As Hobson observes, emigration from Great Britain has been declining since 1884. In that year the number of emigrants was 242,000, while in 1900, the number was only 169,000. German emigration reached the highest point between 1880 and 1890, with a total of 1,453,000 emigrants. In the course of the following two decades, it fell to 544,000 and even to 341,000. On the other hand, there was an increase in the number of workers entering Germany from Austria, Italy, Russia and other countries. According to the 1907 census, there were 1,342,294 foreigners in Germany, of whom 440,800 were industrial workers and 257,329 were agricultural workers. <sup>15</sup> In France, the workers employed in the mining industry are, "in great part," foreigners: Polish, Italian and Spanish. <sup>16</sup> In the United States, immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe are engaged in the most poorly paid occupations, while American workers provide the highest percentage of overseers or of the better paid workers. <sup>17</sup> Imperialism has the tendency to create privileged sections even among the workers, and to detach them from the main proletarian masses.

It must be observed that in Great Britain the tendency of imperialism to divide the workers, to encourage opportunism among them and to cause temporary decay in the working class movement, revealed itself much earlier than the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries; for two important distinguishing features of imperialism were observed in Great Britain in the

<sup>14</sup> Schulze-Gaevernitz, *Britischer Imperialismus*, pp. 246, 301, 317, 323, 324, 361.

<sup>15</sup> *Statistik des Deutschen Reichs* (*Statistics of the German Empire*), Vol. 211.

<sup>16</sup> Henger, *Die Kapitalsanlage der Franzosen* (*French Investments*), Stuttgart, 1913.

<sup>17</sup> Hourwich, *Immigration and Labour*, New York, 1913.

middle of the nineteenth century, *viz.*, vast colonial possessions and a monopolist position in the world market. Marx and Engels systematically traced this relation between opportunism in the labour movement and the imperialist features of British capitalism for several decades. For example, on October 7, 1858, Engels wrote to Marx:

"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."

Almost a quarter of a century later, in a letter dated August 11, 1881, Engels speaks of "...the worst type of English trade unions which allow themselves to be led by men sold to, or at least, paid by the bourgeoisie."<sup>18</sup> 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 merrily share the feast of England's monopoly of the colonies and the world market..."<sup>19</sup> (Engels expressed similar ideas in the press in his preface to the second edition of *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, which appeared in 1892.)

We thus see clearly the causes and effects. The causes are: 1) Exploitation of the whole world by this country. 2) Its monopolistic position in the world market. 3) Its colonial monopoly. The effects are: 1) A section of the British proletariat becomes bourgeois. 2) A section of the proletariat permits itself to be led by men sold to, or at least, paid by the bourgeoisie. The imperialism of the beginning of the twentieth century completed the division of the world among a handful of states, each of which today exploits (*i.e.*, draws super-profits from) a part of the world only a little

<sup>18</sup> Marx-Engels, *Briefwechsel*, Gesamtausgabe, 3. Abteilung, B. 2, S. 340; B. 4, S. 511.—Ed.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Karl Kautsky, *Sozialismus und Kolonialpolitik*, Berlin, 1907, p. 79; this pamphlet was written by Kautsky in those infinitely distant days when he was still a Marxist.

smaller than that which England exploited in 1858. Each of them, by means of trusts, cartels, finance capital, and debtor and creditor relations, occupies a monopoly position in the world market. Each of them enjoys to some degree a colonial monopoly. (We have seen that out of the total of 75,000,000 sq. km. which comprise the *whole* colonial world, 65,000,000 sq. km., or 86 per cent, belong to six great powers; 61,000,000 sq. km., or 81 per cent, belong to three powers.)

The distinctive feature of the present situation is the prevalence of economic and political conditions which could not but increase the irreconcilability between opportunism and the general and vital interests of the working class movement. Embryonic imperialism has grown into a dominant system; capitalist monopolies occupy first place in economics and politics; the division of the world has been completed. On the other hand, instead of an undisputed monopoly by Great Britain, we see a few imperialist powers contending for the right to share in this monopoly, and this struggle is characteristic of the whole period of the beginning of the twentieth century. Opportunism, therefore, cannot now triumph in the working class movement of any country for decades as it did in England in the second half of the nineteenth century. But, in a number of countries it has grown ripe, over-ripe, and rotten, and has become completely merged with bourgeois policy in the form of "social-chauvinism."<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Russian social-chauvinism represented by Messrs. Potresov, Chkhenkeli, Maslov, etc., in its avowed form as well as in its tacit form, as represented by Messrs. Chkheidze, Skobelev, Axelrod, Martov, etc., also emerged from the Russian variety of opportunism, namely liquidationism.

## CHAPTER IX

# The Critique of Imperialism

By the critique of imperialism, in the broad sense of the term, we mean the attitude towards imperialist policy of the different classes of society as part of their general ideology.

The enormous dimensions of finance capital concentrated in a few hands and creating an extremely extensive and close network of ties and relationships which subordinate not only the small and medium, but also even the very small capitalists and small masters, on the one hand, and the intense struggle waged against other national state groups of financiers for the division of the world and domination over other countries, on the other hand, cause the wholesale transition of the possessing classes to the side of imperialism. The signs of the times are a "general" enthusiasm regarding its prospects, a passionate defence of imperialism, and every possible embellishment of its real nature. The imperialist ideology also penetrates the working class. There is no Chinese Wall between it and the other classes. The leaders of the so-called "Social-Democratic" Party of Germany are today justly called "social-imperialists," that is, socialists in words and imperialists in deeds; but as early as 1902, Hobson noted the existence of "Fabian imperialists" who belonged to the opportunist Fabian Society in England.

Bourgeois scholars and publicists usually come out in defence of imperialism in a somewhat veiled form, and obscure its complete domination and its profound roots; they strive to concentrate attention on partial and secondary details and do their very best to distract attention from the main issue by means of ridiculous schemes for "reform," such as police supervision of the trusts and banks, etc. Less frequently, cynical and frank imperialists speak out and are bold enough to admit the absurdity of the idea of reforming the fundamental features of imperialism.

We will give an example. The German imperialists attempt, in the magazine *Archives of World Economy*, to follow the movements for national emancipation in the colonies, particularly, of course, in colonies other than those belonging to Germany. They note the ferment and protest movements in India, the movement in Natal (South Africa), the movement in the Dutch East Indies, etc. One of them, commenting on an English report of the speeches delivered at a conference of subject peoples and races, held on June 28-30, 1910, at which representatives of various peoples subject to foreign domination in Africa, Asia and Europe were present, writes as follows in appraising the speeches delivered at this conference:

"We are told that we must fight against imperialism; that the dominant states should recognise the right of subject peoples to home rule; that an international tribunal should supervise the fulfilment of treaties concluded between the great powers and weak peoples. One does not get any further than the expression of these pious wishes. We see no trace of understanding of the fact that imperialism is indissolubly bound up with capitalism in its present form" (!) "and therefore also no trace of the realisation that an open struggle against imperialism would be hopeless, unless, perhaps, the fight is confined to protests against certain of its especially abhorrent excesses."<sup>1</sup>

Since the reform of the basis of imperialism is a deception, a "pious wish," since the bourgeois representatives of the oppressed nations go no "further" forward, the bourgeois representatives of the oppressing nation go "further" *backward*, to servility, towards imperialism, concealed by the cloak of "science." "Logic," indeed!

The question as to whether it is possible to reform the basis of imperialism, whether to go forward to the accentuation and deepening of the antagonisms which it engenders, or backwards, towards allaying these antagonisms, is a fundamental question in the critique of imperialism. As a consequence of the fact that the political features of imperialism are reaction all along the line, and increased national oppression, resulting from the oppression of the financial oligarchy and the elimination of free competition, a petty-bourgeois-democratic opposition has been rising against imperialism in almost all imperialist countries since the beginning

<sup>1</sup> *Weltwirtschaftliches Archiv (Archives of World Economy)*, Vol. II, pp. 194-95.

of the twentieth century. And the desertion of Kautsky and of the broad international Kautskyan trend from Marxism is displayed in the very fact that Kautsky not only did not trouble to oppose, not only was unable to oppose this petty-bourgeois reformist opposition, which is really reactionary in its economic basis, but in practice actually became merged with it.

In the United States, the imperialist war waged against Spain in 1898 stirred up the opposition of the "anti-imperialists," the last of the Mohicans of bourgeois democracy. They declared this war to be "criminal"; they denounced the annexation of foreign territories as being a violation of the Constitution, and denounced the "Jingo treachery" by means of which Aguinaldo, leader of the native Filipinos, was deceived (the Americans promised him the independence of his country, but later they landed troops and annexed it). They quoted the words of Lincoln:

"When the white man governs himself, that is self-government; but when he governs himself and also governs another man, that is more than self-government—that is despotism."<sup>2</sup>

But while all this criticism shrank from recognising the indissoluble bond between imperialism and the trusts, and, therefore, between imperialism and the very foundations of capitalism; while it shrank from joining up with the forces engendered by large-scale capitalism and its development—it remained a "pious wish."

This is also, in the main, the attitude of Hobson in his criticism of imperialism. Hobson anticipated Kautsky in protesting against the "inevitability of imperialism" argument, and in urging the need to raise the consuming capacity of the "people" (under capitalism!). The petty-bourgeois point of view in the critique of imperialism, the domination of the banks, the financial oligarchy, etc., is that adopted by the authors we have often quoted, such as Agahd, A. Lansburgh, L. Eschwege; and among French writers, Victor Bérard, author of a superficial book entitled *England and Imperialism* which appeared in 1900. All these authors, who make

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Patouillet, *L'impérialisme américain*, Dijon, 1904, p. 272. (From speech "On the Repeal of the Missouri Compromise," at Peoria, Illinois, October 16, 1854.—Ed.)



no claim to be Marxists, contrast imperialism with free competition and democracy; they condemn the Bagdad railway scheme as leading to disputes and war, utter "pious wishes" for peace, etc. This applies also to the compiler of international stock and share issue statistics, A. Neymarck, who, after calculating the hundreds of billions of francs representing "international" securities, exclaimed in 1912: "Is it possible to believe that peace may be disturbed... that, in the face of these enormous figures, anyone would risk starting a war?"<sup>3</sup>

Such simplicity of mind on the part of the bourgeois economists is not surprising. Besides, *it is in their interest* to pretend to be so naive and to talk "seriously" about peace under imperialism. But what remains of Kautsky's Marxism, when, in 1914-15-16, he takes up the same attitude as the bourgeois reformists and affirms that "everybody is agreed" (imperialists, pseudo-socialists and social-pacifists) as regards peace? Instead of an analysis of imperialism and an exposure of the depths of its contradictions, we have nothing but a reformist "pious wish" to wave it aside, to evade it.

Here is an example of Kautsky's economic criticism of imperialism. He takes the statistics of the British export and import trade with Egypt for 1872 and 1912. These statistics show that this export and import trade has developed more slowly than British foreign trade as a whole. From this Kautsky concludes that:

"We have no reason to suppose that British trade with Egypt would have been less developed simply as a result of the mere operation of economic factors, without military occupation... The urge of the present-day states to expand... can be best promoted, not by the violent methods of imperialism, but by peaceful democracy."<sup>4</sup>

This argument, which is repeated in every key by Kautsky's Russian armour-bearer (and Russian protector of the social-chauvinists), Mr. Spectator, represents the basis of Kautskyan criticism of imperialism and that is why we must deal with it in greater detail. We will begin with a quotation from Hilferding, whose

<sup>3</sup> *Bulletin de l'Institut International de Statistique*, Vol. XIX, Book II, p. 225.

<sup>4</sup> Karl Kautsky, *Nationalstaat, imperialistischer Staat und Staatenbund* (*National State, Imperialist State and Union of States*). Nuremberg, 1915, pp. 72, 70.

conclusions, as Kautsky on many occasions, and notably in April 1915, declared, have been "unanimously adopted by all socialist theoreticians."

"It is not the business of the proletariat," writes Hilferding, "to contrast the more progressive capitalist policy with that of the now by-gone era of free trade and of hostility towards the state. The reply of the proletariat to the economic policy of finance capital, to imperialism, cannot be free trade, but socialism. The aim of proletarian policy cannot now be the ideal of restoring free competition—which has now become a reactionary ideal—but the complete abolition of competition by the vanquishment of capitalism."<sup>5</sup>

Kautsky departed from Marxism by advocating what is, in the period of finance capital, a "reactionary ideal," "peaceful democracy," "the mere operation of economic factors," for *objectively* this ideal drags us back from monopoly capitalism to the non-monopolist stage, and is a reformist swindle.

Trade with Egypt (or with any other colony or semi-colony) "would have grown more" *without* military occupation, without imperialism, and without finance capital. What does this mean? That capitalism would develop more rapidly if free competition were not restricted by monopolies in general, by the "connections" or the yoke (*i.e.*, also the monopoly) of finance capital, or by the monopolist possession of colonies by certain countries?

Kautsky's argument can have no other meaning; and *this* "meaning" is meaningless. But suppose, for the sake of argument, free competition, without any sort of monopoly, *would* develop capitalism and trade more rapidly. Is it not a fact that the more rapidly trade and capitalism develop, the greater is the concentration of production and capital which *gives rise* to monopoly? And monopolies have *already* come into being—precisely *out of* free competition! Even if monopolies have now begun to retard progress, it is not an argument in favour of free competition, which has become impossible since it gave rise to monopoly.

Whichever way one turns Kautsky's argument, one will find nothing in it except reaction and bourgeois reformism.

<sup>5</sup> Hilferding, *op. cit.*, pp. 471-72.

Even if we modify this argument and say, as Spectator says, that the trade of the British colonies with the mother country is now developing more slowly than their trade with other countries, it does not save Kautsky; for it is *also* monopoly and imperialism that is beating Great Britain, only it is the monopoly and imperialism of another country (America, Germany). It is known that the cartels have given rise to a new and peculiar form of protective tariffs, *i.e.*, goods suitable for export are protected (Engels noted this in Vol. III of *Capital*). It is known, too, that the cartels and finance capital have a system peculiar to themselves, that of "exporting goods at cut-rate prices," or "dumping," as the English call it: within a given country the cartel sells its goods at a high price fixed by monopoly; abroad it sells them at a much lower price to undercut the competitor, to enlarge its own production to the utmost, etc. If Germany's trade with the British colonies is developing more rapidly than that of Great Britain with the same colonies, it only proves that German imperialism is younger, stronger and better organised than British imperialism, is superior to it. But this by no means proves the "superiority" of free trade, for it is not free trade fighting against protection and colonial dependence, but two rival imperialisms, two monopolies, two groups of finance capital that are fighting. The superiority of German imperialism over British imperialism is stronger than the wall of colonial frontiers or of protective tariffs. To use this as an argument *in favour* of free trade and "peaceful democracy" is banal, is to forget the essential features and qualities of imperialism, to substitute petty-bourgeois reformism for Marxism.

It is interesting to note that even the bourgeois economist, A. Lansburgh, whose criticism of imperialism is as petty-bourgeois as Kautsky's, nevertheless got closer to a more scientific study of trade statistics. He did not compare merely one country, chosen at random, and a colony, with the other countries; he examined the export trade of an imperialist country: 1) with countries which are financially dependent upon it, which borrow money from it; and 2) with countries which are financially independent. He obtained the following results:

EXPORT TRADE OF GERMANY (*million marks*)

| COUNTRIES FINANCIALLY<br>DEPENDENT ON GERMANY | 1889  | 1908  | PER CENT<br>INCREASE |
|---|-------|-------|----------------------|
| Rumania                                       | 48.2  | 70.8  | 47                   |
| Portugal                                      | 19.0  | 32.8  | 73                   |
| Argentina                                     | 60.7  | 147.0 | 143                  |
| Brazil  | 48.7  | 84.5  | 73                   |
| Chile   | 28.3  | 52.4  | 85                   |
| Turkey  | 29.9  | 64.0  | 114                  |
| Total   | 234.8 | 451.5 | 92                   |

COUNTRIES FINANCIALLY  
INDEPENDENT OF GERMANY

|                   |         |         |     |
|-------------------|---------|---------|-----|
| Great Britain     | 651.8   | 997.4   | 53  |
| France            | 210.2   | 437.9   | 108 |
| Belgium           | 137.2   | 322.8   | 135 |
| Switzerland       | 177.4   | 401.1   | 127 |
| Australia         | 21.2    | 64.5    | 205 |
| Dutch East Indies | 8.8     | 40.7    | 363 |
| Total             | 1,206.6 | 2,264.4 | 87  |

Lansburgh did not draw *conclusions* and therefore, strangely enough, failed to observe that *if* the figures prove anything at all, they prove that *he is wrong*, for the exports to countries financially dependent on Germany have grown *more rapidly*, if only slightly, than those to the countries which are financially independent. (We emphasise the "if," for Lansburgh's figures are far from complete.)

Tracing the connection between export trade and loans, Lansburgh writes:

"In 1890-91, a Rumanian loan was floated through the German banks, which had already in previous years made advances on this loan. The loan was used chiefly for purchases of railway materials in Germany. In 1891 German exports to Rumania amounted to 55,000,000 marks. The following year they fell to 39,400,000 marks; then with fluctuations, to 25,400,000 in 1900. Only in very recent years have they regained the level of 1891, thanks to several new loans.

"German exports to Portugal rose, following the loans of 1888-89, to

21,100,000 (1890); then fell, in the two following years, to 16,200,000 and 7,400,000; and only regained their former level in 1903.

"German trade with the Argentine is still more striking. Following the loans floated in 1888 and 1890, German exports to the Argentine reached, in 1889, 60,700,000 marks. Two years later they only reached 18,600,000 marks, that is to say, less than one-third of the previous figure. It was not until 1901 that they regained and surpassed the level of 1889, and then only as a result of new loans floated by the state and by municipalities, with advances to build power stations, and with other credit operations.

"Exports to Chile rose to 45,200,000 marks in 1892, after the loan negotiated in 1889. The following year they fell to 22,500,000 marks. A new Chilean loan floated by the German banks in 1906 was followed by a rise of exports in 1907 to 84,700,000 marks, only to fall again to 52,400,000 marks in 1908."<sup>6</sup>

From all these facts Lansburgh draws the amusing petty-bourgeois moral of how unstable and irregular export trade is when it is bound up with loans, how bad it is to invest capital abroad instead of "naturally" and "harmoniously" developing home industry, how "costly" is the *backsheesh* that Krupp has to pay in floating foreign loans, etc.! But the facts are clear. The increase in exports is *closely* connected with the swindling tricks of finance capital, which is not concerned with bourgeois morality, but with skinning the ox twice—first, it pockets the profits from the loan; then it pockets other profits from the *same* loan which the borrower uses to make purchases from Krupp, or to purchase railway material from the Steel Syndicate, etc.

We repeat that we do not by any means consider Lansburgh's figures to be perfect. But we had to quote them because they are more scientific than Kautsky's and Spectator's, and because Lansburgh showed the correct way of approaching the question. In discussing the significance of finance capital in regard to exports, etc., one must be able to single out the connection of exports especially and solely with the tricks of the financiers, especially and solely with the sale of goods by cartels, etc. Simply to compare colonies with non-colonies, one imperialism with another imperialism,

<sup>6</sup> *Die Bank*, 1909, Vol. II, pp. 826-27.

one semi-colony or colony (Egypt) with all other countries, is to evade and to tone down the very *essence* of the question.

Kautsky's theoretical critique of imperialism has nothing in common with Marxism and serves no other purpose than as a preamble to propaganda for peace and unity with the opportunists and the social-chauvinists, precisely for the reason that it evades and obscures the very profound and radical contradictions of imperialism: the contradictions between monopoly and free competition that exists side by side with it, between the gigantic "operations" (and gigantic profits) of finance capital and "honest" trade in the free market, the contradictions between cartels and trusts, on the one hand, and non-cartelised industry, on the other, etc.

The notorious theory of "ultra-imperialism," invented by Kautsky, is equally reactionary. Compare his arguments on this subject in 1915, with Hobson's arguments in 1902.

Kautsky:

"Cannot the present imperialist policy be supplanted by a new, ultra-imperialist policy, which will introduce the common exploitation of the world by internationally united finance capital in place of the mutual rivalries of national finance capital? Such a new phase of capitalism is at any rate conceivable. Can it be achieved? Sufficient premises are still lacking to enable us to answer this question."<sup>7</sup>

Hobson:

"Christendom thus laid out in a few great federal empires, each with a retinue of uncivilised dependencies, seems to many the most legitimate development of present tendencies, and one which would offer the best hope of permanent peace on an assured basis of inter-imperialism."<sup>8</sup>

Kautsky called ultra-imperialism or super-imperialism what Hobson, thirteen years earlier, described as inter-imperialism. Except for coining a new and clever word, by replacing one Latin prefix by another, the only progress Kautsky has made in the sphere of "scientific" thought is that he has labelled as Marxism what Hobson, in effect, described as the cant of English parsons. After the Anglo-Boer War it was quite natural for this worthy caste

<sup>7</sup> *Die Neue Zeit*, April 30, 1915, p. 144.

<sup>8</sup> Hobson, *op. cit.*, p. 351.

to exert every effort to *console* the British middle class and the workers who had lost many of their relatives on the battlefields of South Africa and who were obliged to pay higher taxes in order to guarantee still higher profits for the British financiers. And what better consolation could there be than the theory that imperialism is not so bad; that it stands close to inter- (or ultra-) imperialism, which can ensure permanent peace? No matter what the good intentions of the English parsons, or of sentimental Kautsky, may have been, the only objective, *i.e.*, real, social significance Kautsky's "theory" can have, is that of a most reactionary method of consoling the masses with hopes of permanent peace being possible under capitalism, distracting their attention from the sharp antagonisms and acute problems of the present era, and directing it towards illusory prospects of an imaginary "ultra-imperialism" of the future. Deception of the masses—there is nothing but this in Kautsky's "Marxian" theory.

Indeed, it is enough to compare well-known and indisputable facts to become convinced of the utter falsity of the prospects which Kautsky tries to conjure up before the German workers (and the workers of all lands). Let us consider India, Indo-China and China. It is known that these three colonial and semi-colonial countries, inhabited by six to seven hundred million human beings, are subjected to the exploitation of the finance capital of several imperialist states: Great Britain, France, Japan, the U.S.A., etc. We will assume that these imperialist countries form alliances against one another in order to protect and extend their possessions, their interests and their "spheres of influence" in these Asiatic states; these alliances will be "inter-imperialist," or "ultra-imperialist" alliances. We will assume that *all* the imperialist countries conclude an alliance for the "peaceful" division of these parts of Asia; this alliance would be an alliance of "internationally united finance capital." As a matter of fact, alliances of this kind have been made in the twentieth century, notably with regard to China. We ask, is it "conceivable," assuming that the capitalist system remains intact—and this is precisely the assumption that Kautsky does make—that such alliances would be more than temporary, that they

would eliminate friction, conflicts and struggle in all and every possible form?

This question need only be stated clearly enough to make it impossible for any other reply to be given than that in the negative; for there can be *no* other conceivable basis under capitalism for the division of spheres of influence, of interests, of colonies, etc., than a calculation of the *strength* of the participants in the division, their general economic, financial, military strength, etc. And the strength of these participants in the division does not change to an equal degree, for under capitalism the development of different undertakings, trusts, branches of industry, or countries cannot be *even*. Half a century ago, Germany was a miserable, insignificant country, as far as its capitalist strength was concerned, compared with the strength of England at that time. Japan was similarly insignificant compared with Russia. Is it "conceivable" that in ten or twenty years' time the relative strength of the imperialist powers will have remained *unchanged*? Absolutely inconceivable.

Therefore, in the realities of the capitalist system, and not in the banal philistine fantasies of English parsons, or of the German "Marxist," Kautsky, "inter-imperialist" or "ultra-imperialist" alliances, no matter what form they may assume, whether of one imperialist coalition against another, or of a general alliance embracing *all* the imperialist powers, are *inevitably* nothing more than a "truce" in periods between wars. Peaceful alliances prepare the ground for wars, and in their turn grow out of wars; the one is the condition for the other, giving rise to alternating forms of peaceful and non-peaceful struggle out of *one and the same* basis of imperialist connections and the relations between world economics and world politics. But in order to pacify the workers and to reconcile them with the social-chauvinists who have deserted to the side of the bourgeoisie, wise Kautsky *separates* one link of a single chain from the other, separates the present peaceful (and ultra-imperialist, nay, ultra-ultra-imperialist) alliance of *all* the powers for the "pacification" of China (remember the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion) from the non-peaceful conflict of tomorrow, which will prepare the ground for another "peaceful" general



alliance for the partition, say, of Turkey, on the day after tomorrow, etc., etc. Instead of showing the vital connection between periods of imperialist peace and periods of imperialist war, Kautsky puts before the workers a lifeless abstraction solely in order to reconcile them to their lifeless leaders.

An American writer, Hill, in his *History of Diplomacy in the International Development of Europe*,<sup>9</sup> points out in his preface the following periods of contemporary diplomatic history: 1) The era of revolution; 2) The constitutional movement; 3) The present era of "commercial imperialism." Another writer divides the history of Great Britain's foreign policy since 1870 into four periods: 1) The first Asiatic period (that of the struggle against Russia's advance in Central Asia towards India); 2) The African period (approximately 1885-1902): that of struggles against France for the partition of Africa (the Fashoda incident of 1898 which brought France within a hair's breadth of war with Great Britain); 3) The second Asiatic period (alliance with Japan against Russia), and 4) The European period, chiefly anti-German.<sup>10</sup> "The political skirmishes of outposts take place on the financial field," wrote Riesser, the banker, in 1905, in showing how French finance capital operating in Italy was preparing the way for a political alliance of these countries, and how a conflict was developing between Great Britain and Germany over Persia, between all the European capitalists over Chinese loans, etc. Behold, the living reality of peaceful "ultra-imperialist" alliances in their indissoluble connection with ordinary imperialist conflicts!

Kautsky's toning down of the deepest contradictions of imperialism, which inevitably becomes the embellishment of imperialism, leaves its traces in this writer's criticism of the political features of imperialism. Imperialism is the epoch of finance capital and of monopolies, which introduce everywhere the striving for domination, not for freedom. The result of these tendencies is reaction all along the line, whatever the political system, and an extreme intensification of existing antagonisms in this domain also. Par-

<sup>9</sup> David Jayne Hill, *A History of Diplomacy in the International Development of Europe*, Vol. I, p. x.

<sup>10</sup> Schilder, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 178.

ticularly acute becomes the yoke of national oppression and the striving for annexations, *i.e.*, the violation of national independence (for annexation is nothing but the violation of the right of nations to self-determination). Hilferding justly draws attention to the connection between imperialism and the growth of national oppression.

"In the newly opened up countries themselves," he writes, "the capitalism imported into them intensifies contradictions and excites the constantly growing resistance against the intruders of the peoples who are awakening to national consciousness. This resistance can easily become transformed into dangerous measures directed against foreign capital. The old social relations become completely revolutionised. The age-long agrarian incrustation of 'nations without a history' is blasted away, and they are drawn into the capitalist whirlpool. Capitalism itself gradually procures for the vanquished the means and resources for their emancipation and they set out to achieve the same goal which once seemed highest to the European nations: the creation of a united national state as a means to economic and cultural freedom. This movement for national independence threatens European capital just in its most valuable and most promising fields of exploitation, and European capital can maintain its domination only by continually increasing its means of exerting violence."<sup>11</sup>

To this must be added that it is not only in newly opened up countries, but also in the old, that imperialism is leading to annexation, to increased national oppression, and, consequently, also to increasing resistance. While opposing the intensification of political reaction caused by imperialism, Kautsky obscures the question, which has become very serious, of the impossibility of unity with the opportunists in the epoch of imperialism. While objecting to annexations, he presents his objections in a form that will be most acceptable and least offensive to the opportunists. He addresses himself to a German audience, yet he obscures the most topical and important point, for instance, the annexation by Germany of Alsace-Lorraine. In order to appraise this "lapse of mind" of Kautsky's we will take the following example. Let us suppose that a Japanese

<sup>11</sup> Hilferding, *op. cit.*, p. 406.

is condemning the annexation of the Philippine Islands by the Americans. Will many believe that he is doing so because he has a horror of annexations as such, and not because he himself has a desire to annex the Philippines? And shall we not be constrained to admit that the "fight" the Japanese are waging against annexations can be regarded as being sincere and politically honest only if he fights against the annexation of Korea by Japan, and urges freedom for Korea to secede from Japan?

Kautsky's theoretical analysis of imperialism, as well as his economic and political criticism of imperialism, are permeated *through and through* with a spirit, absolutely irreconcilable with Marxism, of obscuring and glossing over the most profound contradictions of imperialism and with a striving to preserve the crumbling unity with opportunism in the European labour movement at all costs.

## CHAPTER X

# The Place of Imperialism in History

WE have seen that the economic quintessence of imperialism is monopoly capitalism. This very fact determines its place in history, for monopoly that grew up on the basis of free competition, and precisely out of free competition, is the transition from the capitalist system to a higher social-economic order. We must take special note of the four principal forms of monopoly, or the four principal manifestations of monopoly capitalism, which are characteristic of the epoch under review.

Firstly, monopoly arose out of the concentration of production at a very advanced stage of development. This refers to the monopolist capitalist combines, cartels, syndicates and trusts. We have seen the important part that these play in modern economic life. At the beginning of the twentieth century, monopolies acquired complete supremacy in the advanced countries. And although the first steps towards the formation of the cartels were first taken by countries enjoying the protection of high tariffs (Germany, America), Great Britain, with her system of free trade, was not far behind in revealing the same basic phenomenon, namely, the birth of monopoly out of the concentration of production.

Secondly, monopolies have accelerated the capture of the most important sources of raw materials, especially for the coal and iron industries, which are the basic and most highly cartelised industries in capitalist society. The monopoly of the most important sources of raw materials has enormously increased the power of big capital, and has sharpened the antagonism between cartelised and non-cartelised industry.

Thirdly, monopoly has sprung from the banks. The banks have developed from modest intermediary enterprises into the

monopolists of finance capital. Some three or five of the biggest banks in each of the foremost capitalist countries have achieved the "personal union" of industrial and bank capital, and have concentrated in their hands the disposal of thousands upon thousands of millions which form the greater part of the capital and income of entire countries. A financial oligarchy, which throws a close net of relations of dependence over all the economic and political institutions of contemporary bourgeois society without exception—such is the most striking manifestation of this monopoly.

Fourthly, monopoly has grown out of colonial policy. To the numerous "old" motives of colonial policy, finance capital has added the struggle for the sources of raw materials, for the export of capital, for "spheres of influence," *i.e.*, for spheres for profitable deals, concessions, monopolist profits and so on; in fine, for economic territory in general. When the colonies of the European powers in Africa, for instance, comprised only one-tenth of that territory (as was the case in 1876), colonial policy was able to develop by methods other than those of monopoly—by the "free grabbing" of territories, so to speak. But when nine-tenths of Africa had been seized (approximately by 1900), when the whole world had been divided up, there was inevitably ushered in a period of colonial monopoly and, consequently, a period of particularly intense struggle for the division and the redivision of the world.

The extent to which monopolist capital has intensified all the contradictions of capitalism is generally known. It is sufficient to mention the high cost of living and the oppression of the cartels. This intensification of contradictions constitutes the most powerful driving force of the transitional period of history, which began from the time of the definite victory of world finance capital.

Monopolies, oligarchy, the striving for domination instead of the striving for liberty, the exploitation of an increasing number of small or weak nations by an extremely small group of the richest or most powerful nations—all these have given birth to those distinctive characteristics of imperialism which compel us to define it as parasitic or decaying capitalism. More and more prominently there emerges, as one of the tendencies of imperialism, the crea-

tion of the "bondholding" (rentier) state, the usurer state, in which the bourgeoisie lives on the proceeds of capital exports and by "clipping coupons." It would be a mistake to believe that this tendency to decay precludes the possibility of the rapid growth of capitalism. It does not. In the epoch of imperialism, certain branches of industry, certain strata of the bourgeoisie and certain countries betray, to a more or less degree, one or other of these tendencies. On the whole, capitalism is growing far more rapidly than before. But this growth is not only becoming more and more uneven in general; its unevenness also manifests itself, in particular, in the decay of the countries which are richest in capital (such as England).

In regard to the rapidity of Germany's economic development, Riesser, the author of the book on the big German banks, states:

"The progress of the preceding period (1848-70), which had not been exactly slow, stood in about the same ratio to the rapidity with which the whole of Germany's national economy, and with it German banking, progressed during this period (1870-1905) as the mail coach of the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation stood to the speed of the present-day automobile...which in whizzing past, it must be said, often endangers not only innocent pedestrians in its path, but also the occupants of the car."<sup>1</sup>

In its turn, this finance capital which has grown so rapidly is not unwilling (precisely because it has grown so quickly) to pass on to a more "tranquil" possession of colonies which have to be seized—and not only by peaceful methods—from richer nations. In the United States, economic development in the last decades has been even more rapid than in Germany, and *for this very reason* the parasitic character of modern American capitalism has stood out with particular prominence. On the other hand, a comparison of, say, the republican American bourgeoisie with the monarchist Japanese or German bourgeoisie shows that the most pronounced political distinctions diminish to an extreme degree in the epoch of imperialism—not because they are unimportant in general, but because in all these cases we are discussing a bourgeoisie which has definite features of parasitism.

<sup>1</sup> Riesser, *op. cit.*, third ed., p. 354.—*E.L.*

The receipt of high monopoly profits by the capitalists in one of the numerous branches of industry, in one of numerous countries, etc., makes it economically possible for them to corrupt certain sections of the working class, and for a time a fairly considerable minority, and win them to the side of the bourgeoisie of a given industry or nation against all the others. The intensification of antagonisms between imperialist nations for the division of the world increases this striving. And so there is created that bond between imperialism and opportunism, which revealed itself first and most clearly in England, owing to the fact that certain features of imperialist development were observable there much earlier than in other countries.

Some writers, L. Martov, for example, try to evade the fact that there is a connection between imperialism and opportunism in the labour movement—which is particularly striking at the present time—by resorting to “official optimistic” arguments (*à la* Kautsky and Huysmans) like the following: the cause of the opponents of capitalism would be hopeless if it were precisely progressive capitalism that led to the increase of opportunism, or, if it were precisely the best paid workers who were inclined towards opportunism, etc. We must have no illusion regarding “optimism” of this kind. It is optimism in regard to opportunism; it is optimism which serves to conceal opportunism. As a matter of fact the extraordinary rapidity and the particularly revolting character of the development of opportunism is by no means a guarantee that its victory will be durable: the rapid growth of a malignant abscess on a healthy body only causes it to burst more quickly and thus to relieve the body of it. The most dangerous people of all in this respect are those who do not wish to understand that the fight against imperialism is a sham and humbug unless it is inseparably bound up with the fight against opportunism.

From all that has been said in this book on the economic nature of imperialism, it follows that we must define it as capitalism in transition, or, more precisely, as moribund capitalism. It is very instructive in this respect to note that the bourgeois economists, in describing modern capitalism, frequently employ terms like “interlocking,” “absence of isolation,” etc.; “in conformity with their

functions and course of development," banks are "not purely private business enterprises; they are more and more outgrowing the sphere of purely private business regulation." And this very Riesser, who uttered the words just quoted, declares with all seriousness that the "prophecy" of the Marxists concerning "socialisation" has "not come true"!

What then does this word "interlocking" express? It merely expresses the most striking feature of the process going on before our eyes. It shows that the observer counts the separate trees, but cannot see the wood. It slavishly copies the superficial, the fortuitous, the chaotic. It reveals the observer as one who is overwhelmed by the mass of raw material and is utterly incapable of appreciating its meaning and importance. Ownership of shares and relations between owners of private property "interlock in a haphazard way." But the underlying factor of this interlocking, its very base, is the changing social relations of production. When a big enterprise assumes gigantic proportions, and, on the basis of exact computation of mass data, organises according to plan the supply of primary raw materials to the extent of two-thirds, or three-fourths of all that is necessary for tens of millions of people; when the raw materials are transported to the most suitable place of production, sometimes hundreds or thousands of miles away, in a systematic and organised manner; when a single centre directs all the successive stages of work right up to the manufacture of numerous varieties of finished articles; when these products are distributed according to a single plan among tens and hundreds of millions of consumers (as in the case of the distribution of oil in America and Germany by the American "oil trust")—then it becomes evident that we have socialisation of production, and not mere "interlocking"; that private economic relations and private property relations constitute a shell which is no longer suitable for its contents, a shell which must inevitably begin to decay if its destruction be delayed by artificial means; a shell which may continue in a state of decay for a fairly long period (particularly if the cure of the opportunist abscess is protracted), but which will inevitably be removed.



The enthusiastic admirer of German imperialism, Schulze-Gaevernitz, exclaims:

"Once the supreme management of the German banks has been entrusted to the hands of a dozen persons, their activity is even today more significant for the public good than that of the majority of the Ministers of State." (The "interlocking" of bankers, ministers, magnates of industry and rentiers is here conveniently forgotten.)... "If we conceive of the tendencies of development which we have noted as realised to the utmost: the money capital of the nation united in the banks; the banks themselves combined into cartels; the investment capital of the nation cast in the shape of securities, then the brilliant forecast of Saint-Simon will be fulfilled: 'The present anarchy of production caused by the fact that economic relations are developing without uniform regulation must make way for organisation in production. Production will no longer be shaped by isolated manufacturers, independent of each other and ignorant of man's economic needs, but by a social institution. A central body of management, being able to survey the large fields of social economy from a more elevated point of view, will regulate it for the benefit of the whole of society, will be able to put the means of production into suitable hands, and above all will take care that there be constant harmony between production and consumption. Institutions already exist which have assumed as part of their task a certain organisation of economic labour: the banks.' The fulfilment of the forecasts of Saint-Simon still lies in the future, but we are on the way to its fulfilment—Marxism, different from what Marx imagined, but different only in form."<sup>2</sup>

A crushing "refutation" of Marx, indeed! It is a retreat from Marx's precise, scientific analysis to Saint-Simon's guesswork, the guesswork of a genius, but guesswork all the same.

January-July, 1916.

<sup>2</sup> Schulze-Gaevernitz, in *Grundriss der Socialökonomik*, pp. 145-46.

# STATE AND REVOLUTION

BY  
V. I. LENIN



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## PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION <sup>1</sup>

THE question of the state is acquiring at present a particular importance, both as theory, and from the point of view of practical politics. The imperialist war has greatly accelerated and intensified the transformation of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism. The monstrous oppression of the labouring masses by the state—which connects itself more and more intimately with the all-powerful capitalist combines—is becoming ever more monstrous. The foremost countries are being converted—we speak here of their “rear”—into military convict labour prisons for the workers.

The unheard-of horrors and miseries of the protracted war are making the position of the masses unbearable and increasing their indignation. An international proletarian revolution is clearly rising. The question of its relation to the state is acquiring a practical importance.

The elements of opportunism accumulated during the decades of comparatively peaceful development have created a predominance of social-chauvinism in the official Socialist parties of the whole world (Plekhanov, Potresov, Breshkovskaya, Rubanovich, and, in a slightly concealed form, Messrs. Tsereteli, Chernov and Co., in Russia; Scheidemann, Legien, David and others in Germany; Renaudel, Guesde, Vandervelde in France and Belgium; Hyndman and the Fabians in England, etc., etc.). Socialism in words, chauvinism in deeds is characterised by a base, servile adaptation of the “leaders of Socialism” to the interests not only of “their” national bourgeoisie, but also of “their” state—for a whole series of smaller, weaker nationalities have long since been exploited and enslaved by most of the so-called great powers. The imperialist war is just a war for division and re-division of this kind of booty. The struggle for the emancipation of the labouring masses from the influence of the bourgeoisie in general, and the imperialist bourgeoisie in particular, is impossible without a struggle against the opportunist superstitions concerning the “state.”

We first of all survey the teachings of Marx and Engels on the state, dwelling with particular fullness on those aspects of their teachings which have been forgotten or opportunistically distorted. We then analyse specially the chief representative of these distorters, Karl Kautsky, the best known leader of the Second International (1889-1914), who has suffered such a pitiful political bankruptcy during the present war. Finally, we sum up, in the main, the experiences of the Russian Revolution of 1905 and particularly that of 1917. The revolution is evidently completing at the present time (beginning of August, 1917) the first stage of its development; but, generally speaking, this revolution can be understood in its totality only as a link in the chain of Socialist proletarian revolutions called forth by the imperialist war. The question of the relation of a proletarian Socialist revolution to the state acquires, therefore, not only a practical political importance, but the importance of an urgent problem of the day, the problem of elucidating to the masses what they will have to do for their liberation from the yoke of capitalism in the very near future.

THE AUTHOR.

August, 1917.

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## PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

THE present, second, edition is published almost without change. Paragraph three has been added to Chapter II.

THE AUTHOR.

Moscow, December 30, 1918.

# STATE AND REVOLUTION

## CHAPTER I

### CLASS SOCIETY AND THE STATE

#### 1. THE STATE AS THE PRODUCT OF THE IRRECONCILABILITY OF CLASS ANTAGONISMS

WHAT is now happening to Marx's doctrine has, in the course of history, often happened to the doctrines of other revolutionary thinkers and leaders of oppressed classes struggling for emancipation. During the lifetime of great revolutionaries, the oppressing classes have visited relentless persecution on them and received their teaching with the most savage hostility, the most furious hatred, the most ruthless campaign of lies and slanders. After their death, attempts are made to turn them into harmless icons, canonise them, and surround their *names* with a certain halo for the "consolation" of the oppressed classes and with the object of duping them, while at the same time emasculating and vulgarising the *real essence* of their revolutionary theories and blunting their revolutionary edge. At the present time, the bourgeoisie and the opportunists within the labour movement are co-operating in this work of adulterating Marxism. They omit, obliterate, and distort the revolutionary side of its teaching, its revolutionary soul. They push to the foreground and extol what is, or seems, acceptable to the bourgeoisie. All the social-chauvinists are now "Marxists"—joking aside! And more and more do German bourgeois professors, erstwhile specialists in the demolition of Marx, speak now of the "national-German" Marx, who, they aver, has educated the labour unions which are so splendidly organised for conducting the present predatory war!

In such circumstances, the distortion of Marxism being so widespread, it is our first task to *resuscitate* the real teachings of Marx on the state. For this purpose it will be necessary to quote at length from the works of Marx and Engels themselves. Of course, long quotations will make the text cumbersome and in no way help to



make it popular reading, but we cannot possibly avoid them. All, or at any rate, all the most essential passages in the works of Marx and Engels on the subject of the state must necessarily be given as fully as possible, in order that the reader may form an independent opinion of all the views of the founders of scientific Socialism and of the development of those views, and in order that their distortions by the present predominant "Kautskyism" may be proved in black and white and rendered plain to all.

Let us begin with the most popular of Engels' works, *Der Ursprung der Familie, des Privateigentums und des Staats*,\* the sixth edition of which was published in Stuttgart as far back as 1894. We must translate the quotations from the German originals, as the Russian translations, although very numerous, are for the most part either incomplete or very unsatisfactory.

Summarising his historical analysis Engels says:

The state is therefore by no means a power imposed on society from the outside; just as little is it "the reality of the moral idea," "the image and reality of reason," as Hegel asserted. Rather, it is a product of society at a certain stage of development; it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself, that it is cleft into irreconcilable antagonisms which it is powerless to dispel. But in order that these antagonisms, classes with conflicting economic interests, may not consume themselves and society in sterile struggle, a power apparently standing above society becomes necessary, whose purpose is to moderate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of "order"; and this power arising out of society, but placing itself above it, and increasingly separating itself from it, is the state.\*\*

Here we have, expressed in all its clearness, the basic idea of Marxism on the question of the historical rôle and meaning of the state. The state is the product and the manifestation of the *irreconcilability* of class antagonisms. The state arises when, where, and to the extent that the class antagonisms *cannot* be objectively reconciled. And, conversely, the existence of the state proves that the class antagonisms *are* irreconcilable.

It is precisely on this most important and fundamental point that distortions of Marxism arise along two main lines.

On the one hand, the bourgeois, and particularly the petty-bourgeois, ideologists, compelled under the pressure of indisputable historical facts to admit that the state only exists where there are class antagonisms and the class struggle, "correct" Marx in such a

\* Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, London and New York, 1933.—Ed.

\*\* *Ibid.*—Ed.

way as to make it appear that the state is an organ for *reconciling* the classes. According to Marx, the state could neither arise nor maintain itself if a reconciliation of classes were possible. But with the petty-bourgeois and philistine professors and publicists, the state—and this frequently on the strength of benevolent references to Marx!—becomes a conciliator of the classes. According to Marx, the state is an organ of class *domination*, an organ of *oppression* of one class by another; its aim is the creation of “order” which legalises and perpetuates this oppression by moderating the collisions between the classes. But in the opinion of the petty-bourgeois politicians, order means reconciliation of the classes, and not oppression of one class by another; to moderate collisions does not mean, they say, to deprive the oppressed classes of certain definite means and methods of struggle for overthrowing the oppressors, but to practice reconciliation.

For instance, when, in the Revolution of 1917, the question of the real meaning and rôle of the state arose in all its vastness as a practical question demanding immediate action on a wide mass scale, all the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks suddenly and completely sank to the petty-bourgeois theory of “reconciliation” of the classes by the “state.” Innumerable resolutions and articles by politicians of both these parties are saturated through and through with this purely petty-bourgeois and philistine theory of “reconciliation.” That the state is an organ of domination of a definite class which *cannot* be reconciled with its antipode (the class opposed to it)—this petty-bourgeois democracy is never able to understand. Its attitude towards the state is one of the most telling proofs that our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks are not Socialists at all (which we Bolsheviks have always maintained), but petty-bourgeois democrats with a near-Socialist phraseology.

On the other hand, the “Kautskyist” distortion of Marx is far more subtle. “Theoretically,” there is no denying that the state is the organ of class domination, or that class antagonisms are irreconcilable. But what is forgotten or glossed over is this: if the state is the product of the irreconcilable character of class antagonisms, if it is a force standing *above* society and “increasingly separating itself from it,” then it is clear that the liberation of the oppressed class is impossible not only without a violent revolution, *but also without the destruction* of the apparatus of state power, which was created by the ruling class and in which this “separation” is em-

bodied. As we shall see later, Marx drew this theoretically self-evident conclusion from a concrete historical analysis of the problems of revolution. And it is exactly this conclusion which Kautsky—as we shall show fully in our subsequent remarks—has “forgotten” and distorted.

## 2. SPECIAL BODIES OF ARMED MEN, PRISONS, ETC.

Engels continues:

In contrast with the ancient organisation of the *gens*, the first distinguishing characteristic of the state is the grouping of the subjects of the state *on a territorial basis*. . . .

Such a grouping seems “natural” to us, but it came after a prolonged and costly struggle against the old form of tribal or gentile society.

. . . The second is the establishment of a *public force*, which is no longer absolutely identical with the population organising itself as an armed power. This special public force is necessary, because a self-acting armed organisation of the population has become impossible since the cleavage of society into classes. . . . This public force exists in every state; it consists not merely of armed men, but of material appendages, prisons and repressive institutions of all kinds, of which gentile society knew nothing. . . .\*

Engels develops the conception of that “power” which is termed the state—a power arising from society, but placing itself above it and becoming more and more separated from it. What does this power mainly consist of? It consists of special bodies of armed men who have at their disposal prisons, etc.

We are justified in speaking of special bodies of armed men, because the public power peculiar to every state is not “absolutely identical” with the armed population, with its “self-acting armed organisation.”

Like all the great revolutionary thinkers, Engels tries to draw the attention of the class-conscious workers to that very fact which to prevailing philistinism appears least of all worthy of attention, most common and sanctified by solid, indeed, one might say, petrified prejudices. A standing army and police are the chief instruments of state power. But can this be otherwise?

From the point of view of the vast majority of Europeans at the end of the nineteenth century whom Engels was addressing, and who had neither lived through nor closely observed a single great

\* *Ibid.*—*Éd.*

revolution, this cannot be otherwise. They cannot understand at all what this "self-acting armed organisation of the population" means. To the question, whence arose the need for special bodies of armed men, standing above society and becoming separated from it (police and standing army), the Western European and Russian philistines are inclined to answer with a few phrases borrowed from Spencer or Mikhailovsky, by reference to the complexity of social life, the differentiation of functions, and so forth.

Such a reference seems "scientific" and effectively dulls the senses of the average man, obscuring the most important and basic fact, namely, the break-up of society into irreconcilably antagonistic classes.

Without such a break-up, the "self-acting armed organisation of the population" might have differed from the primitive organisation of a herd of monkeys grasping sticks, or of primitive men, or men united in a tribal form of society, by its complexity, its high technique, and so forth, but would still have been possible.

It is impossible now, because society, in the period of civilisation, is broken up into antagonistic and, indeed, irreconcilably antagonistic classes, which, if armed in a "self-acting" manner, would come into armed struggle with each other. A state is formed, a special power is created in the form of special bodies of armed men, and every revolution, by shattering the state apparatus, demonstrates to us how the ruling class aims at the restoration of the special bodies of armed men at *its* service, and how the oppressed class tries to create a new organisation of this kind, capable of serving not the exploiters, but the exploited.

In the above observation, Engels raises theoretically the very same question which every great revolution raises practically, palpably, and on a mass scale of action, namely, the question of the relation between special bodies of armed men and the "self-acting armed organisation of the population." We shall see how this is concretely illustrated by the experience of the European and Russian revolutions.

But let us return to Engels' discourse.

He points out that sometimes, for instance, here and there in North America, this public power is weak (he has in mind an exception that is rare in capitalist society, and he speaks about parts of North America in its pre-imperialist days, where the free colonist predominated), but that in general it tends to become stronger:

It [the public power] grows stronger, however, in proportion as the class antagonisms within the state grow sharper, and with the growth in size and population of the adjacent states. We have only to look at our present-day Europe, where class struggle and rivalry in conquest have screwed up the public power to such a pitch that it threatens to devour the whole of society and even the state itself.\*

This was written as early as the beginning of the 'nineties of last century, Engels' last preface being dated June 16, 1891. The turn towards imperialism, understood to mean complete domination of the trusts, full sway of the large banks, and a colonial policy on a grand scale, and so forth, was only just beginning in France, and was even weaker in North America and in Germany. Since then the "rivalry in conquest" has made gigantic progress—especially as, by the beginning of the second decade of the twentieth century, the whole world had been finally divided up between these "rivals in conquest," *i.e.*, between the great predatory powers. Military and naval armaments since then have grown to monstrous proportions, and the predatory war of 1914-1917 for the domination of the world by England or Germany, for the division of the spoils, has brought the "swallowing up" of all the forces of society by the rapacious state power nearer to a complete catastrophe.

As early as 1891 Engels was able to point to "rivalry in conquest" as one of the most important features of the foreign policy of the great powers, but in 1914-1917, when this rivalry, many times intensified, has given birth to an imperialist war, the rascally social-chauvinists cover up their defence of the predatory policy of "their" capitalist classes by phrases about the "defence of the fatherland," or the "defence of the republic and the revolution," etc.!

### 3. THE STATE AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR THE EXPLOITATION OF THE OPPRESSED CLASS

For the maintenance of a special public force standing above society, taxes and state loans are needed.

Having at their disposal the public force and the right to exact taxes, the officials now stand as organs of society *above* society. The free, voluntary respect which was accorded to the organs of the gentile form of government does not satisfy them, even if they could have it. . . .

Special laws are enacted regarding the sanctity and the inviolability of the officials. "The shabbiest police servant . . . has

\* *Ibid.*—Ed.

more authority" than the representative of the clan, but even the head of the military power of a civilised state "may well envy the least among the chiefs of the clan the unconstrained and uncontested respect which is paid to him." \*

Here the question regarding the privileged position of the officials as organs of state power is clearly stated. The main point is indicated as follows: what is it that places them *above* society? We shall see how this theoretical problem was solved in practice by the Paris Commune in 1871 and how it was slurred over in a reactionary manner by Kautsky in 1912.

As the state arose out of the need to hold class antagonisms in check; but as it, at the same time, arose in the midst of the conflict of these classes, it is, as a rule, the state of the most powerful, economically dominant class, which by virtue thereof becomes also the dominant class politically, and thus acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class. . . .

Not only the ancient and feudal states were organs of exploitation of the slaves and serfs, but

the modern representative state is the instrument of the exploitation of wage-labour by capital. By way of exception, however, there are periods when the warring classes so nearly attain equilibrium that the state power, ostensibly appearing as a mediator, assumes for the moment a certain independence in relation to both. . . .\*\*

Such were, for instance, the absolute monarchies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Bonapartism of the First and Second Empires in France, and the Bismarck régime in Germany.

Such, we may add, is now the Kerensky government in republican Russia after its shift to persecuting the revolutionary proletariat, at a moment when the Soviets, thanks to the leadership of the petty-bourgeois democrats, have *already* become impotent, while the bourgeoisie is *not yet* strong enough to disperse them outright.

In a democratic republic, Engels continues, "wealth wields its power indirectly, but all the more effectively," first, by means of "direct corruption of the officials" (America); second, by means of "the alliance of the government with the stock exchange" (France and America).

At the present time, imperialism and the domination of the banks have "developed" to an unusually fine art both these methods of defending and asserting the omnipotence of wealth in democratic republics of all descriptions. If, for instance, in the very first months

\* *Ibid.*—Ed.

\*\* *Ibid.*—Ed.

of the Russian democratic republic, one might say during the honeymoon of the union of the "Socialists"—Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks—with the bourgeoisie, Mr. Palchinsky obstructed every measure in the coalition cabinet. restraining the capitalists and their war profiteering, their plundering of the public treasury by means of army contracts; and if, after his resignation, Mr. Palchinsky (replaced, of course, by an exactly similar Palchinsky) was "rewarded" by the capitalists with a "soft" job carrying a salary of 120,000 rubles per annum, what was this? Direct or indirect bribery? A league of the government with the capitalist syndicates, or "only" friendly relations? What is the rôle played by the Chernovs, Tseretelis, Avksentyevs and Skobelevs? Are they the "direct" or only the indirect allies of the millionaire treasury looters?

The omnipotence of "wealth" is thus more *secure* in a democratic republic, since it does not depend on the poor political shell of capitalism. A democratic republic is the best possible political shell for capitalism, and therefore, once capital has gained control (through the Palchinskys, Chernovs, Tseretelis and Co.) of this very best shell, it establishes its power so securely, so firmly that *no* change, either of persons, or institutions, or parties in the bourgeois republic can shake it.

We must also note that Engels quite definitely regards universal suffrage as a means of bourgeois domination. Universal suffrage, he says, obviously summing up the long experience of German Social-Democracy, is "an index of the maturity of the working class; it cannot, and never will, be anything else but that in the modern state."

The petty-bourgeois democrats, such as our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, and also their twin brothers, the social-chauvinists and opportunists of Western Europe, all expect "more" from universal suffrage. They themselves share, and instil into the minds of the people, the wrong idea that universal suffrage "in the *modern state*" is really capable of expressing the will of the majority of the toilers and of assuring its realisation.

We can here only note this wrong idea, only point out that this perfectly clear, exact and concrete statement by Engels is distorted at every step in the propaganda and agitation of the "official" (*i.e.*, opportunist) Socialist parties. A detailed analysis of all the falseness of this idea, which Engels brushes aside, is given in our further account of the views of Marx and Engels on the "modern" state.

A general summary of his views is given by Engels in the most popular of his works in the following words:

The state, therefore, has not existed from all eternity. There have been societies which managed without it, which had no conception of the state and state power. At a certain stage of economic development, which was necessarily bound up with the cleavage of society into classes, the state became a necessity owing to this cleavage. We are now rapidly approaching a stage in the development of production at which the existence of these classes has not only ceased to be a necessity, but is becoming a positive hindrance to production. They will disappear as inevitably as they arose at an earlier stage. Along with them, the state will inevitably disappear. The society that organises production anew on the basis of a free and equal association of the producers will put the whole state machine where it will then belong: in the museum of antiquities, side by side with the spinning wheel and the bronze axe.\*

It is not often that we find this passage quoted in the propaganda and agitation literature of contemporary Social-Democracy. But even when we do come across it, it is generally quoted in the same manner as one bows before an icon, *i.e.*, it is done merely to show official respect for Engels, without any attempt to gauge the breadth and depth of revolutionary action presupposed by this relegating of "the whole state machine . . . to the museum of antiquities." In most cases we do not even find an understanding of what Engels calls the state machine.

#### 4. THE "WITHERING AWAY" OF THE STATE AND VIOLENT REVOLUTION

Engels' words regarding the "withering away" of the state enjoy such popularity, they are so often quoted, and they show so clearly the essence of the usual adulteration by means of which Marxism is made to look like opportunism, that we must dwell on them in detail. Let us quote the whole passage from which they are taken.

The proletariat seizes state power, and then transforms the means of production into state property. But in doing this, it puts an end to itself as the proletariat, it puts an end to all class differences and class antagonisms, it puts an end also to the state as the state. Former society, moving in class antagonisms, had need of the state, that is, an organisation of the exploiting class at each period for the maintenance of its external conditions of production; therefore, in particular, for the forcible holding down of the exploited class in the conditions of oppression (slavery, bondage or serfdom, wage-labour) determined by the existing mode of production. The state was the official representative of society as a whole, its embodiment in a visible corporate body; but it was this only in so far as it was the state of that class which itself, in its epoch, repre-

\* *Ibid.*—Ed.



sented society as a whole: in ancient times, the state of the slave-owning citizens; in the Middle Ages, of the feudal nobility; in our epoch, of the bourgeoisie. When ultimately it becomes really representative of society as a whole, it makes itself superfluous. As soon as there is no longer any class of society to be held in subjection; as soon as, along with class domination and the struggle for individual existence based on the former anarchy of production, the collisions and excesses arising from these have also been abolished, there is nothing more to be repressed, and a special repressive force, a state, is no longer necessary. The first act in which the state really comes forward as the representative of society as a whole—the seizure 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 a state power in social relations becomes superfluous in one sphere after another, and then becomes dormant of itself. Government over persons is replaced by the administration of things and the direction of the processes of production. The state is not “abolished,” *it withers away*. It is from this standpoint that we must appraise the phrase “people’s free state”—both its justification at times for agitational purposes, and its ultimate scientific inadequacy—and also the demand of the so-called Anarchists that the state should be abolished overnight.\*

Without fear of committing an error, it may be said that of this argument by Engels so singularly rich in ideas, only one point has become an integral part of Socialist thought among modern Socialist parties, namely, that, unlike the Anarchist doctrine of the “abolition” of the state, according to Marx the state “withers away.” To emasculate Marxism in such a manner is to reduce it to opportunism, for such an “interpretation” only leaves the hazy conception of a slow, even, gradual change, free from leaps and storms, free from revolution. The current popular conception, if one may say so, of the “withering away” of the state undoubtedly means a slurring over, if not a negation, of revolution.

Yet, such an “interpretation” is the crudest distortion of Marxism, which is advantageous only to the bourgeoisie; in point of theory, it is based on a disregard for the most important circumstances and considerations pointed out in the very passage summarising Engels’ ideas, which we have just quoted in full.

In the first place, Engels at the very outset of his argument says that, in assuming state power, the proletariat by that very act “puts an end to the state as the state.” One is “not accustomed” to reflect on what this really means. Generally, it is either ignored altogether, or it is considered as a piece of “Hegelian weakness” on Engels’ part. As a matter of fact, however, these words express succinctly the experience of one of the greatest proletarian revolutions—the Paris Commune of 1871, of which we shall speak in greater detail

\* Friedrich Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, London and New York, 1933.—Ed.

in its proper place. As a matter of fact, Engels speaks here of the destruction of the bourgeois state by the proletarian revolution, while the words about its withering away refer to the remains of *proletarian* statehood *after* the Socialist revolution. The bourgeois state does not "wither away," according to Engels, but is "put an end to" by the proletariat in the course of the revolution. What withers away after the revolution is the proletarian state or semi-state.

Secondly, the state is a "special repressive force." This splendid and extremely profound definition of Engels' is given by him here with complete lucidity. It follows from this that the "special repressive force" of the bourgeoisie for the suppression of the proletariat, of the millions of workers by a handful of the rich, must be replaced by a "special repressive force" of the proletariat for the suppression of the bourgeoisie (the dictatorship of the proletariat). It is just this that constitutes the destruction of "the state as the state." It is just this that constitutes the "act" of "the seizure of the means of production in the name of society." And it is obvious that such a substitution of one (proletarian) "special repressive force" for another (bourgeois) "special repressive force" can in no way take place in the form of a "withering away."

Thirdly, as to the "withering away" or, more expressively and colourfully, as to the state "becoming dormant," Engels refers quite clearly and definitely to the period *after* "the seizure of the means of production [by the state] in the name of society," that is, *after* the Socialist revolution. We all know that the political form of the "state" at that time is complete democracy. But it never enters the head of any of the opportunists who shamelessly distort Marx that when Engels speaks here of the state "withering away," or "becoming dormant," he speaks of *democracy*. At first sight this seems very strange. But it is "unintelligible" only to one who has not reflected on the fact that democracy is *also* a state and that, consequently, democracy will *also* disappear when the state disappears. The bourgeois state can only be "put an end to" by a revolution. The state in general, *i.e.*, most complete democracy, can only "wither away."

Fourthly, having formulated his famous proposition that "the state withers away," Engels at once explains concretely that this proposition is directed equally against the opportunists and the Anárchists. In doing this, however, Engels puts in the first place that conclusion

from his proposition about the "withering away" of the state which is directed against the opportunists.

One can wager that out of every 10,000 persons who have read or heard about the "withering away" of the state, 9,990 do not know at all, or do not remember, that Engels did not direct his conclusions from this proposition against the Anarchists *alone*. And out of the remaining ten, probably nine do not know the meaning of a "people's free state" nor the reason why an attack on this watchword contains an attack on the opportunists. This is how history is written! This is how a great revolutionary doctrine is imperceptibly adulterated and adapted to current philistinism! The conclusion drawn against the Anarchists has been repeated thousands of times, vulgarised, harangued about in the crudest fashion possible until it has acquired the strength of a prejudice, whereas the conclusion drawn against the opportunists has been hushed up and "forgotten"!

The "people's free state" was a demand in the programme of the German Social-Democrats and their current slogan in the 'seventies. There is no political substance in this slogan other than a pompous middle-class circumlocution of the idea of democracy. In so far as it referred in a lawful manner to a democratic republic, Engels was prepared to "justify" its use "at times" from a propaganda point of view. But this slogan was opportunist, for it not only expressed an exaggerated view of the attractiveness of bourgeois democracy, but also a lack of understanding of the Socialist criticism of every state in general. We are in favour of a democratic republic as the best form of the state for the proletariat under capitalism, but we have no right to forget that wage slavery is the lot of the people even in the most democratic bourgeois republic. Furthermore, every state is a "special repressive force" for the suppression of the oppressed class. Consequently, *no* state is either "free" or a "people's state." Marx and Engels explained this repeatedly to their party comrades in the 'seventies.

Fifthly, in the same work of Engels, from which every one remembers his argument on the "withering away" of the state, there is also a disquisition on the significance of a violent revolution. The historical analysis of its rôle becomes, with Engels, a veritable panegyric on violent revolution. This, of course, "no one remembers"; to talk or even to think of the importance of this idea is not considered good form by contemporary Socialist parties, and in the daily propaganda and agitation among the masses it plays no part

whatever. Yet it is indissolubly bound up with the "withering away" of the state in one harmonious whole.

Here is Engels' argument:

. . . That force, however, plays another rôle (other than that of a diabolical power) in history, a revolutionary rôle; that, in the words of Marx, it is the midwife of every old society which is pregnant with the new; that it is the instrument with whose aid social movement forces its way through and shatters the dead, fossilised political forms—of this there is not a word in Herr Dühring. It is only with sighs and groans that he admits the possibility that force will perhaps be necessary for the overthrow of the economic system of exploitation—unfortunately! because all use of force, forsooth, demoralises the person who uses it. And this in spite of the immense moral and spiritual impetus which has resulted from every victorious revolution! And this in Germany, where a violent collision—which indeed may be forced on the people—would at least have the advantage of wiping out the servility which has permeated the national consciousness as a result of the humiliation of the Thirty Years' War.<sup>2</sup> And this parson's mode of thought—lifeless, insipid and impotent—claims to impose itself on the most revolutionary party which history has known? \*

How can this panegyric on violent revolution, which Engels insistently brought to the attention of the German Social-Democrats between 1878 and 1894, *i.e.*, right to the time of his death, be combined with the theory of the "withering away" of the state to form one doctrine?

Usually the two views are combined by means of eclecticism, by an unprincipled, sophistic, arbitrary selection (to oblige the powers that be) of either one or the other argument, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred (if not more often), it is the idea of the "withering away" that is specially emphasised. Eclecticism is substituted for dialectics—this is the most usual, the most widespread phenomenon to be met with in the official Social-Democratic literature of our day in relation to Marxism. Such a substitution is, of course, nothing new; it may be observed even in the history of classic Greek philosophy. When Marxism is adulterated to become opportunism, the substitution of eclecticism for dialectics is the best method of deceiving the masses; it gives an illusory satisfaction; it seems to take into account all sides of the process, all the tendencies of development, all the contradictory factors and so forth, whereas in reality it offers no consistent and revolutionary view of the process of social development at all.

We have already said above and shall show more fully later that the teaching of Marx and Engels regarding the inevitability of a

\* *Ibid.*—Ed.

violent revolution refers to the bourgeois state. It *cannot* be replaced by the proletarian state (the dictatorship of the proletariat) through "withering away," but, as a general rule, only through a violent revolution. The panegyric sung in its honour by Engels and fully corresponding to the repeated declarations of Marx (remember the concluding passages of the *Poverty of Philosophy* and the *Communist Manifesto*, with its proud and open declaration of the inevitability of a violent revolution; remember Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme* of 1875 in which, almost thirty years later, he mercilessly castigates the opportunist character of that programme<sup>3</sup>)—this praise is by no means a mere "impulse," a mere declamation, or a polemical sally. The necessity of systematically fostering among the masses *this* and just this point of view about violent revolution lies at the root of the *whole* of Marx's and Engels' teaching. The neglect of such propaganda and agitation by both the present predominant social-chauvinist and the Kautskyist currents brings their betrayal of Marx's and Engels' teaching into prominent relief.

The replacement of the bourgeois by the proletarian state is impossible without a violent revolution. The abolition of the proletarian state, *i.e.*, of all states, is only possible through "withering away."

Marx and Engels gave a full and concrete exposition of these views in studying each revolutionary situation separately, in analysing the lessons of the experience of each individual revolution. We now pass to this, undoubtedly the most important part of their work.

## CHAPTER II

### THE EXPERIENCES OF 1848-1851

#### I. ON THE EVE OF REVOLUTION

THE first productions of mature Marxism—the *Poverty of Philosophy* and the *Communist Manifesto*—were created on the very eve of the Revolution of 1848. For this reason we have in them, side by side with a statement of the general principles of Marxism, a reflection, to a certain degree, of the concrete revolutionary situation of the time. Consequently, it will possibly be more to the point to examine what the authors of these works say about the state immediately before they draw conclusions from the experience of the years 1848-1851.

In the course of its development,—wrote Marx in the *Poverty of Philosophy*—the working class will replace the old bourgeois society by an association which excludes classes and their antagonism, and there will no longer be any real political power, for political power is precisely the official expression of the class antagonism within bourgeois society.\*

It is instructive to compare with this general statement of the idea of the state disappearing after classes have disappeared, the statement contained in the *Communist Manifesto*, written by Marx and Engels a few months later—to be exact, in November, 1847:

In depicting the most general phases of the development of the proletariat, we traced the more or less veiled civil war, raging within existing society, up to the point where that war breaks out into open revolution, and where the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat. . . .

We have seen above that the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise [literally "promote"] the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to establish democracy.

The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest by degrees all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the state, i.e., of the proletariat organised as the ruling class; and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible.\*\*

\* Karl Marx, *Poverty of Philosophy*, London and New York, 1933.—Ed.

\*\* Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Authorised English Translation of 1888, London and New York, 1932, pp. 20-30.—Ed.

Here we have a formulation of one of the most remarkable and most important ideas of Marxism on the subject of the state, namely, the idea of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" (as Marx and Engels began to term it after the Paris Commune); and also a definition of the state, in the highest degree interesting, but nevertheless also belonging to the category of "forgotten words" of Marxism: "*the state, i.e., the proletariat organised as the ruling class.*"

This definition of the state, far from having ever been explained in the current propaganda and agitation literature of the official Social-Democratic parties, has been actually forgotten, as it is absolutely irreconcilable with reformism, and is a slap in the face of the common opportunist prejudices and philistine illusions about the "peaceful development of democracy."

The proletariat needs the state—this is repeated by all the opportunists, social-chauvinists and Kautskyists, who assure us that this is what Marx taught. They "forget," however, to add that, in the first place, the proletariat, according to Marx, needs only a state which is withering away, *i.e.*, a state which is so constituted that it begins to wither away immediately, and cannot but wither away; and, secondly, the workers need "a state, *i.e.*, the proletariat organised as the ruling class."

The state is a special organisation of force; it is the organisation of violence for the suppression of some class. What class must the proletariat suppress? Naturally, the exploiting class only, *i.e.*, the bourgeoisie. The toilers need the state only to overcome the resistance of the exploiters, and only the proletariat can direct this suppression and bring it to fulfilment, for the proletariat is the only class that is thoroughly revolutionary, the only class that can unite all the toilers and the exploited in the struggle against the bourgeoisie, in completely displacing it.

The exploiting classes need political rule in order to maintain exploitation, *i.e.*, in the selfish interests of an insignificant minority, and against the vast majority of the people. The exploited classes need political rule in order completely to abolish all exploitation, *i.e.*, in the interests of the vast majority of the people, and against the insignificant minority consisting of the slave-owners of modern times—the landowners and the capitalists.

The petty-bourgeois democrats, these sham Socialists who have substituted for the class struggle dreams of harmony between classes, imagined even the transition to Socialism in a dreamy fashion—not

in the form of the overthrow of the rule of the exploiting class, but in the form of the peaceful submission of the minority to a majority conscious of its aims. This petty-bourgeois Utopia, indissolubly connected with the idea of the state's being above classes, in practice led to the betrayal of the interests of the toiling classes, as was shown, for example, in the history of the French revolutions of 1848 and 1871, and in the participation of "Socialists" in bourgeois cabinets in England, France, Italy and other countries at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries.

Marx fought all his life against this petty-bourgeois Socialism—now reborn in Russia in the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik Parties. He carried his analysis of the class struggle logically right to the doctrine of political power, the doctrine of the state.

The overthrow of bourgeois rule can be accomplished only by the proletariat, as the particular class, which, by the economic conditions of its existence, is being prepared for this work and is provided both with the opportunity and the power to perform it. While the capitalist class breaks up and atomises the peasantry and all the petty-bourgeois strata, it welds together, unites and organises the town proletariat. Only the proletariat—by virtue of its economic rôle in large-scale production—is capable of leading *all* the toiling and exploited masses, who are exploited, oppressed, crushed by the bourgeoisie not less, and often more, than the proletariat, but who are incapable of carrying on the struggle for their freedom *independently*.

The doctrine of the class struggle, as applied by Marx to the question of the state and of the Socialist revolution, leads inevitably to the recognition of the *political rule* of the proletariat, of its dictatorship, *i.e.*, of a power shared with none and relying directly upon the armed force of the masses. The overthrow of the bourgeoisie is realisable only by the transformation of the proletariat into the *ruling class*, able to crush the inevitable and desperate resistance of the bourgeoisie, and to organise, for the new economic order, *all* the toiling and exploited masses.

The proletariat needs state power, the centralised organisation of force, the organisation of violence, both for the purpose of crushing the resistance of the exploiters and for the purpose of *guiding* the great mass of the population—the peasantry, the petty-bourgeoisie, the semi-proletarians—in the work of organising Socialist economy.

By educating a workers' party, Marxism educates the vanguard



of the proletariat, capable of assuming power and of *leading the whole people* to Socialism, of directing and organising the new order, of being the teacher, guide and leader of all the toiling and exploited in the task of building up their social life without the bourgeoisie and against the bourgeoisie. As against this, the opportunism predominant at present breeds in the workers' party representatives of the better-paid workers, who lose touch with the rank and file, "get along" fairly well under capitalism, and sell their birthright for a mess of pottage, *i.e.*, renounce their rôle of revolutionary leaders of the people against the bourgeoisie.

"The state, *i.e.*, the proletariat organised as the ruling class"—this theory of Marx's is indissolubly connected with all his teaching concerning the revolutionary rôle of the proletariat in history. The culmination of this rôle is proletarian dictatorship, the political rule of the proletariat.

But, if the proletariat needs the state, as a *special* form of organisation of violence *against* the capitalist class, the following question arises almost automatically: is it thinkable that such an organisation can be created without a preliminary break-up and destruction of the state machinery created for *its own* use by the bourgeoisie? The *Communist Manifesto* leads straight to this conclusion, and it is of this conclusion that Marx speaks when summing up the experience of the revolution of 1848-1851.

## 2. RESULTS OF THE REVOLUTION

On the question of the state which we are concerned with, Marx sums up his conclusions from the revolution of 1848-1851 in the following observations contained in his work, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*:

... But the revolution is thorough. It is still on its way through purgatory. It is completing its task methodically. By December 2nd, 1851 [the day of Louis Bonaparte's *coup d'état*], it had completed one-half of its preparatory work; now it is completing the other half. First, it perfected parliamentary power, so that it could overthrow it. Now, when it has achieved this, it is perfecting *executive power*, reducing it to its purest terms, isolating it, setting it over against itself as the sole object of reproach, so that it can *concentrate against it all its forces of destruction* [the italics are ours]. And when it has completed this second half of its preparatory work, Europe will leap to its feet and shout with joy: well grubbed, old mole!

This executive power with its huge bureaucratic and military organisation, with its extensive and artificial state machinery, a horde of half a million offi-

cials in addition to an army of another half a million, this frightful body of parasites wound like a caul about the body of French society and clogging its every pore, arose in the time of the absolute monarchy in the period of the fall of feudalism, which it helped to hasten.

The first French Revolution developed centralisation,

but at the same time it developed the scope, the attributes and the servants of the government power. Napoleon perfected this state machinery. The legitimate monarchy and the July monarchy added nothing to it but a greater division of labour. . . .

Finally, in its struggle against the revolution, the parliamentary Republic found itself compelled to strengthen with its repressive measures, the resources and the centralisation of the government power. *All revolutions brought this machine to greater perfection, instead of breaking it up* [the italics are ours]. The parties which alternately contended for supremacy looked on the capture of this vast state edifice as the chief spoils of the victor.\*

In this remarkable passage Marxism makes a tremendous step forward in comparison with the position of the *Communist Manifesto*. There the question of the state still is treated extremely in the abstract, in the most general terms and expressions. Here the question is treated in a concrete manner, and the conclusion is most precise, definite, practical and palpable: all revolutions which have taken place up to the present have helped to perfect the state machinery, whereas it must be shattered, broken to pieces.

This conclusion is the chief and fundamental thesis in the Marxist theory of the state. Yet it is this fundamental thesis which has been not only completely *forgotten* by the dominant official Social-Democratic parties, but directly *distorted* (as we shall see later) by the foremost theoretician of the Second International, K. Kautsky.

In the *Communist Manifesto* are summed up the general lessons of history, which force us to see in the state the organ of class domination, and lead us to the inevitable conclusion that the proletariat cannot overthrow the bourgeoisie without first conquering political power, without obtaining political rule, without transforming the state into the "proletariat organised as the ruling class"; and that this proletarian state will begin to wither away immediately after its victory, because in a society without class antagonisms, the state is unnecessary and impossible. The question as to how, from the point of view of historical development, this replacement of the capitalist state by the proletarian state shall take place, is not raised here.

\* Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, London and New York, 1933.—Ed.

It is precisely this question that Marx raises and solves in 1852. True to his philosophy of dialectical materialism, Marx takes as his basis the experience of the great revolutionary years 1848-1851. Here, as everywhere, his teaching is the *summing up of experience*, illuminated by a profound philosophical world-conception and a rich knowledge of history.

The problem of the state is put concretely: how did the bourgeois state, the state machinery necessary for the rule of the bourgeoisie, come into being? What were its changes, what its evolution in the course of the bourgeois revolutions and in the face of the independent actions of the oppressed classes? What are the tasks of the proletariat relative to this state machinery?

The centralised state power peculiar to bourgeois society came into being in the period of the fall of absolutism. Two institutions are especially characteristic of this state machinery: bureaucracy and the standing army. In their works, Marx and Engels mention repeatedly the thousand threads which connect these institutions with the bourgeoisie. The experience of every worker illustrates this connection in the clearest and most impressive manner. From its own bitter experience, the working class learns to recognise this connection; that is why it so easily acquires, so completely absorbs the doctrine revealing this inevitable connection, a doctrine which the petty-bourgeois democrats either ignorantly and light-heartedly deny, or, still more light-heartedly, admit "in general," forgetting to draw adequate practical conclusions.

Bureaucracy and the standing army constitute a "parasite" on the body of bourgeois society—a parasite born of the internal antagonisms which tear that society asunder, but essentially a parasite, "clogging every pore" of existence. The Kautskyist opportunism prevalent at present within official Social-Democracy considers this view of the state as a *parasitic organism* to be the peculiar and exclusive property of Anarchism. Naturally, this distortion of Marxism is extremely useful to those philistines who have brought Socialism to the unheard-of disgrace of justifying and embellishing the imperialist war by applying to it the term of "national defence"; but none the less it is an absolute distortion.

The development, perfecting and strengthening of the bureaucratic and military apparatus has been going on through all the bourgeois revolutions of which Europe has seen so many since the fall of feudalism. It is particularly the petty bourgeoisie that is attracted

to the side of the big bourgeoisie and to its allegiance, largely by means of this apparatus, which provides the upper strata of the peasantry, small artisans and tradesmen with a number of comparatively comfortable, quiet and respectable berths raising their holders *above* the people. Consider what happened in Russia during the six months following March 12, 1917. The government posts which hitherto had been given by preference to members of the Black Hundreds now became the booty of Cadets, Mensheviks and S.R.'s. Nobody really thought of any serious reform. They were to be put off "until the Constituent Assembly," which, in its turn, was eventually to be put off until the end of the war! But there was no delay, no waiting for a Constituent Assembly in the matter of dividing the spoils, of getting hold of the berths of Ministers, Assistant-Ministers, governor-generals, etc., etc.! The game that went on of changing the combination of persons forming the Provisional Government was, in essence, only the expression of this division and re-division of the "spoils," which was going on high and low, throughout the country, throughout the central and local government. The practical results of the six months between March 12 and September 9, 1917, beyond all dispute, are: reforms shelved, distribution of officials' berths accomplished, and "mistakes" in the distribution corrected by a few re-distributions.

But the longer the process of "re-apportioning" the bureaucratic apparatus among the various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties (among the Cadets, S.R.'s and Mensheviks, if we take the case of Russia) goes on, the more clearly the oppressed classes, with the proletariat at their head, realise that they are irreconcilably hostile to the *whole* of bourgeois society. Hence the necessity for all bourgeois parties, even for the most democratic and "revolutionary-democratic" among them, to increase their repressive measures against the revolutionary proletariat, to strengthen the apparatus of repression, *i.e.*, the same state machinery. Such a course of events compels the revolution "*to concentrate all its forces of destruction*" against the state power, and to regard the problem as one, not of perfecting the machinery of the state, but of *breaking up and annihilating it*.

It was not logical theorising, but the actual course of events, the living experience of 1848-1851, that produced such a statement of the problem. To what extent Marx held strictly to the solid ground of historical experience we can see from the fact that, in 1852, he

did not as yet deal concretely with the question of *what* was to replace this state machinery that was to be destroyed. Experience had not yet yielded material for the solution of this problem which history placed on the order of the day later on, in 1871. What could be laid down in 1852 with the accuracy of observation characterising the natural sciences, was that the proletarian revolution *had approached* the task of "concentrating all its forces of destruction" against the state, of "breaking up" the governmental machinery.

Here the question may arise: is it correct to generalise the experience, observations and conclusions of Marx, to apply them to a wider field than the history of France during the three years 1848-1851? To analyse this question, let us recall, first of all, a certain remark of Engels, and then proceed to examine the facts.

France—wrote Engels in his introduction to the third edition of the *Eighteenth Brumaire*—is the country where, more than anywhere else, historical class struggles have been always fought through to a decisive conclusion, and therefore where also the changing political forms within which the struggles developed, and in which their results were summed up, were stamped in sharpest outline. The centre of feudalism in the Middle Ages, the model country (since the Renaissance) of a rigidly unified monarchy, in the great revolution France shattered feudalism and established the unadulterated rule of the bourgeoisie in a more classical form than any other European country. And here also the struggle of the rising proletariat against the ruling bourgeoisie appeared in an acute form such as was unknown elsewhere.\*

The last sentence is out of date, inasmuch as there has been a lull in the revolutionary struggle of the French proletariat since 1871; though, long as this lull may be, it in no way excludes the possibility that, in the coming proletarian revolution, France may once more reveal itself as the traditional home of the struggle of classes to a finish.

Let us, however, cast a general glance over the history of the more advanced countries during the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. We shall see that the same process has been going on more slowly, in more varied forms, on a much wider field: on the one hand, a development of "parliamentary power," not only in the republican countries (France, America, Switzerland), but also in the monarchies (England, Germany to a certain extent, Italy, the Scandinavian countries, etc.); on the other hand, a struggle for power of various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties distributing and redistributing the "spoils" of officials' berths, the founda-

\* *Ibid.*—Ed.

tions of capitalist society remaining all the while unchanged; finally, the perfecting and strengthening of the "executive power," its bureaucratic and military apparatus.

There is no doubt that these are the features common to the latest stage in the evolution of all capitalist states generally. In the three years, 1848-1851, France showed, in a swift, sharp, concentrated form, all those processes of development which are inherent in the whole capitalist world.

Imperialism in particular—the era of banking capital, the era of gigantic capitalist monopolies, the era of the transformation of monopoly capitalism into state monopoly-capitalism—shows an unprecedented strengthening of the "state machinery" and an unprecedented growth of its bureaucratic and military apparatus, side by side with the increase of repressive measures against the proletariat, alike in the monarchical and the freest republican countries.

At the present time, world history is undoubtedly leading, on an incomparably larger scale than in 1852, to the "concentration of all the forces" of the proletarian revolution for the purpose of "destroying" the state machinery.

As to what the proletariat will put in its place, instructive data on the subject were furnished by the Paris Commune.

### 3. THE FORMULATION OF THE QUESTION BY MARX IN 1852 \*

In 1907 Mehring published in the magazine *Neue Zeit* (Vol. XXV. 2, p. 164) extracts from a letter by Marx to Weydemeyer dated March 5, 1852. In this letter, among other things, is the following noteworthy observation:

As far as I am concerned, the honour does not belong to me for having discovered the existence either of classes in modern society or of the struggle between the classes. Bourgeois historians a long time before me expounded the historical development of this class struggle, and bourgeois economists, the economic anatomy of classes. What was new on my part, was to prove the following: (1) that the existence of classes is connected only with certain historical struggles which arise out of the development of production [*historische Entwicklungskämpfe der Produktion*]; (2) that class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat; (3) that this dictatorship is itself only a transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society.

In these words Marx has succeeded in expressing with striking clearness, first, the chief and concrete differences between his teach-

\* This section was added by Lenin in the second Russian edition of *State and Revolution*, 1918.—Ed.

ings and those of the most advanced and profound thinkers of the bourgeoisie, and second, the essence of his teachings concerning the state.

The main point in the teaching of Marx is the class struggle. This has very often been said and written. But this is not true. Out of this error, here and there, springs an opportunist distortion of Marxism, such a falsification of it as to make it acceptable to the bourgeoisie. The theory of the class struggle was *not* created by Marx, but by the bourgeoisie *before* Marx and is, generally speaking, *acceptable* to the bourgeoisie. He who recognises *only* the class struggle is not yet a Marxist; he may be found not to have gone beyond the boundaries of bourgeois reasoning and politics. To limit Marxism to the teaching of the class struggle means to curtail Marxism—to distort it, to reduce it to something which is acceptable to the bourgeoisie. A Marxist is one who *extends* the acceptance of class struggle to the acceptance of the *dictatorship of the proletariat*. Herein lies the deepest difference between a Marxist and an ordinary petty or big bourgeois. On this touchstone it is necessary to test a *real* understanding and acceptance of Marxism. And it is not astonishing that, when the history of Europe put before the working class this question in a practical way, not only all opportunists and reformists but all Kautskyists (people who vacillate between reformism and Marxism) turned out to be miserable philistines and petty-bourgeois democrats, *denying* the dictatorship of the proletariat. Kautsky's pamphlet, *Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, published in August, 1918, *i.e.*, long after the first edition of this book, is an example of petty-bourgeois distortion of Marxism and base renunciation of it *in practice*, while hypocritically recognising it *in words* (see my pamphlet, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, Petrograd and Moscow, 1918).\*

The present-day opportunism in the person of its main representative, the former Marxist, K. Kautsky, comes wholly under Marx's characterisation of the *bourgeois* position as quoted above, for this opportunism limits the field of recognition of the class struggle to the realm of bourgeois relationships. (Within this realm, inside of its framework, not a single educated liberal will refuse to recognise the class struggle "in principle"! ) Opportunism *does not lead* the recognition of class struggle up to the main point, up to the period of *transition* from capitalism to Communism, up to the period

\* See *Collected Works*, Volume XXIII.—Ed.

of *overthrowing* and completely abolishing the bourgeoisie. In reality, this period inevitably becomes a period of unusually violent class struggles in their sharpest possible forms and, therefore, the state during this period inevitably must be a state that is democratic *in a new way* (for the proletariat and the poor in general) and dictatorial *in a new way* (against the bourgeoisie).

Further, the substance of the teachings of Marx about the state is assimilated only by one who understands that the dictatorship of a *single* class is necessary not only for any class society generally, not only for the *proletariat* which has overthrown the bourgeoisie, but for the entire *historic period* which separates capitalism from "classless society," from Communism. The forms of bourgeois states are exceedingly variegated, but their essence is the same: in one way or another, all these states are in the last analysis inevitably a *dictatorship of the bourgeoisie*. The transition from capitalism to Communism will certainly bring a great variety and abundance of political forms, but the essence will inevitably be only one: *the dictatorship of the proletariat*.



## CHAPTER III

### EXPERIENCE OF THE PARIS COMMUNE OF 1871: MARX'S ANALYSIS

#### 1. IN WHAT DOES THE HEROISM OF THE COMMUNARDS CONSIST?

It is well known that in the autumn of 1870, a few months prior to the Commune, Marx warned the Paris workers that an attempt to overthrow the government would be the folly of despair. But when, in March, 1871, a decisive battle was *forced* upon the workers and they accepted it, when the uprising had become a fact, Marx welcomed the proletarian revolution with the greatest enthusiasm, in spite of unfavourable auguries. Marx did not assume the rigid attitude of pedantically condemning an "untimely" movement as did the ill-famed Russian renegade from Marxism, Plekhanov, who, in November, 1905, wrote encouragingly about the workers' and peasants' struggle but, after December, 1905, cried, liberal fashion: "They should not have taken up arms."<sup>4</sup>

Marx, however, was not only enthusiastic about the heroism of the Communards who "stormed the heavens," as he expressed himself. He saw in the mass revolutionary movement, although it did not attain its aim, an historic experiment of gigantic importance, a certain advance of the world proletarian revolution, a practical step more important than hundreds of programmes and discussions. To analyse this experiment, to draw from it lessons in tactics, to re-examine his theory in the new light it afforded—such was the problem as it presented itself to Marx.

The only "correction" which Marx thought it necessary to make in the *Communist Manifesto* was made by him on the basis of the revolutionary experience of the Paris Communards.

The last preface to a new German edition of the *Communist Manifesto* signed by both its authors is dated June 24, 1872. In this preface the authors, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, say that the programme of the *Communist Manifesto* is now "in places out of date."

One thing especially—they continue—was proved by the Commune, viz., that the “working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes.” \*

The words within quotation marks in this passage are borrowed by its authors from Marx’s book, *The Civil War in France*.

It thus appears that one principal and fundamental lesson of the Paris Commune was considered by Marx and Engels to be of such enormous importance that they introduced it as a vital correction into the *Communist Manifesto*.

It is most characteristic that it is precisely this vital correction which has been distorted by the opportunists, and its meaning, probably, is not known to nine-tenths, if not ninety-nine-hundredths, of the readers of the *Communist Manifesto*. We shall deal with this distortion more fully further on, in a chapter devoted specially to distortions. It will be sufficient here to note that the current vulgar “interpretation” of Marx’s famous utterance quoted above consists in asserting that Marx is here emphasising the idea of gradual development, in contradistinction to a seizure of power, and so on.

As a matter of fact, *exactly the opposite is the case*. Marx’s idea is that the working class must *break up, shatter* the “ready-made state machinery,” and not confine itself merely to taking possession of it.

On April 12, 1871, i.e., just at the time of the Commune, Marx wrote to Kugelmann:

If you look at the last chapter of my *Eighteenth Brumaire*, you will see that I declare that the next attainment of the French Revolution must be: not, as in the past, to transfer the bureaucratic and military machinery from one hand to the other, but to *break it up* [Marx’s italics—the original is *zerbrechen*]; and this is the precondition of any real people’s revolution on the Continent. And this is what our heroic party comrades in Paris have attempted.\*\*

In these words, “to break up the bureaucratic and military machinery,” is contained, briefly formulated, the principal lesson of Marxism on the tasks of the proletariat in relation to the state during a revolution. And it is just this lesson which has not only been

\* Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, London and New York, 1932, p. 7.—Ed.

\*\* *Neue Zeit*, XX-1, 1901-1902, p. 709. The letters from Marx to Kugelmann have come out in Russian in no less than two editions, one of them edited and with an introduction by me. [Karl Marx, *Letters to Kugelmann*, London and New York, 1933.—Ed.].

forgotten, but downright distorted, by the prevailing Kautskyist "interpretation" of Marxism.

As for Marx's reference to the *Eighteenth Brumaire*, we have quoted above the corresponding passage in full.

It is interesting to note two particular points in the passages of Marx quoted. First, he confines his conclusions to the Continent. This was natural in 1871, when England was still the model of a purely capitalist country, but without a military machine and, in large measure, without a bureaucracy. Hence Marx excluded England, where a revolution, even a people's revolution, could be imagined, and was then possible, *without* the preliminary condition of destroying the "ready-made state machinery."

Today, in 1917, in the epoch of the first great imperialist war, this exception made by Marx is no longer valid. Both England and America, the greatest and last representatives of Anglo-Saxon "liberty" in the sense of the absence of militarism and bureaucracy, have today plunged headlong into the all-European dirty, bloody morass of military bureaucratic institutions to which everything is subordinated and which trample everything under foot. Today, both in England and in America, the "precondition of any real people's revolution" is the *break-up*, the *shattering* of the "ready-made state machinery" (brought in those countries, between 1914 and 1917, to general "European" imperialist perfection).

Secondly, particular attention should be given to Marx's extremely profound remark that the destruction of the military and bureaucratic apparatus of the state is "the precondition of any real *people's* revolution." This idea of a "people's" revolution seems strange on Marx's lips, and the Russian Plekhanovists and Mensheviks, those followers of Struve who wish to be considered Marxists, might possibly declare such an expression to be a "slip of the tongue." They have reduced Marxism to such a state of poverty-stricken "liberal" distortion that nothing exists for them beyond the distinction between bourgeois and proletarian revolution—and even that distinction they understand in an entirely lifeless way.

If we take for examples the revolutions of the twentieth century, we shall, of course, have to recognise both the Portuguese and the Turkish revolutions as bourgeois. Neither, however, is a "people's" revolution, inasmuch as the mass of the people, the enormous majority, does not make its appearance actively, independently, with its own economic and political demands, in either the one or the other.

On the other hand, the Russian bourgeois revolution of 1905-1907, although it presented no such "brilliant" successes as at times fell to the lot of the Portuguese and Turkish revolutions, was undoubtedly a real "people's" revolution, since the mass of the people, the majority, the lowest social "depths," crushed down by oppression and exploitation, were rising independently, since they put on the entire course of the revolution the stamp of *their* demands, *their* attempts at building up, in their own way, a new society in place of the old society that was being shattered.

In the Europe of 1871, the proletariat on the Continent did not constitute the majority of the people. A "people's" revolution, actually sweeping the majority into its current, could be such only if it embraced both the proletariat and the peasantry. Both classes then constituted the "people." Both classes are united by the circumstance that the "bureaucratic and military state machinery" oppresses, crushes, exploits them. To *shatter* this machinery, to *break it up*—this is the true interest of the "people," of its majority, the workers and most of the peasants, this is the "preliminary condition" of a free union of the poorest peasantry with the proletarians; while, without such a union, democracy is unstable and Socialist reorganisation is impossible.

Towards such a union, as is well known, the Paris Commune was making its way, though it did not reach its goal, owing to a number of circumstances, internal and external.

Consequently, when speaking of "a real people's revolution," Marx, without in the least forgetting the peculiar characteristics of the petty bourgeoisie (he spoke of them much and often), was very carefully taking into account the actual interrelation of classes in most of the continental European states in 1871. On the other hand, he stated that the "breaking up" of the state machinery is demanded by the interests both of the workers and of the peasants, that it unites them, that it places before them the common task of removing the "parasite" and replacing it by something new.

By what exactly?

## 2. WHAT IS TO REPLACE THE SHATTERED STATE MACHINERY?

In 1847, in the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx answered this question still in a purely abstract manner, stating the problems rather than the methods of solving them. To replace this machinery by "the

proletariat organised as the ruling class," by "establishing democracy"—such was the answer of the *Communist Manifesto*.

Without resorting to Utopias, Marx waited for the *experience* of a mass movement to produce the answer to the problem as to the exact forms which this organisation of the proletariat as the ruling class will assume and as to the exact manner in which this organisation will be combined with the most complete, most consistent "establishment of democracy."

The experiment of the Commune, meagre as it was, was subjected by Marx to the most careful analysis in his *The Civil War in France*. Let us quote the most important passages of this work.

There developed in the nineteenth century, he says, originating from the days of absolute monarchy, "the centralised state power, with its ubiquitous organs of standing army, police, bureaucracy, clergy and judicature." With the development of class antagonism between capital and labour, "the state power assumed more and more the character of the national power of capital over labour, of a public force organised for social enslavement, of an engine of class despotism. After every revolution marking a progressive phase in the class struggle, the purely repressive character of the state power stands out in bolder and bolder relief." The state power, after the revolution of 1848-1849 became "the national war engine of capital against labour." The Second Empire consolidated this.

"The direct antithesis of the Empire was the Commune," says Marx. It was the "positive form" of "a republic that was not only to supersede the monarchical form of class rule, but class rule itself."

What was this "positive" form of the proletarian, the Socialist republic? What was the state it was beginning to create?

"The first decree of the Commune . . . was the suppression of the standing army, and the substitution for it of the armed people," says Marx.\*

This demand now figures in the programme of every party calling itself Socialist. But the value of their programmes is best shown by the behaviour of our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, who, even after the revolution of March 12, 1917, refused to carry out this demand in practice!

The Commune was formed of municipal councillors, chosen by universal suffrage in various wards of the town, responsible and revocable at short terms. The majority of its members were naturally working men, or acknowledged rep-

\* Karl Marx. *The Civil War in France*, London and New York, 1933.—Ed.

representatives of the working class. . . . Instead of continuing to be the agent of the Central Government, the police was at once stripped of its political attributes, and turned into the responsible and at all times revocable agent of the Commune. So were the officials of all other branches of the administration. From the members of the Commune downwards, the public service had to be done at *workmen's wages*. The vested interests and the representation allowances of the high dignitaries of state disappeared along with the high dignitaries themselves. . . .

Having once got rid of the standing army and the police, the physical force elements of the old government, the Commune was anxious to break the spiritual force of repression, the "parson power." . . .

The judicial functionaries were to be divested of [their] sham independence. . . . Like the rest of public servants, magistrates and judges were to be elective, responsible and revocable.\*

Thus the Commune would appear to have replaced the shattered state machinery "only" by fuller democracy: abolition of the standing army; all officials to be fully elective and subject to recall. But, as a matter of fact this "only" signifies a gigantic replacement of one type of institution by others of a fundamentally different order. Here we observe a case of "transformation of quantity into quality": democracy, introduced as fully and consistently as is generally thinkable, is transformed from capitalist democracy into proletarian democracy; from the state (*i.e.*, a special force for the suppression of a particular class) into something which is no longer really the state in the accepted sense of the word.

It is still necessary to suppress the bourgeoisie and crush its resistance. This was particularly necessary for the Commune; and one of the reasons of its defeat was that it did not do this with sufficient determination. But the organ of suppression is now the majority of the population, and not a minority, as was always the case under slavery, serfdom, and wage labour. And, once the majority of the people *itself* suppresses its oppressors, a "special force" for suppression is *no longer necessary*. In this sense the state *begins to wither away*. Instead of the special institutions of a privileged minority (privileged officialdom, heads of a standing army), the majority can itself directly fulfil all these functions; and the more the discharge of the functions of state power devolves upon the people generally, the less need is there for the existence of this power.

In this connection the Commune's measure emphasised by Marx, particularly worthy of note, is: the abolition of all representation allowances, and of all money privileges in the case of officials, the

\* *Ibid.*—Ed.

reduction of the remuneration of *all* servants of the state to "*workingmen's wages*." Here is shown, more clearly than anywhere else, the *break* from a bourgeois democracy to a proletarian democracy, from the democracy of the oppressors to the democracy of the oppressed classes, from the state as a "special force for suppression" of a given class to the suppression of the oppressors by the *whole force* of the majority of the people—the workers and the peasants. And it is precisely on this most striking point, perhaps the most important as far as the problem of the state is concerned, that the teachings of Marx have been entirely forgotten! In popular commentaries, whose number is legion, this is not mentioned. It is "proper" to keep silent about it as if it were a piece of old-fashioned "naïveté," just as the Christians, after Christianity had attained the position of a state religion, "forgot" the "naïvetés" of primitive Christianity with its democratic-revolutionary spirit.

The reduction of the remuneration of the highest state officials seems "simply" a demand of naïve, primitive democracy. One of the "founders" of modern opportunism, the former Social-Democrat, Eduard Bernstein, has more than once exercised his talents in repeating the vulgar bourgeois jeers at "primitive" democracy. Like all opportunists, including the present Kautskyists, he fails completely to understand that, first of all, the transition from capitalism to Socialism is *impossible* without "return," in a measure, to "primitive" democracy (how can one otherwise pass on to the discharge of all the state functions by the majority of the population and by every individual of the population?); and, secondly, he forgets that "primitive democracy" on the basis of capitalism and capitalist culture is not the same primitive democracy as in prehistoric or pre-capitalist times. Capitalist culture has *created* large-scale production, factories, railways, the postal service, telephones, etc., and *on this basis* the great majority of functions of the old "state power" have become so simplified and can be reduced to such simple operations of registration, filing and checking that they will be quite within the reach of every literate person, and it will be possible to perform them for "workingmen's wages," which circumstance can (and must) strip those functions of every shadow of privilege, of every appearance of "official grandeur."

All officials, without exception, elected and subject to recall *at any time*, their salaries reduced to "workingmen's wages"—these simple and "self-evident" democratic measures, which, completely

uniting the interests of the workers and the majority of peasants, at the same time serve as a bridge leading from capitalism to Socialism. These measures refer to the state, to the purely political reconstruction of society; but, of course, they acquire their full meaning and significance only in connection with the "expropriation of the expropriators," either accomplished or in preparation, *i.e.*, with the turning of capitalist private ownership of the means of production into social ownership. Marx wrote:

The Commune made that catchword of bourgeois revolutions, cheap government, a reality by destroying the two greatest sources of expenditure—the standing army and state functionarism.\*

From the peasantry, as from other sections of the petty bourgeoisie, only an insignificant few "rise to the top," occupy "a place in the sun" in the bourgeois sense, *i.e.*, become either well-to-do people or secure and privileged officials. The great majority of peasants in every capitalist country where the peasantry exists (and the majority of capitalist countries are of this kind) is oppressed by the government and longs for its overthrow, longs for "cheap" government. This can be realised *only* by the proletariat; and by realising it, the proletariat makes at the same time a step forward towards the Socialist reconstruction of the state.

### 3. THE DESTRUCTION OF PARLIAMENTARISM

The Commune—says Marx—was to be a working, not a parliamentary body, executive and legislative at the same time. . . .

Instead of deciding once in three or six years which member of the ruling class was to represent the people in Parliament, universal suffrage was to serve the people, constituted in Communes, as individual suffrage serves every other employer in the search for the workmen and managers in his business.\*\*

This remarkable criticism of parliamentarism made in 1871 also belongs to the "forgotten words" of Marxism, thanks to the prevalence of social-chauvinism and opportunism. Ministers and professional parliamentarians, traitors to the proletariat and Socialist "sharks" of our day, have left all criticism of parliamentarism to the Anarchists, and, on this wonderfully intelligent ground, denounce *all* criticism of parliamentarism as "Anarchism"!! It is not surprising that the proletariat of the most "advanced" parliamentary countries, being disgusted with such "Socialists" as Messrs. Scheide-

\* *Ibid.*—Ed.

\*\* *Ibid.*—Ed.



mann, David, Legien, Sembat, Renaudel, Henderson, Vandervelde, Stauning, Branting, Bissolati and Co. has been giving its sympathies more and more to Anarcho-syndicalism, in spite of the fact that it is but the twin brother of opportunism.

But to Marx, revolutionary dialectics was never the empty fashionable phrase, the toy rattle, which Plekhanov, Kautsky and the others have made of it. Marx knew how to break with Anarchism ruthlessly for its inability to make use of the "stable" of bourgeois parliamentarism, especially at a time when the situation was not revolutionary; but at the same time he knew how to subject parliamentarism to a really revolutionary-proletarian criticism.

To decide once every few years which member of the ruling class is to repress and oppress the people through parliament—this is the real essence of bourgeois parliamentarism, not only in parliamentary-constitutional monarchies, but also in the most democratic republics.

But, if the question of the state is raised, if parliamentarism is to be regarded as one institution of the state, what then, from the point of view of the tasks of the proletariat in *this* realm, is to be the way out of parliamentarism? How can we do without it?

Again and again we must repeat: the teaching of Marx, based on the study of the Commune, has been so completely forgotten that any criticism of parliamentarism other than Anarchist or reactionary is quite unintelligible to a present-day "Social-Democrat" (read: present-day traitor to Socialism).

The way out of parliamentarism is to be found, of course, not in the abolition of the representative institutions and the elective principle, but in the conversion of the representative institutions from mere "talking shops" into working bodies. "The Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary body, executive and legislative at the same time."

"A working, not a parliamentary body"—this hits the vital spot of present-day parliamentarians and the parliamentary Social-Democratic "lap-dogs"! Take any parliamentary country, from America to Switzerland, from France to England, Norway and so forth—the actual work of the "state" there is done behind the scenes and is carried out by the departments, the offices and the staffs. Parliament itself is given up to talk for the special purpose of fooling the "common people." This is so true that even in the Russian republic, a bourgeois-democratic republic, all these aims of parliamentarism were immediately revealed, even before a real parliament was cre-

ated. Such heroes of rotten philistinism as the Skobelevs and the Tseretelis, Chernovs and Avksentyevs, have managed to pollute even the Soviets, after the model of the most despicable petty-bourgeois parliamentarism, by turning them into hollow talking shops. In the Soviets, the Right Honourable "Socialist" Ministers are fooling the confiding peasants with phrase-mongering and resolutions. In the government itself a sort of permanent quadrille is going on in order that, on the one hand, as many S.-R.'s and Mensheviks as possible may get at the "gravy," the "soft" jobs, and, on the other hand, the attention of the people may be occupied. All the while the real "state" business is being done in the offices, in the staffs.

The *Dyelo Naroda*, organ of the ruling Socialist-Revolutionary Party, recently admitted in an editorial article—with the incomparable candour of people of "good society," in which "all" are engaged in political prostitution—that even in those ministries which belong to the "Socialists" (please excuse the term), the whole bureaucratic apparatus remains essentially the same as of old, working as of old, and "freely" obstructing revolutionary measures. Even if we did not have this admission, would not the actual history of the participation of the S.-R.'s and Mensheviks in the government prove this? It is only characteristic that—while in ministerial company with the Cadets—Messrs. Chernov, Rusanov, Zenzinov and other editors of the *Dyelo Naroda* have so completely lost all shame that they unblushingly proclaim, as if it were a mere bagatelle, that in "their" ministries everything remains as of old!! Revolutionary-democratic phrases to gull the Simple Simons; bureaucracy and red tape for the "benefit" of the capitalists—here you have the *essence* of the "honourable" coalition.

The venal and rotten parliamentarism of bourgeois society is replaced in the Commune by institutions in which freedom of opinion and discussion does not degenerate into deception, for the parliamentarians must themselves work, must themselves execute their own laws, must themselves verify their results in actual life, must themselves be directly responsible to their electorate. Representative institutions remain, but parliamentarism as a special system, as a division of labour between the legislative and the executive functions, as a privileged position for the deputies, *no longer exists*. Without representative institutions we cannot imagine democracy, not even proletarian democracy; but we can and *must* think of democracy without parliamentarism, if criticism of bourgeois

society is not mere empty words for us, if the desire to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie is our serious and sincere desire, and not a mere "election cry" for catching workingmen's votes, as it is with the Mensheviks and S.-R.'s, the Scheidemanns, the Legiens, the Sembats and the Vanderveldes.

It is most instructive to notice that, in speaking of the functions of *those* officials who are necessary both in the Commune and in the proletarian democracy, Marx compares them with the workers of "every other employer," that is, of the usual capitalist concern, with its "workers and managers."

There is no trace of Utopianism in Marx, in the sense of inventing or imagining a "new" society. No, he studies, as a process of natural history, the *birth* of the new society *from* the old, the forms of transition from the latter to the former. He takes the actual experience of a mass proletarian movement and tries to draw practical lessons from it. He "learns" from the Commune, as all great revolutionary thinkers have not been afraid to learn from the experience of great movements of the oppressed classes, never preaching them pedantic "sermons" (such as Plekhanov's: "They should not have taken up arms"; or Tsereteli's: "A class must know how to limit itself").

To destroy officialdom immediately, everywhere, completely—this cannot be thought of. That is a Utopia. But to *break up* at once the old bureaucratic machine and to start immediately the construction of a new one which will enable us gradually to reduce all officialdom to naught—this is *no* Utopia, it is the experience of the Commune, it is the direct and urgent task of the revolutionary proletariat.

Capitalism simplifies the functions of "state" administration; it makes it possible to throw off "commanding" methods and to reduce everything to a matter of the organisation of the proletarians (as the ruling class), hiring "workmen and managers" in the name of the whole of society.

We are not Utopians, we do not indulge in "dreams" of how best to do away *immediately* with all administration, with all subordination; these Anarchist dreams, based upon a lack of understanding of the task of proletarian dictatorship, are basically foreign to Marxism, and, as a matter of fact, they serve but to put off the Socialist revolution until human nature is different. No, we want the Socialist

revolution with human nature as it is now, with human nature that cannot do without subordination, control, and "managers."

But if there be subordination, it must be to the armed vanguard of all the exploited and the labouring—to the proletariat. The specific "commanding" methods of the state officials can and must begin to be replaced—immediately, within twenty-four hours—by the simple functions of "managers" and bookkeepers, functions which are now already within the capacity of the average city dweller and can well be performed for "workingmen's wages."

We organise large-scale production, starting from what capitalism has already created; we workers *ourselves*, relying on our own experience as workers, establishing a strict, an iron discipline, supported by the state power of the armed workers, shall reduce the rôle of the state officials to that of simply carrying out our instructions as responsible, moderately paid "managers" (of course, with technical knowledge of all sorts, types and degrees). This is *our* proletarian task, with this we can and must *begin* when carrying through a proletarian revolution. Such a beginning, on the basis of large-scale production, of itself leads to the gradual "withering away" of all bureaucracy, to the gradual creation of a new order, an order without quotation marks, an order which has nothing to do with wage slavery, an order in which the more and more simplified functions of control and accounting will be performed by each in turn, will then become a habit, and will finally die out as *special* functions of a special stratum of the population.

A witty German Social-Democrat of the 'seventies of the last century called the *post-office* an example of the socialist system. This is very true. At present the post-office is a business organised on the lines of a state *capitalist* monopoly. Imperialism is gradually transforming all trusts into organisations of a similar type. Above the "common" workers, who are overloaded with work and starving, there stands here the same bourgeois bureaucracy. But the mechanism of social management is here already to hand. Overthrow the capitalists, crush with the iron hand of the armed workers the resistance of these exploiters, break the bureaucratic machine of the modern state—and you have before you a mechanism of the highest technical equipment, freed of "parasites," capable of being set into motion by the united workers themselves who hire their own technicians, managers, bookkeepers, and pay them *all*, as, indeed, every "state" official, with the usual workers' wage. Here is a con-

crete, practicable task, immediately realisable in relation to all trusts, a task that frees the workers of exploitation and makes use of the experience (especially in the realm of the construction of the state) which the Commune began to reveal in practice.

To organise the *whole* national economy like the postal system, in such a way that the technicians, managers, bookkeepers as well as *all* officials, should receive no higher wages than "workingmen's wages," all under the control and leadership of the armed proletariat—this is our immediate aim. This is the kind of state and economic basis we need. This is what will produce the destruction of parliamentarism, while retaining representative institutions. This is what will free the labouring classes from the prostitution of these institutions by the bourgeoisie.

#### 4. THE ORGANISATION OF NATIONAL UNITY

In a rough sketch of national organisation which the Commune had no time to develop, it states clearly that the Commune was to be the political form of even the smallest country hamlet. . . .

From these Communes would be elected the "National Delegation" at Paris.

The few but important functions which still would remain for a central government were not to be suppressed, as has been intentionally misstated, but were to be discharged by Communal, and, therefore, strictly responsible agents. The unity of the nation was not to be broken; but, on the contrary, to be organised by the Communal constitution, and to become a reality by the destruction of the state power which claimed to be the embodiment of that unity independent of, and superior to, the nation itself, from which it was but a parasitic excrescence. While the merely repressive organs of the old governmental power were to be amputated, its legitimate functions were to be wrested from an authority usurping pre-eminence over society itself, and restored to the responsible agents of society.\*

To what extent the opportunists of contemporary Social-Democracy have failed to understand—or perhaps it would be more true to say, did not want to understand—these observations of Marx is best shown by the famous (Herostrates-fashion) book of the renegade Bernstein, *Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus und die Aufgaben der Sozialdemokratie*.\*\* It is just in connection with the above passage from Marx that Bernstein wrote saying that this programme

\* *Ibid.*—Ed.

\*\* An English translation is published under the title *Evolutionary Socialism*.—Ed.

... in its political content displays, in all its essential features, the greatest similarity to the federalism of Proudhon. . . . In spite of all the other points of difference between Marx and the "petty-bourgeois" Proudhon [Bernstein places the words "petty-bourgeois" in quotation marks in order to make them sound ironical] on these points their ways of thinking resemble each other as closely as could be.

Of course, Bernstein continues, the importance of the municipalities is growing, but:

... it seems to me doubtful whether the first task of democracy would be such a dissolution [*Auflösung*] of the modern states and such a complete transformation [*Umwandlung*] of their organisation as is described by Marx and Proudhon (the formation of a national assembly from delegates of the provincial or district assemblies, which, in their turn, would consist of delegates from the Communes), so that the whole previous mode of national representation would vanish completely.\*

This is really monstrous: thus to confuse Marx's views on the "destruction of the state power," of the "parasitic excrescence" with the federalism of Proudhon! But this is no accident, for it never occurs to the opportunist that Marx is not speaking here at all of federalism as opposed to centralism, but of the destruction of the old bourgeois state machinery which exists in all bourgeois countries.

To the opportunist occurs only what he sees around him, in a society of petty-bourgeois philistinism and "reformist" stagnation, namely, only "municipalities"! As for a proletarian revolution, the opportunist has forgotten even how to imagine it.

It is amusing. But it is remarkable that on this point nobody argued against Bernstein! Bernstein has been refuted often enough, especially by Plekhanov in Russian literature and by Kautsky in European, but neither made *any* remark upon *this* perversion of Marx by Bernstein.

To such an extent has the opportunist forgotten to think in a revolutionary way and forgotten how to reflect on revolution, that he attributes "federalism" to Marx, mixing him up with the founder of Anarchism, Proudhon. And Kautsky and Plekhanov, anxious to be orthodox Marxists and to defend the teaching of revolutionary Marxism, are silent on this point! Herein lies one of the roots of that vulgarisation of the ideas concerning the difference between Marxism and Anarchism, which is common to both Kautskyists and opportunists, and which we shall discuss later.

Federalism is not touched upon in Marx's observations about the

\* Bernstein, *ibid.*, German Edition, 1899, pp. 134-136.

experience of the Commune, as quoted above. Marx agrees with Proudhon precisely on that point which has quite escaped the opportunist Bernstein. Marx differs from Proudhon just on the point where Bernstein sees their agreement.

Marx agrees with Proudhon in that they both stand for the "destruction" of the contemporary state machinery. This common ground of Marxism with Anarchism (both with Proudhon and with Bakunin) neither the opportunists nor the Kautskyists wish to see, for on this point they have themselves departed from Marxism.

Marx differs both from Proudhon and Bakunin precisely on the point of federalism (not to speak of the dictatorship of the proletariat). Federalism arises, as a principle, from the petty-bourgeois views of Anarchism. Marx is a centralist. In the above-quoted observations of his there is no deviation from centralism. Only people full of petty-bourgeois "superstitious faith" in the state can mistake the destruction of the bourgeois state for the destruction of centralism.

But will it not be centralism if the proletariat and poorest peasantry take the power of the state in their own hands, organise themselves freely into communes, and *unite* the action of all the communes in striking at capital, in crushing the resistance of the capitalists, in the transfer of private property in railways, factories, land, and so forth, to the *entire* nation, to the whole of society? Will that not be the most consistent democratic centralism? And proletarian centralism at that?

Bernstein simply cannot conceive the possibility of voluntary centralism, of a voluntary union of the communes into a nation, a voluntary fusion of the proletarian communes in the process of destroying bourgeois supremacy and the bourgeois state machinery. Like all philistines, Bernstein can imagine centralism only as something from above, to be imposed and maintained solely by means of bureaucracy and militarism.

Marx, as though he foresaw the possibility of the perversion of his ideas, purposely emphasises that the accusation against the Commune that it desired to destroy the unity of the nation, to do away with a central power, was a deliberate falsehood. Marx purposely uses the phrase "to organise the unity of the nation," so as to contrast conscious, democratic, proletarian centralism to bourgeois, military, bureaucratic centralism.

But no one is so deaf as he who will not hear. The opportunists

of contemporary Social-Democracy do not, on any account, want to hear of destroying the state power, of cutting off the parasite.

## 5. DESTRUCTION OF THE PARASITE-STATE

We have already quoted part of Marx's statements on this subject, and must now complete his presentation.

It is generally the fate of completely new historical creations—wrote Marx—to be mistaken for the counterpart of older and even defunct forms of social life, to which they may bear a certain likeness. Thus, this new Commune, which breaks [*bricht*] the modern state power, has been mistaken for a reproduction of the mediaeval Communes . . . for a federation of small states [Montesquieu, the Girondins] . . . for an exaggerated form of the ancient struggle against over-centralisation. . . . The Communal Constitution would have restored to the social body all the forces hitherto absorbed by the state parasite feeding upon, and clogging the free movements of, society. By this one act it would have initiated the regeneration of France . . . the Communal Constitution brought the rural producers under the intellectual lead of the central towns of their districts, and there secured to them, in the working man, the natural trustees of their interests. The very existence of the Commune involved, as a matter of course, local municipal liberty, but no longer as a check upon the, now superseded, state power.\*

"Breaks the modern state power," which was a "parasitic excrescence"; its "amputation," its "destruction"; "the now superseded state power"—these are the expressions used by Marx regarding the state when he appraised and analysed the experience of the Commune.

All this was written a little less than half a century ago; and now one has to undertake excavations, as it were, in order to bring uncorrupted Marxism to the knowledge of the masses. The conclusions drawn from the observation of the last great revolution, through which Marx lived, have been forgotten just at the moment when the time had arrived for the next great proletarian revolutions.

The multiplicity of interpretations to which the Commune has been subjected, and the multiplicity of interests which construed it in their favour, show that it was a thoroughly expansive political form, while all previous forms of government had been emphatically repressive. Its true secret was this. It was essentially a *working class government*, the product of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class, the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economical emancipation of labour.

Except on this last condition, the Communal Constitution would have been an impossibility and a delusion.\*\*

The Utopians busied themselves with the "discovery" of the political forms under which the Socialist reconstruction of society

\* *The Civil War in France*.—Ed.

\*\* *Ibid.*—Ed.



could take place. The Anarchists turned away from the question of political forms altogether. The opportunists of modern Social-Democracy accepted the bourgeois political forms of a parliamentary, democratic state as the limit which cannot be overstepped; they broke their foreheads praying before this idol, denouncing as Anarchism every attempt to *destroy* these forms.

Marx deducted from the whole history of Socialism and political struggle that the state was bound to disappear, and that the transitional form of its disappearance (the transition from the political state to no state) would be the "proletariat organised as the ruling class." But Marx did not undertake the task of *discovering* the political *forms* of this future stage. He limited himself to an exact observation of French history, its analysis and the conclusion to which the year 1851 had led, *viz.*, that matters were moving towards the *destruction* of the bourgeois machinery of state.

And when the mass revolutionary movement of the proletariat burst forth, Marx, in spite of the failure of that movement, in spite of its short life and its patent weakness, began to study what political forms it had *disclosed*.

The Commune is the form "at last discovered" by the proletarian revolution, under which the economic liberation of labour can proceed.

The Commune is the first attempt of a proletarian revolution to *break up* the bourgeois state machinery and constitutes the political form, "at last discovered," which can and must *take the place* of the broken machine.

We shall see below that the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917, in different surroundings and under different circumstances, continued the work of the Commune and confirmed the historic analysis made by the genius of Marx.

## CHAPTER IV

### SUPPLEMENTARY EXPLANATIONS BY ENGELS

MARX gave the fundamentals on the question of the meaning of the experience of the Commune. Engels returned to the same question repeatedly, elucidating Marx's analysis and conclusions, sometimes so forcibly throwing *other* sides of the question into relief that we must dwell on these explanations separately.

#### 1. THE HOUSING QUESTION

In his work on the housing question (1872) Engels took into account the experience of the Commune, dwelling repeatedly on the tasks of the revolution in relation to the state. It is interesting to note that in the treatment of this concrete subject there become clear, on the one hand, the features common to the proletarian state and the present state—features which permit of speaking of a state in both cases—and, on the other hand, the features which differentiate them, or the transition to the destruction of the state.

How then is the housing question to be solved? In present-day society, it is solved as every other social question is solved: by the gradual economic equalisation of supply and demand, a solution which ever anew begets the very same question, and is consequently no solution at all. How a social revolution would solve this question depends not only on the circumstances then existing, but is also connected with much more far-reaching questions, one of the most important of which is the abolition of the antagonism between town and country. As it is not our business to make any utopian systems for the organisation of the society of the future, it would be more than idle to go into this. But this much at least is certain, that in the large towns there are already enough dwelling houses, if these were made rational use of, to immediately relieve any real "housing shortage." This, of course, can only be done by the expropriation of the present owners and by quartering in their houses workers who are homeless or are excessively overcrowded in their present quarters; and as soon as the proletariat has conquered political power, such a measure, demanded in the interests of public welfare, would be as easy to carry through as other expropriations and quarterings by the state of today.\*

Here the change in the form of the state power is not considered, but only the content of its activity. Expropriations and the occupa-

\* Friedrich Engels, *The Housing Question*, London and New York, 1933.—Ed.

tion of houses take place by order even of the present state. The proletarian state, from the formal point of view, will also "order" the occupation of houses and expropriation of buildings. But it is clear that the old executive apparatus, the bureaucracy connected with the bourgeoisie, would simply be unfit to carry out the orders of the proletarian state.

... It must, however, be stated that the "actual seizure of possession" of all instruments of labour, the taking possession of the whole of industry by the working people, is the direct opposite of the Proudhonist "solution." In the latter, the *individual worker* becomes the owner of a house, a farm, and the instruments of labour; in the former, the "working people" remains the collective owner of the houses, factories and instruments of labour, and will hardly, at any rate during a transition period, hand over the usufruct of these to individuals or companies unless the costs are met by them. It is just the same as with the abolition of property in land, which is not the abolition of ground rent, but only its transfer, even though in modified form, to society. The actual taking possession of all instruments of labour by the working people therefore by no means excludes the retention of rent relations.\*

One question touched upon here, namely, the economic reasons for the withering away of the state, we shall discuss in the next chapter. Engels expresses himself most cautiously, saying that the proletarian state will "hardly" allot houses without pay, "at any rate, during a transition period." The renting out to separate families of houses belonging to the whole people presupposes the collection of rent, a certain amount of control, and some rules underlying the allotment of houses. All this demands a certain form of state, but it does not at all demand a special military and bureaucratic apparatus, with officials occupying especially privileged positions. Transition to a state of affairs when it will be possible to let houses without rent is bound up with the complete "withering away" of the state.

Speaking of the conversion of the Blanquists, after the Commune and under the influence of its experience, to the principles of Marxism, Engels, in passing, formulates these principles as follows:

... Necessity of political action by the proletariat, and its dictatorship as the transition to the abolition of classes and, with them, of the state. . . .\*\*

Those addicted to hair-splitting criticism, and those who belong to the bourgeois "exterminators of Marxism," will perhaps see a contradiction, in the above quotation from the *Anti-Dühring*, be-

\* *Ibid.*—Ed.

\*\* *Ibid.*—Ed.

tween this *avowal* of the "abolition of the state" and the repudiation of a formula like the Anarchist one. It would not be surprising if the opportunists stamped Engels, too, as an "Anarchist," for the social-chauvinists are now more and more adopting the method of accusing the internationalists of Anarchism.

That, together with the abolition of classes, the state will also be abolished, Marxism has always taught. The well-known passage on the "withering away of the state" in the *Anti-Dühring* does not blame the Anarchists for being in favour of the abolition of the state, but for preaching that the state can be abolished "within twenty-four hours."

In view of the fact that the present predominant "Social-Democratic" doctrine completely distorts the relation of Marxism to Anarchism on the question of the abolition of the state, it will be quite useful to recall a certain polemic of Marx and Engels against the Anarchists.

## 2. POLEMIC AGAINST THE ANARCHISTS

This polemic took place in 1873. Marx and Engels contributed articles against the Proudhonists, "autonomists" or "anti-authoritarians," to an Italian Socialist publication, and it was not until 1913 that these articles appeared in German translation in the *Neue Zeit*.

When the political struggle of the working class—wrote Marx, ridiculing the Anarchists for their repudiation of political action—assumes a revolutionary form, when the workers set up in place of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie their revolutionary dictatorship, then they commit the terrible crime of outraging principle, for in order to satisfy their wretched, vulgar, everyday needs, in order to break down the resistance of the bourgeoisie, they give the state a revolutionary and transitional form, instead of laying down arms and abolishing the state. . . .\*

It was exclusively against this kind of "abolition" of the state, that Marx fought, refuting the Anarchists! He fought, not against the theory of the disappearance of the state when classes disappear, or of its abolition when classes have been abolished, but against the proposition that the workers should deny themselves the use of arms, the use of organised force, that is, *the use of the state*, for the purpose of "breaking down the resistance of the bourgeoisie."

\* *Neue Zeit*, XXXII-1, 1913-1914, p. 40.

In order that the true sense of his fight against the Anarchists might not be perverted, Marx purposely emphasises the "revolutionary and *transitional* form" of the state necessary for the proletariat. The proletariat needs the state only for a while. We do not at all disagree with the Anarchists on the question of the abolition of the state as an *aim*. We maintain that, to achieve this aim, temporary use must be made of the instruments, means, and methods of the state power *against* the exploiters, just as the dictatorship of the oppressed class is temporarily necessary for the annihilation of classes. Marx chooses the sharpest and clearest way of stating his position against the Anarchists: when they have cast off the yoke of the capitalists, ought the workers to "lay down arms," or ought they to use them against the capitalists in order to crush their resistance? But what is the systematic use of arms by one class against the other, if not a "transitional form" of state?

Let every Social-Democrat ask himself: Was *that* the way in which he approached the question of the state in his discussion with the Anarchists? Was *that* the way in which the vast majority of the official Social-Democratic parties of the Second International approached it?

Engels develops these same ideas in even greater detail and more simply. He first of all ridicules the muddled ideas of the Proudhonists, who called themselves "anti-authoritarians," *i.e.*, they denied every kind of authority, every kind of subordination, every kind of power. Take a factory, a railway, a vessel on the high seas, said Engels—is it not clear that not one of these complex technical units, based on the use of machines and the ordered co-operation of many people, could function without a certain amount of subordination and, consequently, without some authority or power?

When I put these arguments—writes Engels—up against the most rabid anti-authoritarians, they are only able to give me the following answer: Ah! that is true, but here it is not a case of authority conferred on the delegates, *but of a commission* which we give them. These people think that they can change a thing by changing its name. . . .

Having thus shown that authority and autonomy are relative terms, that the sphere of their application varies with the various phases of social development, that it is absurd to take them as absolute concepts; having added that the sphere of the application of machinery and large-scale production is ever extending, Engels passes from a general discussion of authority to the question of the state.

If the autonomists—he writes—had been content to say that the social organisation of the future would permit authority only within the limits in which the relations of production made it inevitable, then it would have been possible to come to an understanding with them; but they are blind to all facts which make authority necessary, and they fight passionately against the word.

Why do the anti-authoritarians not confine themselves to crying out against political authority, against the state? All Socialists are agreed that the state, and political authority along with it, will disappear as the result of the coming social revolution, *i.e.*, that public functions will lose their political character and be transformed into simple administrative functions of watching over social interests. But the anti-authoritarians demand that the political state should be abolished at one stroke, even before the social relations which gave birth to it have been abolished. They demand that the first act of the social revolution should be the abolition of authority.

Have these gentlemen ever seen a revolution? Revolution is undoubtedly the most authoritative thing possible. It is an act in which one section of the population imposes its will on the other by means of rifles, bayonets, cannon, *i.e.*, by highly authoritative means, and the victorious party is inevitably forced to maintain its supremacy by means of that fear which its arms inspire in the reactionaries. Would the Paris Commune have lasted a single day had it not relied on the authority of the armed people against the bourgeoisie? Are we not, on the contrary, entitled to blame the Commune for not having made sufficient use of this authority? And so: either—or: either the anti-authoritarians do not know what they are talking about, in which case they merely sow confusion; or they do know, in which case they are betraying the cause of the proletariat. In either case they serve only the interests of reaction.\*

In this discussion, questions are touched upon which must be examined in connection with the subject of the interrelation of politics and economics during the “withering away” of the state. (The next chapter is devoted to this subject.) Such are the questions of the transformation of public functions from political into simply administrative ones, and of the “political state.” This last term, particularly liable to cause misunderstanding, indicates the process of the withering away of the state: the dying state, at a certain stage of its withering away, can be called a non-political state.

The most remarkable point in our quotation from Engels is again the way he states the case against the Anarchists. Social-Democrats, desiring to be disciples of Engels, have discussed this question with the Anarchists millions of times since 1873, but they have *not* discussed it as Marxists can and should. The Anarchist idea of the abolition of the state is muddled and *non-revolutionary*—that is how Engels put it. It is precisely the revolution, in its rise and development, with its specific tasks in relation to violence, authority, power, the state, that the Anarchists do not wish to see.

The customary criticism of Anarchism by modern Social-Demo-

\* *Ibid.*, p. 39.

crats has been reduced to the purest philistine vulgarity: "We recognise the state, whereas the Anarchists do not." Naturally, such vulgarity cannot but repel revolutionary workingmen who think at all. Engels says something different. He emphasises that all Socialists recognise the disappearance of the state as a result of the Socialist revolution. He then deals with the concrete question of the revolution—that very question which, as a rule, the Social-Democrats, because of their opportunism, evade, leaving it, so to speak, exclusively for the Anarchists "to work out." And in thus formulating the question, Engels takes the bull by the horns: ought not the Commune to have made *more* use of the *revolutionary* power of the *state*, *i.e.*, of the proletariat armed and organised as the ruling class?

Prevailing official Social-Democracy usually dismissed the question as to the concrete tasks of the proletariat in the revolution either with an inane philistine shrug, or, at the best, with the evasive sophism, "Wait and see." And the Anarchists were thus justified in saying about such a Social-Democracy that it had betrayed the task of educating the working class for the revolution. Engels makes use of the experience of the last proletarian revolution for the particular purpose of making a concrete analysis as to what the proletariat should do in relation both to the banks and the state, and how it should do it.

### 3. LETTER TO BEBEL

One of the most remarkable, if not the most remarkable observation on the state to be found in the works of Marx and Engels is contained in the following passage of Engels' letter to Bebel dated March 18-28, 1875. This letter, we may remark in passing, was first published, so far as we know, by Bebel in the second volume of his memoirs (*Aus meinen Leben*), published in 1911, *i.e.*, thirty-six years after it had been written and mailed.

Engels wrote to Bebel, criticising that same draft of the Gotha Programme which Marx also criticised in his famous letter to Bracke; referring particularly to the question of the state, Engels said:

... The people's free state has been transformed into a free state. According to the grammatical meaning of the words, the free state is one in which the state is free in relation to its citizens, *i.e.*, a state with a despotic government. It would be well to throw overboard all this chatter about the

state, especially after the Commune, which was no longer a state in the proper sense of the word. The Anarchists have too long thrown this "people's state" into our teeth, although already in Marx's work against Proudhon, and then in the *Communist Manifesto*, it was stated definitely that, with the introduction of the Socialist order of society, the state will dissolve of itself [*sich auflöst*] and disappear. As the state is only a transitional phenomenon which must be made use of in struggle, in the revolution, in order forcibly to crush our antagonists, it is pure absurdity to speak of a people's free state. As long as the proletariat still *needs* the state, it needs it, not in the interests of freedom, but for the purpose of crushing its antagonists; and as soon as it becomes possible to speak of freedom, then the state, as such, ceases to exist. We would, therefore, suggest that everywhere the word "state" be replaced by "community" [*Gemeinwesen*], a fine old German word, which corresponds to the French word "commune." \*

One must bear in mind that this letter refers to the party programme which Marx criticised in his letter dated only a few weeks later than the above (Marx's letter is dated May 5, 1875), and that Engels was living at the time with Marx in London. Consequently, when he says "we" in the last sentence, Engels undoubtedly suggests to the leader of the German workers' party, both in his own and in Marx's name, that the word "state" should be *struck out of the programme* and replaced by "*community*."

What a howl about "Anarchism" would be raised by the leaders of present-day "Marxism," adulterated to meet the requirements of the opportunists, if such a rectifying of the programme were suggested to them!

Let them howl. The bourgeoisie will praise them for it.

But we shall go on with our work. In revising the programme of our party, the advice of Engels and Marx absolutely must be taken into consideration in order to come nearer to the truth, to re-establish Marxism, to purge it of distortions, to direct more correctly the struggle of the working class for its liberation. Among the Bolsheviks there will certainly be none opposed to the advice of Engels and Marx. Difficulties may, perhaps, crop up only regarding terminology. In German there are two words meaning "community," \*\* of which Engels used the one which does not denote a single community, but the totality, the system of communities. In Russian there is no such word, and perhaps we may have to decide to use the French word "commune," although this also has its drawbacks.

"The Commune was no longer a state in the proper sense of the word"—this is Engels' most important statement, theoretically speak-

\* *Aus meinen Leben*, pp. 321-322.

\*\* *Gemeinde* and *Gemeinwesen*.—Ed.



ing. After what has been presented above, this statement is perfectly clear. The Commune *ceased* to be a state in so far as it had to repress, not the majority of the population but a minority (the exploiters); it had broken the bourgeois state machinery; in the place of a *special* repressive force, the whole population itself came onto the scene. All this is a departure from the state in its proper sense. And had the Commune asserted itself as a lasting power, remnants of the state would of themselves have "withered away" within it; it would not have been necessary to "abolish" its institutions; they would have ceased to function in proportion as less and less was left for them to do.

"The Anarchists throw this 'people's state' into our teeth." In saying this, Engels has in mind especially Bakunin and his attacks on the German Social-Democrats. Engels admits these attacks to be justified *in so far* as the "people's state" is as senseless and as much a deviation from Socialism as the "people's free state." Engels tries to improve the struggle of the German Social-Democrats against the Anarchists, to make this struggle correct in principle, to purge it of opportunist prejudices concerning the "state." Alas! Engels' letter has been pigeonholed for thirty-six years. We shall see below that, even after the publication of Engels' letter, Kautsky obstinately repeats in essence the very mistakes against which Engels warned.

Bebel replied to Engels in a letter, dated September 21, 1875, in which, among other things, he wrote that he "fully agreed" with Engels' criticism of the draft programme, and that he had reproached Liebknecht for his readiness to make concessions.\* But if we take Bebel's pamphlet, *Unsere Ziele*, we find there absolutely wrong views regarding the state:

The state must be transformed from one based on *class domination* into a *people's state*.\*\*

This is printed in the *ninth* (the ninth!) edition of Bebel's pamphlet. Small wonder that such constantly repeated opportunist views regarding the state were absorbed by German Social-Democracy, especially as Engels' revolutionary interpretations were safely pigeonholed, and all the conditions of everyday life were such as to "wean" the people from revolution for a long time!

\* *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 334.

\*\* *Unsere Ziele*, 1886, p. 14.

#### 4. CRITICISM OF THE DRAFT OF THE ERFURT PROGRAMME

In analysing the doctrines of Marxism on the state, the criticism of the draft of the Erfurt Programme sent by Engels to Kautsky on June 29, 1891, a criticism published only ten years later in *Neue Zeit*, cannot be overlooked; for this criticism is mainly concerned with the *opportunist* views of Social-Democracy regarding questions of *state* organisation.<sup>5</sup>

We may note in passing that in the field of economics Engels also makes an exceedingly valuable observation, which shows how attentively and thoughtfully he followed the changes in modern capitalism, and how he was able, in a measure, to foresee the problems of our own, the imperialist, epoch. Here is the point: touching on the word "planlessness" (*Planlosigkeit*) used in the draft programme, as characteristic of capitalism, Engels writes:

When we pass from joint-stock companies to trusts which control and monopolise whole branches of industry, not only private production comes to an end at that point, but also planlessness.\*

Here we have what is most essential in the theoretical appreciation of the latest phase of capitalism, *i.e.*, imperialism, *viz.*, that capitalism becomes monopoly *capitalism*. This fact must be emphasised because the bourgeois reformist view that monopoly capitalism or state-monopoly capitalism is *no longer* capitalism, but can already be termed "state Socialism," or something of that sort, is a very widespread error. The trusts, of course, have not created, do not create now, and cannot create full and complete planning. But, however much of a plan they may create, however closely capitalist magnates may estimate in advance the extent of production on a national and even international scale, and however systematically they may regulate it, we still remain *under capitalism*—capitalism, it is true, in its new stage, but still, unquestionably, capitalism. The "proximity" of *such* capitalism to Socialism should serve for the real representatives of the proletariat as an argument proving the nearness, ease, feasibility and urgency of the Socialist revolution, and not at all as an argument for tolerating a repudiation of such a revolution or for making capitalism more attractive, in which work all the reformists are engaged.

\* *Neue Zeit*, XX-1, 1901-1902, p. 8. [Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Critique of the Social-Democratic Programmes*, London and New York, 1933.—Ed.]

But to return to the question of the state. Engels makes here three kinds of valuable suggestions: first, as regards a republic; second, as to the connection between the national question and the form of state; and third, as to local self-government.

As to a republic, Engels made this point the centre of gravity of his criticism of the draft of the Erfurt Programme. And when we remember what importance the Erfurt Programme has acquired in international Social-Democracy, how it has become the model for the whole of the Second International, it may, without exaggeration, be said that Engels thereby criticised the opportunism of the whole Second International.

The political demands of the draft—Engels writes—have one great defect. The point that should particularly have been stated *is not among them* [Engels' italics].\*

And, later on, he makes it clear that the German constitution is but a copy of the reactionary constitution of 1850; that the Reichstag is only, as Wilhelm Liebknecht put it, "the fig-leaf of absolutism"; and that to wish "to transform all the means of production into public property" on the basis of a constitution which legalises the existence of petty states and the federation of petty German states, is an "obvious absurdity."

"It is dangerous to touch on this subject," Engels adds, knowing full well that it is impossible, for police reasons, to include in the programme an openly stated demand for a republic in Germany. But Engels does not rest content with this obvious consideration which satisfies "everybody." He continues:

And yet in one way or another the question must be tackled. How necessary this is is shown precisely at this moment by the opportunism which is gaining ground [*einreissend*] in a large section of the Social-Democratic press. Because they fear the re-enactment of the anti-Socialist law, because they have in mind all kinds of premature declarations made when that law was in force, now all at once we are told that the legal situation now existing in Germany can suffice the party for the realisation of all its demands by peaceful methods.

That the German Social-Democrats were actuated by fear of the renewal of the exception law, this fundamental fact Engels stresses particularly, and, without hesitation, he calls this opportunism, declaring that just because of the absence of a republic and freedom in Germany, the dreams of a "peaceful" path were perfectly absurd.

\* *Ibid.*—*F.d.*

Engels is sufficiently careful not to tie his hands. He admits that in republican or very free countries "one can conceive" (only "conceive"! ) of a peaceful development towards Socialism, but in Germany, he repeats:

. . . In Germany, where the government is almost all-powerful and the Reichstag and all other representative bodies have no real power, to proclaim such a thing in Germany—and moreover when there is no need to do so—is to remove the fig-leaf from absolutism, and to screen its nakedness by one's own body.

The great majority of the official leaders of the German Social-Democratic Party, who pigeonholed this advice, has indeed proved to be a screen for absolutism.

Such a policy can only lead their own party permanently astray. General and abstract political questions are pushed into the foreground, thus covering up the immediate concrete issues, the issues which, at the first great events, at the first political crisis, put themselves on the order of the day. What else can come of it but that suddenly, at the decisive moment, the party will be helpless and that there will be lack of clarity and unity on the most decisive points, for the reason that these points have never been discussed. . . .

This neglect of the great fundamental issues for momentary day-to-day interests, this striving and struggling for momentary success without regard to further consequences, this sacrifice of the future of the movement for the sake of its immediate position may be "honestly" meant, but opportunism it is and remains, and "honest" opportunism is perhaps the most dangerous of all. . . .

If anything is certain, it is that our party and the working class can only come to power under the form of the democratic republic. This is, indeed, the specific form for the dictatorship of the proletariat, as has already been shown by the great French Revolution. . . .\*

Engels repeats here in a particularly emphatic form the fundamental idea which runs like a red thread throughout all Marx's work, namely, that the democratic republic is the nearest approach to the dictatorship of the proletariat. For such a republic—without in the least setting aside the domination of capital, and, therefore, the oppression of the masses and the class struggle—inevitably leads to such an extension, development, unfolding and sharpening of that struggle that, as soon as the possibility arises for satisfying the fundamental interests of the oppressed masses, this possibility is realised inevitably and solely in the dictatorship of the proletariat, in the guidance of these masses by the proletariat. These also have been, for the whole of the Second International, "forgotten words" of Marxism, and this forgetting was demonstrated with particular

\* *Ibid.*—Ed

vividness by the history of the Menshevik Party during the first half year of the Russian Revolution of 1917.

On the question of a federal republic, in connection with the national composition of the population, Engels wrote:

What should take the place of present-day Germany (with its reactionary monarchical constitution and its equally reactionary division into petty states, which perpetuates all that is specifically Prussian instead of merging it in Germany as a whole)? In my view, the proletariat can use only the form of a single Parliament three different systems of legislation exist side by side even today. In little Switzerland, it has long been a hindrance, tolerable only because Switzerland is content to be purely a passive member of the European state system. For Germany, federation of the Swiss type would be an enormous step backward. Two points distinguish a federal state from a unitary state: that each separate federated state, each canton, has its own civil and criminal legislation and judicial system, and then, that alongside of a popular chamber there is also a house of representatives from the states, in which each canton, large or small, votes as such. Fortunately, we have got over the first, and we shall not be so childish as to introduce it again; and we have the second in the Federal Council [*Bundesrat*] and could very well do without it, especially as our "federal state" [*Bundestaat*] already forms the transition to the unitary State. And it is not our task to reverse from above the revolution carried out in 1866 and 1870, but to give it its necessary completion and improvements through a movement from below.\*

Engels not only shows no indifference to the question of the forms of state, but, on the contrary, tries to analyse with the utmost care the transitional forms, in order to establish in accordance with the concrete historical peculiarities of each separate case, *from what and to what* the given transitional form is evolving.

From the point of view of the proletariat and the proletarian revolution, Engels, like Marx, insists on democratic centralism, on one indivisible republic. The federal republic he considers either as an exception and a hindrance to development, or as a transitional form from a monarchy to a centralised republic, as a "step forward" under certain special conditions. And among these special conditions, the national question arises.

Engels, like Marx, in spite of their ruthless criticism of the reactionary nature of small states, and, in certain concrete cases, the screening of this by the national question, never shows a trace of desire to ignore the national question—a desire of which the Dutch

\* *Ibid.*—Ed.

and Polish Marxists are often guilty, as a result of their most justifiable opposition to the narrow philistine nationalism of "their" little states.

Even in England, where geographical conditions, common language, and the history of many centuries would seem to have put "an end" to the national question in the separate small divisions of England—even here Engels is cognisant of the patent fact that the national question has not yet been overcome, and recognises, in consequence, that the establishment of a federal republic would be a "step forward." Of course, there is no trace here of refusing to criticise the defects of the federal republic or to conduct the most determined propaganda and fight for a united and centralised democratic republic.

But Engels by no means understands democratic centralism in the bureaucratic sense in which this term is used by bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideologists, including Anarchists. Centralism does not, with Engels, in the least exclude such wide local self-government which combines a voluntary defence of the unity of the state by the "communes" and districts with the complete abolition of all bureaucracy and all "commanding" from above.

. . . So, then, a unitary republic—writes Engels, setting forth the programmatic views of Marxism on the state—but not in the sense of the present French Republic, which is nothing but the Empire established in 1798 minus the Emperor. From 1792 to 1798 each Department of France, each local area [*Gemeinde*] enjoyed complete self-government on the American model, and this is what we too must have. How self-government is to be organised, and how we can manage without a bureaucracy, has been demonstrated to us by America and the first French Republic, and is being demonstrated even today by Australia, Canada and the other English colonies. And a provincial and local self-government of this type is far freer than, for example, Swiss federalism, in which it is true the canton is very independent in relation to the *Bund* (i.e., the federated state as a whole), but is also independent in relation to the district and the local area. The cantonal governments appoint the district governors [*Staathalter*] and prefects—a feature which is unknown in English-speaking countries, and which in the future we shall have to abolish here, along with the Prussian *Landräte* and *Regierungsräte* [Commissaries, district police chiefs, governors, and in general all officials appointed from above].\*

In accordance with this, Engels suggests the following wording for the clause in the programme regarding self-government:

Complete self-government for the provinces, districts, and local areas through officials elected by universal suffrage. The abolition of all local and provincial authorities appointed by the state.

\* *Ibid.*—EJ.

In the *Pravda* (No. 68, June 10, 1917),\* suppressed by the government of Kerensky and other "Socialist" Ministers, I have already had occasion to point out how in this connection (not by any means in this alone) our sham Socialist representatives of the sham-revolutionary sham-democracy have scandalously departed from democracy. Naturally, people who have bound themselves by a "coalition" with the imperialist bourgeoisie remained deaf to this criticism.

It is highly important to note that Engels, armed with facts, disproves by a telling example the superstition, very widespread especially among the petty-bourgeois democracy, that a federal republic necessarily means a greater amount of freedom than a centralised republic. This is not true. It is disproved by the facts cited by Engels regarding the centralised French Republic of 1792-1798 and the federal Swiss Republic. The really democratic centralised republic gave more freedom than the federal republic. In other words, the greatest amount of local, provincial and other freedom known in history was granted by a centralised, and not by a federal republic.

Insufficient attention has been and is being paid to this fact in our party propaganda and agitation, as, indeed, to the whole question of federal and centralised republics and local self-government.

## 5. THE 1891 PREFACE TO MARX'S *Civil War in France*

In his preface to the third edition of *The Civil War in France* (this preface is dated March 18, 1891, and was originally published in the *Neue Zeit*), Engels, with many other interesting remarks, made in passing, on questions of the attitude towards the state, gives a remarkably striking résumé of the lessons of the Commune. This résumé, confirmed by all the experience of the period of twenty years separating the author from the Commune, and directed particularly against the "superstitious faith in the state" so widely diffused in Germany, can justly be called the *last word* of Marxism on the question dealt with here.

In France, Engels observes the workers were armed after every revolution,

and therefore the disarming of the workers was the first commandment for whatever bourgeois was at the helm of the state. Hence, after each revolution won by the workers, a new struggle, ending with the defeat of the workers.<sup>6</sup> \*\*

\* See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XX, Book II, pp. 148-150.—Ed.

\*\* *The Civil War in France*.—Ed.

This summing up of the experience of bourgeois revolutions is as concise as it is expressive. The essence of the whole matter—also, by the way, of the question of the state (*has the oppressed class arms?*)—is here remarkably well defined. It is just this essential thing which is most ignored both by professors under the influence of bourgeois ideology and by the petty-bourgeois democrats. In the Russian Revolution of 1917, the honour (Cavaignac honour) of babbling out this secret of bourgeois revolutions fell to the Menshevik, “also-Marxist,” Tsereteli. In his “historic” speech of June 22, Tsereteli blurted out the decision of the bourgeoisie to disarm the Petrograd workers—referring, of course, to this decision as his own, and as a vital necessity for the “state”! <sup>7</sup>

Tsereteli’s historic speech of June 22 will certainly constitute for every historian of the Revolution of 1917 one of the clearest illustrations of how the bloc of Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, led by Mr. Tsereteli, went over to the side of the bourgeoisie *against* the revolutionary proletariat.

Another incidental remark of Engels’, also connected with the question of the state, deals with religion. It is well known that German Social-Democracy, in proportion as it began to decay and become more and more opportunist, slid down more and more frequently to the philistine misinterpretation of the celebrated formula: “Religion is a private matter.” That is, this formula was twisted to mean that *even for the party* of the revolutionary proletariat the question of religion was a private matter! It was against this complete betrayal of the revolutionary programme of the proletariat that Engels revolted. In 1891 he only saw the *very feeble* beginnings of opportunism in his party, and therefore he expressed himself on the subject most cautiously:

As almost without exception workers or recognised representatives of the workers sat in the Commune, its decisions bore a decidedly proletarian character. Either they decreed reforms which the republican bourgeoisie had failed to pass only out of cowardice, but which provided a necessary basis for the free activity of the working class—such as the adoption of the principle that *in relation to the state*, religion is a purely private affair—or they promulgated decrees directly in the interests of the working class and to some extent cutting deeply into the old order of society.\*

Engels deliberately emphasised the words “in relation to the state,” as a straight thrust at the heart of German opportunism, which had declared religion to be a private matter *in relation to the party*,

\* *Ibid.*—Ed.



thus lowering the party of the revolutionary proletariat to the most vulgar "free-thinking" philistine level, ready to allow a non-denominational status, but renouncing all *party* struggle against the religious opium which stupefies the people.

The future historian of German Social-Democracy in investigating the basic causes of its shameful collapse in 1914, will find no little material of interest on this question, beginning with the evasive declarations in the articles of the ideological leader of the party, Kautsky, which opened the door wide to opportunism, and ending with the attitude of the party towards the *Los-von-Kirche Bewegung* (the movement for the disestablishment of the church) in 1913.

But let us see how, twenty years after the Commune, Engels summed up its lessons for the fighting proletariat.

Here are the lessons to which Engels attached prime importance:

. . . It was precisely this oppressive power of the former centralised government—the army, political police and bureaucracy which Napoleon had created in 1798 and since then had been taken over as a welcome instrument by every new government and used against its opponents—it was precisely this power which should have fallen everywhere, as it had already fallen in Paris.

The Commune was compelled to recognise from the outset that the working class, once come to power, could not carry on business with the old state machine; that, in order not to lose again its own position of power which it had but just conquered, this working class must, on the one hand, set aside all the old repressive machinery previously used against itself, and on the other, safeguard itself against its own deputies and officials by declaring them all, without any exception, subject to recall at any moment. . . .

Engels emphasises again and again that not only in a monarchy, but *also in a democratic republic*, the state remains a state, *i.e.*, it retains its fundamental and characteristic feature of transforming the officials, "the servants of society," its organs, into the *masters* of society.

Against this transformation of the state and the organs of the state from servants of society into masters of society—a process which had been inevitable in all previous states—the Commune made use of two infallible remedies. In the first place, it filled all posts—administrative, judicial and educational—by election on the basis of universal suffrage of all concerned, with the right of these electors to recall their delegate at any time. And in the second place, all officials, high or low, were paid only the wages received by other workers. The highest salary paid by the Commune to any one was 6,000 francs.\* In

\* Nominally this means about 2,400 rubles a year; according to the present rate of exchange about 6,000 rubles. Those Bolsheviks who propose a salary of 9,000 rubles for members of the municipal administration, for instance, instead of suggesting a maximum salary of 6,000 rubles *for the whole of the state*—a sum quite sufficient for anybody, are making quite an unpardonable error.<sup>8</sup>

this way, an effective barrier to place-hunting and careerism was set up, even apart from the imperative mandates to delegates to representative bodies which were also added in profusion. . . .\*

Engels approaches here the interesting boundary line where consistent democracy is, on the one hand, *transformed* into Socialism, and on the other, it *demand*s the introduction of Socialism. For, in order to destroy the state, it is necessary to convert the functions of public service into such simple operations of control and accounting as are within the reach of the vast majority of the population, and, ultimately, of every single individual. And, in order to do away completely with careerism it must be made *impossible* for an "honourable," though unsalaried, post in the public service to be used as a springboard to a highly profitable post in the banks or the joint-stock companies, as happens *constantly* in all the freest capitalist countries.

But Engels does not make the mistake made, for instance, by some Marxists in dealing with the right of a nation to self-determination: that this is impossible under capitalism and will be unnecessary under Socialism. Such an apparently clever, but really incorrect statement might be repeated of *any* democratic institution, including moderate salaries for officials; for, under capitalism, fully consistent democracy is impossible, while under Socialism all democracy *withers away*.

This is a sophism, comparable to the old humorous problem of whether a man is becoming bald if he loses one hair.

To develop democracy to *its logical conclusion*, to find the *forms* for this development, to test them by practice, and so forth—all this is one of the fundamental tasks of the struggle for the social revolution. Taken separately, no kind of democracy will yield Socialism. But in actual life democracy will never be "taken separately"; it will be "taken together" with other things, it will exert *its* influence on economic life, stimulating its reorganisation; it will be subjected, in its turn, to the influence of economic development, and so on. Such is the dialectics of living history.

Engels continues:

This shattering [*Sprengung*] of the former state power and its replacement by a new and really democratic state is described in detail in the third section of *The Civil War*. But it was necessary here once more to dwell briefly on some of its features, because in Germany particularly the superstitious faith in

\* *Ibid.*—Ed.

the state has been carried over from philosophy into the general consciousness of the bourgeoisie and even of many workers. According to the philosophical conception, the state is the "realisation of the idea" or, translated into philosophical language, the Kingdom of God on earth; the sphere in which eternal truth and justice is, or should be, realised. And from this then follows a superstitious reverence for the state and for everything connected with it, which takes root the more readily as people from their childhood are accustomed to imagine that the affairs and interests common to the whole of society could not be managed and safeguarded in any other way than as in the past, that is, through the state and its well-paid officials. And people think they are taking quite an extraordinarily bold step forward when they rid themselves of faith in a hereditary monarchy and become partisans of a democratic republic. In reality, however, the state is nothing more than a machine for the oppression of one class by another, and indeed in the democratic republic no less than in the monarchy; and at best an evil, inherited by the proletariat after its victorious struggle for class supremacy, whose worst sides the proletariat, just like the Commune, will have at the earliest possible moment to lop off, until such time as a new generation, reared under new and free social conditions, will be able to throw on the scrap-heap all this state rubbish.\*

Engels cautioned the Germans, in the event of the monarchy being replaced by a republic, not to forget the fundamentals of Socialism on the question of the state in general. His warnings now read like a direct lecture to Messrs. Tsereteli and Chernov, who revealed in their coalition tactics a superstitious faith in, and a respect for, the state!

Two more points. First: when Engels says that in a democratic republic, "no less" than in a monarchy, the state remains a "machine for the oppression of one class by another," this by no means signifies that the *form* of oppression is a matter of indifference to the proletariat, as some Anarchists "teach." A wider, freer and more open *form* of the class struggle and of class oppression enormously assists the proletariat in its struggle for the abolition of all classes.

Second: why only a new generation will be able completely to throw out all the state rubbish—this question is bound up with the question of overcoming democracy, to which we now turn.

## 6. ENGELS ON THE OVERCOMING OF DEMOCRACY

Engels had occasion to speak on this subject in connection with the question of the *scientific* incorrectness of the term "Social-Democrat."

In the introduction to an edition of his articles of the 'seventies on

\* *Ibid.*—Ed.

various subjects, mainly on international questions (*Internationales aus dem Volkstaat*), dated January 3, 1894, i.e., written a year and a half before his death, Engels wrote that in all his articles he used the word "Communist," not "Social-Democrat," because at that time it was the Proudhonists in France and the Lassalleans in Germany who called themselves Social-Democrats.

... For Marx and me—Engels writes—it was therefore quite impossible to choose such an elastic term to characterise our special point of view. Today things are different, and the word ("Social-Democrat") may perhaps pass muster [*mag passieren*], however unsuitable [*unpassend*] it still is for a party whose economic programme is not merely Socialist in general, but directly Communist, and whose ultimate political aim is to overcome the whole state, and therefore democracy as well. The names of *real* [Engels' italics] political parties, however, are never wholly appropriate; the party develops, while the name persists.

The dialectician Engels remains true to dialectics to the end of his days. Marx and I, he says, had a splendid, scientifically exact name for the party, but there was no real party, i.e., no proletarian mass party. Now, at the end of the nineteenth century, there is a real party, but its name is scientifically inexact. Never mind, "it will pass muster," only let the party *grow*, do not let the scientific inexactness of its name be hidden from it, and do not let it hinder its development in the right direction!

Perhaps, indeed, some humourist might comfort us Bolsheviks in the manner of Engels: we have a real party, it is developing splendidly; even such a meaningless and awkward term as "Bolshevik" will "pass muster," although it expresses nothing but the purely accidental fact that at the Brussels-London Congress of 1903 we had a majority. . . . \* Perhaps now, when the July and August persecutions of our party by republican and "revolutionary" petty-bourgeois democracy have made the word "Bolshevik" such a universally respected name; when, in addition, these persecutions have signalised such a great historical step forward made by our party in its *actual* development, perhaps now even I would hesitate to repeat my April suggestion as to changing the name of our party. Perhaps I would propose a "compromise" to our comrades, to call ourselves the Communist Party, but to retain the word "Bolsheviks" in brackets. . . .

\* Lenin and his followers among the delegates at this congress secured a majority on a fundamental organisational political question and were afterwards called *Bolsheviks*, from the Russian word *Bolshinstvo*, meaning majority; the adherents of the opposite group were called *Mensheviks*, from the Russian word *Menshinstvo*, meaning minority.—Ed.

But the question of the name of the party is incomparably less important than the question of the relation of the revolutionary proletariat to the state.

In the current arguments about the state, the mistake is constantly made against which Engels cautions here, and which we have indicated above, namely, it is constantly forgotten that the destruction of the state means also the destruction of democracy; that the withering away of the state also means the withering away of democracy.

At first sight such a statement seems exceedingly strange and incomprehensible; indeed, some one may even begin to fear lest we be expecting the advent of such an order of society in which the principle of the subordination of the minority to the majority will not be respected—for is not a democracy just the recognition of this principle?

No, democracy is *not* identical with the subordination of the minority to the majority. Democracy is a *state* recognising the subordination of the minority to the majority, *i.e.*, an organisation for the systematic use of *violence* by one class against the other, by one part of the population against another.

We set ourselves the ultimate aim of destroying the state, *i.e.*, every organised and systematic violence, every use of violence against man in general. We do not expect the advent of an order of society in which the principle of subordination of minority to majority will not be observed. But, striving for Socialism, we are convinced that it will develop into Communism; that, side by side with this, there will vanish all need for force, for the *subjection* of one man to another, and of one part of the population to another, since people will *grow accustomed* to observing the elementary conditions of social existence *without force and without subjection*.

In order to emphasise this element of habit, Engels speaks of a *new generation*, "reared under new and free social conditions," which "will be able to throw on the scrap heap all this state rubbish"—every kind of state, including even the democratic-republican state.

For the elucidation of this, the question of the economic basis of the withering away of the state must be analysed.

## CHAPTER V

### THE ECONOMIC BASE OF THE WITHERING AWAY OF THE STATE

A most detailed elucidation of this question is given by Marx in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (letter to Bracke, May 15, 1875, printed only in 1891 in the *Neue Zeit*, IX-1, and in a special Russian edition \*). The polemical part of this remarkable work, consisting of a criticism of Lassalleanism, 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. FORMULATION OF THE QUESTION BY MARX

From a superficial comparison of the letter of Marx to Bracke (May 15, 1875) with Engels' letter to Bebel (March 28, 1875), analysed above, it might appear that Marx was much more "pro-state" than Engels, and that the difference of opinion between the two writers on the question of the state is very considerable.

Engels suggests to Bebel that all the chatter about the state should be thrown overboard; that the word "state" should be eliminated from the programme and replaced by "community"; Engels even declares that the Commune was really no longer a state in the proper sense of the word. And Marx even speaks of the "future state in Communist society," i.e., he is apparently recognising the necessity of a state even under Communism.

But such a view would be fundamentally incorrect. 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 merely to this withering away of the state.

It is clear that there can be no question of defining the exact moment of the *future* withering away—the more so as it must obviously be a rather lengthy process. The apparent difference between Marx and Engels is due to the different subjects they dealt with, the different aims they were pursuing. Engels set out to show to Bebel,

\* English translation in *Critique of the Social-Democratic Programmes*.—Ed.

in a plain, bold and broad outline, all the absurdity of the current superstitions concerning the state, shared to no small degree by Lassalle himself. Marx, on the other hand, only touches upon *this* question in passing, being interested mainly in another subject—the *evolution* of Communist society.

The whole theory of Marx is an application of the theory of evolution—in its most consistent, complete, well considered and fruitful form—to modern capitalism. It was natural for Marx to raise the question of applying this theory both to the *coming* collapse of capitalism and to the *future* evolution of *future* Communism.

On the basis of what *data* can the future evolution of future Communism be considered?

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 *has given birth*. There is no shadow of an attempt on Marx's part to conjure up a Utopia, to make idle guesses about that which cannot be known. Marx treats the question of Communism in the same way as a naturalist would treat the question of the evolution of, say, a new biological species, if he knew that such and such was its origin, and such and such the direction in which it changed.

Marx, first of all, brushes aside the confusion the Gotha Programme brings into the question of the interrelation between state and society.

"Contemporary society" is the capitalist society—he writes—which exists in all civilised countries, more or less free of mediaeval admixture, more or less modified by each country's particular historical development, more or less developed. In contrast with this, the "contemporary state" varies with every state boundary. It is different in the Prusso-German Empire from what it is in Switzerland, and different in England from what it is in the United States. The "contemporary state" is therefore a fiction.

Nevertheless, in spite of the motley variety of their forms, the different states of the various civilised countries all have this in common: they are all based on modern bourgeois society, only a little more or less capitalistically developed. Consequently, they also have certain essential characteristics in common. In this sense, it is possible to speak of the "contemporary state" in contrast to the future, when its present root, bourgeois society, will have perished.

Then the question arises: what transformation will the state undergo in a Communist society? In other words, what social functions analogous to the present functions of the state will then still survive? This question can only be answered scientifically, and however many thousand times the word *people* is combined with the word *state*, we get not a flea-jump closer to the problem. . . .\*

Having thus ridiculed all talk about a "people's state," Marx formulates the question and warns us, as it were, that to arrive at a scientific answer one must rely only on firmly established scientific data.

The first fact that has been established with complete exactness by the whole theory of evolution, by science as a whole—a fact which the Utopians forgot, and which 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 epoch of *transition* from capitalism to Communism.

## 2. TRANSITION FROM CAPITALISM TO COMMUNISM

Between capitalist and Communist society—Marx continues—lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the former into the latter. To this also corresponds a political transition period, in which the state can be no other than *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*.\*

This conclusion Marx bases on an analysis of the rôle played by the proletariat in modern capitalist society, on the data concerning the evolution of this society, and on the irreconcilability of the opposing interests of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

Earlier the question was put thus: to attain its emancipation, the proletariat must overthrow the bourgeoisie, conquer political power and establish its own revolutionary dictatorship.

Now the question is put somewhat differently: the transition from capitalist society, developing towards Communism, towards a Communist society, is impossible 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 ideas: the "transformation of the proletariat into the ruling class" and the "establishment of democracy." On the basis of all that has been said above, one can define more exactly how democracy changes in the transition from capitalism to Communism.

In capitalist society, under the conditions most favourable to its development, we have more or less complete democracy in the democratic republic. But this democracy is always bound by the narrow framework of capitalist exploitation, and consequently always re-

\* *Ibid.*—Ed.



mains, in reality, a democracy for the minority, only for the possessing classes, only for the rich. Freedom in capitalist society always remains just about the same as it was in the ancient Greek republics: freedom for the slave-owners. The modern wage-slaves, owing to the conditions of capitalist exploitation, are so much crushed by want and poverty that "democracy is nothing to them," "politics is nothing to them"; that, in the ordinary peaceful course of events, the majority of the population is debarred from participating in social and political life.

The correctness of this statement is perhaps most clearly proved by Germany, just because in this state constitutional legality lasted and remained stable for a remarkably long time—for nearly half a century (1871-1914)—and because Social-Democracy in Germany during that time was able to achieve far more than in other countries in "utilising legality," and was able to organise into a political party a larger proportion of the working class than anywhere else in the world.

What, then, 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 wage-workers! Three million organised 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 mechanism of capitalist democracy, everywhere, both in the "petty"—so-called petty—details of the suffrage (residential qualification, exclusion of women, etc.), and 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 organisation of the daily press, etc., etc.—on all sides we see restriction after restriction upon democracy. These restrictions, exceptions, exclusions, obstacles for the poor, seem slight, especially in the eyes of one who has himself never known want 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 class), but in their sum total these restrictions exclude and squeeze out the poor from politics and from an active share in democracy.

Marx splendidly grasped this *essence* of capitalist democracy, when, in analysing the experience of the Commune, he said that the

oppressed were allowed, once every few years, to decide which particular representatives of the oppressing class should be in parliament to represent and repress them!

But from this capitalist democracy—inevitably narrow, subtly rejecting the poor, and therefore hypocritical and false to the core—progress does not march onward, simply, smoothly and directly, to “greater and greater democracy,” as the liberal professors and petty-bourgeois opportunists would have us believe. No, progress marches onward, *i.e.*, towards Communism, through the dictatorship of the proletariat; it cannot do otherwise, for there is no one else and no other way to *break the resistance* of the capitalist exploiters.

But the dictatorship of the proletariat—*i.e.*, the organisation of the vanguard of the oppressed as the ruling class for the purpose of crushing the oppressors—cannot produce merely an expansion of democracy. *Together* 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 rich folk, the dictatorship of the proletariat produces a series of restrictions of liberty in the case of the oppressors, the exploiters, the capitalists. We must crush them in order to free humanity from wage-slavery; their resistance must be broken by force; it is clear that where there is suppression there is also violence, there is no liberty, no democracy.

Engels expressed this splendidly in his letter to Bebel when he said, as the reader will remember, that “as long as the proletariat still *needs* the state, it needs it not in the interests of freedom, but for the purpose of crushing its antagonists; and as soon as it becomes possible to speak of freedom, then 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 modification of democracy during the *transition* from capitalism to Communism.

Only in Communist society, when the resistance of the capitalists has been completely broken, when the capitalists have disappeared, when there are no classes (*i.e.*, there is no difference between the members of society in 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 a really full democracy, a democracy without any exceptions, will be possible and will be realised. And only then will democracy itself begin to *wither away* due to the simple fact that, freed from capitalist slavery, from the untold hor-

rors, savagery, absurdities and infamies of capitalist exploitation, people will gradually *become accustomed* to the observance of the elementary rules of social life that have been known for centuries and repeated for thousands of years in all school books; 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 elemental nature of the process. Only habit can, and undoubtedly will, have such an effect; for we see around us millions of times how readily people get accustomed to observe the necessary rules of life in common, if there is no exploitation, if there is nothing that causes indignation, that calls forth protest and revolt and has to be *suppressed*.

Thus, in capitalist society, we have a democracy that is curtailed, poor, 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, produce democracy for the people, for the majority, side by side with the necessary suppression of the minority—the exploiters. Communism alone is capable of giving a 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 a state in the proper sense of the word, that is, special machinery for the suppression of one class by another, and of the majority by the minority at that. Naturally, for the successful discharge of such a task as the systematic suppression by the exploiting minority of the exploited majority, the greatest ferocity and savagery of suppression are required, seas of blood are required, through which mankind is marching in slavery, serfdom, and wage-labour.

Again, during the *transition* from capitalism to Communism, suppression is *still* necessary; but it is the suppression of the minority of exploiters by the majority of exploited. A special apparatus, special machinery for suppression, the "state," is *still* necessary, but this is now a transitional state, no longer a state in the usual sense, for the suppression of the minority of exploiters, by the majority of the wage slaves of *yesterday*, is a matter comparatively so easy, simple and natural that it will cost far less bloodshed than the suppression of the risings of slaves, serfs or wage labourers, and will cost mankind far less. This is compatible with the diffusion of

democracy among such an overwhelming majority of the population, that the need for *special machinery* of suppression will begin to disappear. The exploiters are, naturally, unable to suppress the people without a most complex machinery for performing this task; but *the people* can suppress the exploiters even with very simple "machinery," almost without any "machinery," without any special apparatus, by the simple *organisation of the armed masses* (such as the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, we may remark, anticipating a little).

Finally, only Communism renders the state absolutely unnecessary, for there is *no one* to be suppressed—"no one" in the sense of a *class*, in the sense of a systematic struggle with a definite section of the population. We are not Utopians, and we do not in the least deny the possibility and inevitability of excesses on the part of *individual persons*, nor the need to suppress *such* excesses. But, in the first place, no special machinery, no special apparatus of repression is needed for this; this will be done by the armed people itself, as simply and as readily as any crowd of civilised people, even in modern society, parts a pair of combatants or does not allow a woman to be outraged. And, secondly, we know that the fundamental social cause of excesses which consist in violating the rules of social life 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 going into Utopias, Marx defined more fully what can *now* be defined regarding this future, namely, the difference between the lower and higher phases (degrees, stages) of Communist society.

### 3. FIRST PHASE OF COMMUNIST SOCIETY

In the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Marx goes into some detail to disprove the Lassalleian idea of the workers' receiving under Socialism the "undiminished" or "full product of their labour." Marx shows that out of the whole of the social labour of society, it is necessary to deduct a reserve fund, a fund for the expansion of production, for the replacement of worn-out machinery, and so on; then, also, out of the means of consumption must be deducted

a fund for the expenses of management, for schools, hospitals, homes for the aged, and so on.

Instead of the hazy, obscure, general phrase of Lassalle's—"the full product of his labour for the worker"—Marx gives a sober estimate of exactly how a Socialist society will have to manage its affairs. Marx undertakes a *concrete* analysis of the conditions of life of a society in which there is no capitalism, and says:

What we are dealing with here [analysing the programme of the party] is not a Communist society which has *developed* on its own foundations, but, on the contrary, one which is just *emerging* from capitalist society, and which therefore in all respects—economic, moral and intellectual—still bears the birthmarks of the old society from whose womb it sprung.\*

And it is this Communist society—a society which has just come into the world out of the womb of capitalism, and which, in all respects, bears the stamp 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 socially-necessary work, receives a certificate from society to the effect that he has done such and such a quantity of work. According to this certificate, he receives from the public warehouses, where articles of consumption are stored, a corresponding quantity of products. Deducting that proportion of labour which goes to the public fund, every worker, therefore, receives from society as much as he has given it.

"Equality" seems to reign supreme.

But when Lassalle, having in view such a social order (generally called Socialism, but termed by Marx the first phase of Communism), speaks of this as "just distribution," and says that this is "the equal right of each to an equal product of labour," Lassalle is mistaken, 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 the *same* measure to *different* people who, in fact, are not the same and are not equal to one another; this is why "equal right" is really a violation of equality, and an injustice. In effect, every man having done as much social labour

\* *Ibid.*—Ed.

as every other, receives an equal share of the social products (with the above-mentioned deductions).

But different people are not alike: one is strong, another is weak; one is married, the other is not; one has more children, another has less, and so on.

... With equal labour—Marx concludes—and therefore an equal share in the social consumption fund, one man in fact receives more than the other, one is richer than the other, and so forth. In order to avoid all these defects, rights, instead of being equal, must be unequal.\*

The first phase of Communism, therefore, still cannot 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 as private property the *means of production*, the factories, machines, land, and so on. In tearing down Lassalle's petty-bourgeois, confused phrase about "equality" and "justice" *in general*, Marx shows the *course of development* of Communist society, which is forced at first to destroy *only* the "injustice" that consists in the means of production having been seized by private individuals, and which *is not capable* of destroying at once the further injustice consisting in the distribution of the articles of consumption "according to work performed" (and not according to need).

The vulgar economists, including the bourgeois professors and also "our" Tugan-Baranovsky, constantly reproach the Socialists with forgetting the inequality of people and with "dreaming" of destroying this inequality. Such a reproach, as we see, only proves the extreme ignorance of the gentlemen propounding bourgeois ideology.

Marx not only takes into account with the greatest accuracy the inevitable inequality of men; 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 ("Socialism" in the generally accepted sense of the word) *does not remove* the defects of distribution and the inequality of "bourgeois right" which *continue to rule* as long as the products are divided "according to work performed."

But these defects—Marx continues—are unavoidable in the first phase of Communist society, when, after long travail, it first emerges from capitalist society. Justice can never rise superior to the economic conditions of society and the cultural development conditioned by them.\*\*

\* *Ibid.*—Ed.

\*\* *Ibid.*—Ed.

And so, in the first phase of Communist society (generally called Socialism) "bourgeois right" is *not* abolished in its entirety, but only in part, only in proportion to the economic transformation so far attained, *i.e.*, only in respect of the means of production. "Bourgeois right" recognises them as the private property of separate individuals. Socialism converts them into common property. *To that extent*, and to that extent alone, does "bourgeois right" disappear.

However, it continues to exist as far as its other part is concerned; it remains in the capacity of regulator (determining factor) distributing the products and allotting labour among the members of society. "He who does not work, shall not eat"—this Socialist principle is *already* realised; "for an equal quantity of labour, an equal quantity of products"—this Socialist principle is also *already* realised. However, this is not yet Communism, and this does not abolish "bourgeois right," which gives to unequal individuals, in return for an unequal (in reality unequal) amount of work, an equal quantity of products.

This is a "defect," says Marx, but it is unavoidable during the first phase of Communism; for, if we are not to fall into Utopianism, we cannot imagine that, having overthrown capitalism, people will at once learn to work for society *without any standards of right*; indeed, the abolition of capitalism *does not immediately lay* the economic foundations for *such* a change.

And there is no other standard yet than that of "bourgeois right." To this extent, therefore, a form of state is still necessary, which, while maintaining public ownership of the means of production, would preserve the equality of labour and equality in the distribution of products.

The state is withering 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 altogether withered away, since there still remains the protection of "bourgeois right" which sanctifies actual inequality. For the complete extinction of the state, complete Communism is necessary.

#### 4. HIGHER PHASE OF COMMUNIST SOCIETY

Marx continues:

In a higher phase of Communist society, when the enslaving subordination of individuals in the division of labour has disappeared, and with it also the

antagonism between mental and physical labour; when labour has become not only a means of living, but itself the first necessity of life; when, along with the all-round development of individuals, the productive forces too have grown, and all the springs of social wealth are flowing more freely—it is only at that stage that it will be possible to pass completely beyond the narrow horizon of bourgeois rights, and for society to inscribe on its banners: from each according to his ability; to each according to his needs! \*

Only now can we appreciate the full correctness of Engels' remarks in which he mercilessly ridiculed all the absurdity of combining the words "freedom" and "state." While the state exists there is no freedom. When there is freedom, there will be no state.

The economic basis for the complete withering away of the state is that high stage of development of Communism when the antagonism between mental and physical labour disappears, that is to say, when one of the principal sources of modern *social* inequality disappears—a source, moreover, which it is impossible to remove immediately by the mere conversion of the means of production into public property, by the mere expropriation of the capitalists.

This expropriation will make a gigantic development of the productive forces *possible*. And seeing how incredibly, even now, capitalism *retards* this development, how much progress could be made even on the basis of modern technique at the level it has reached, we have a right to say, with the fullest confidence, that the expropriation of the capitalists will inevitably result in a gigantic development of the productive forces of human society. But how rapidly this development will go forward, how soon it will reach the point of breaking away from the division of labour, of removing the antagonism between mental and physical labour, of transforming work into the "first necessity of life"—this we do not and *cannot* know.

Consequently, we have a right to speak solely of the inevitable withering away of the state, emphasising the protracted nature of this process and its dependence upon the rapidity of development of the *higher phase* of Communism; leaving quite open the question of lengths of time, or the concrete forms of withering away, since material for the solution of such questions is *not available*.

The state will be able to wither away completely when society has realised the rule: "From each according to his ability; to each according to his needs," *i.e.*, when people have become accustomed to observe the fundamental rules of social life, and their labour is

\* *Ibid.*—Ed.



so productive, that they voluntarily work *according to their ability*. "The narrow horizon of bourgeois rights," which compels one to calculate, with the hard-heartedness of a Shylock, whether he has not worked half an hour more than another, whether he is not getting less pay than another—this narrow horizon will then be left behind. There will then be no need for any exact calculation by society of the quantity of products to be distributed to each of its members; each will take freely "according to his needs."

From the bourgeois point of view, it is easy to declare such a social order "a pure Utopia," and to sneer at the Socialists for promising each the right to receive from society, without any control of the labour of the individual citizen, any quantity of truffles, automobiles, pianos, etc. Even now, most bourgeois "savants" deliver themselves of such sneers, thereby displaying at once their ignorance and their self-seeking defence of capitalism.

Ignorance—for it has never entered the head of any Socialist to "promise" that the highest phase of Communism will arrive; while the great Socialists, in *foreseeing* its arrival, presupposed both a productivity of labour unlike the present and a person not like the present man in the street, capable of spoiling, without reflection, like the seminary students in Pomyalovsky's book,\* the stores of social wealth, 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 quantity of labour and the quantity of consumption; only this control must *start* with the expropriation of the capitalists, with the control of the workers over the capitalists, and must be carried out, not by a state of bureaucrats, but by a state of *armed workers*.

Self-seeking defence of capitalism by the bourgeois ideologists (and their hangers-on like Tsereteli, Chernov and Co.) consists in that they *substitute* disputes and discussions about the distant future for the essential imperative questions of present-day policy: 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 whole of the work of this syndicate to the really democratic state of the *Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies*.

In reality, when a learned professor, and following him some

\* Pomyalovsky's *Seminary Sketches* depicted a group of student-ruffians who engaged in destroying things for the pleasure it gave them.—Ed.

philistine, and following the latter Messrs. Tsereteli and Chernov, talk of the unreasonable Utopias, of the demagogic promises of the Bolsheviks, of the impossibility of "introducing" Socialism, it is the higher stage or phase of Communism which they have in mind, and which no one has ever promised, or even thought of "introducing," for the reason that, generally speaking, it cannot be "introduced."

And here we come to that question of the scientific difference between Socialism and Communism, upon which Engels touched in his above-quoted discussion on the incorrectness of the name "Social-Democrat." The political difference between the first, or lower, and the higher phase of Communism will in time, no doubt, be tremendous; but it would be ridiculous to emphasise it now, under capitalism, and only, perhaps, some isolated Anarchist could invest it with primary importance (if there are still some people among the Anarchists who have learned nothing from the Plekhanov-like conversion of the Kropotkins, the Graveses, the Cornelissens, and other "leading lights" of Anarchism to social-chauvinism or Anarcho-*Jusquaabout*-ism,\* as Ge, one of the few Anarchists still preserving honour and conscience, has expressed it).

But the scientific difference between Socialism and Communism is clear. What is generally called Socialism was termed by Marx the "first" or lower phase of Communist society. In so far as the means of production become *public* property, the word "Communism" is also applicable here, providing we do not forget that it is *not* full Communism. The great significance of Marx's elucidations consists in this: that here, too, he consistently applies materialist dialectics, the doctrine of evolution, looking upon Communism as something which evolves *out of* capitalism. Instead of artificial, "elaborate," scholastic definitions and profitless disquisitions on the meaning of words (what Socialism is, what Communism is), Marx gives an analysis of what may be called stages in the economic ripeness of Communism.

In its first phase or first stage Communism *cannot* as yet be economically ripe and entirely free of all tradition and of all taint of capitalism. Hence the interesting phenomenon of Communism retaining, in its first phase, "the narrow horizon of bourgeois rights." Bourgeois rights, with respect to distribution of articles of *consump-*

\* *Jusquaabout*—combination of the French words meaning "until the end." Anarcho-*Jusquaabout*-ism—Anarcho-until-the-End-ism.—Ed.

tion, inevitably presupposes, of course, the existence of the *bourgeois state*, for rights are nothing without an apparatus capable of *enforcing* the observance of the rights.

Consequently, for a certain time not only bourgeois rights, but even the bourgeois state remains under Communism, without the bourgeoisie!

This may look like a paradox, or simply a dialectical puzzle for which Marxism is often blamed by people who would not make the least effort to study its extraordinarily profound content.

But, as a matter of fact, the old surviving in the new confronts us in life at every step, in nature as well as in society. Marx did not smuggle a scrap of "bourgeois" rights into Communism of his own accord; he indicated what is economically and politically inevitable in a society issuing *from the womb* of capitalism.

Democracy is of great importance for the working class in its struggle for freedom against the capitalists. But democracy is by no means a limit one may not overstep; it is only one of the stages in the course of development from feudalism to capitalism, and from capitalism to Communism.

Democracy means equality. The great significance of the struggle of the proletariat for equality, and the significance of equality as a slogan, are apparent, if we correctly interpret it as meaning the abolition of *classes*. But democracy means only *formal* equality. Immediately after the attainment of equality for all members of society *in respect of* the ownership of the means of production, that is, of equality of labour and equality of wages, there will inevitably arise before humanity the question of going further from formal equality to real equality, *i.e.*, to realising 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 higher aim—this we do not and cannot know. But it is important to realise how infinitely mendacious is the usual bourgeois presentation of Socialism as something lifeless, petrified, fixed once for all, whereas in reality, it is *only* with Socialism that there will commence a rapid, genuine, real mass advance, in which first the *majority* and then the whole of the population will take part—an advance in all domains of social and individual life.

Democracy is a form of the state—one of its varieties. Consequently, like every state, it consists in organised, systematic application of force against human beings. This on the one hand. On

the other hand, however, it signifies the formal recognition of the equality of all citizens, the equal right of all to determine the structure and administration of the state. This, in turn, is connected with the fact that, at a certain stage in the development of democracy, it first rallies the proletariat as a revolutionary class against capitalism, and gives it an opportunity to crush, to smash to bits, to wipe off the face of the earth the bourgeois state machinery—even its republican variety: the standing army, the police, and bureaucracy; then it substitutes for all this a *more* democratic, but still a state machinery in the shape of armed masses of workers, which becomes transformed into universal participation of the people in the militia.

Here “quantity turns into quality”: *such* a degree of democracy is bound up with the abandonment of the framework of bourgeois society, and the beginning of its Socialist reconstruction. If *every one* really takes part in the administration of the state, capitalism cannot retain its hold. In its turn, capitalism, as it develops, itself creates *prerequisites* for “every one” *to be able* really to take part in the administration of the state. Among such prerequisites are: universal literacy, already realised in most of the advanced capitalist countries, then the “training and disciplining” of millions of workers by the huge, complex, and socialised apparatus of the post-office, the railways, the big factories, large-scale commerce, banking, etc., etc.

With such *economic* prerequisites it is perfectly possible, immediately, within twenty-four hours after the overthrow of the capitalists and bureaucrats, to replace them, in the control of production and distribution, in the business of *control* of labour and products, by the armed workers, by the whole people in arms. (The question of control and accounting must not be confused with the question of the scientifically educated staff of engineers, agronomists and so on. These gentlemen work today, obeying the capitalists; they will work even better tomorrow, obeying the armed workers.)

Accounting and control—these are the *chief* things necessary for the organising and correct functioning of the *first phase* of Communist society. *All* citizens are here transformed into hired employees of the state, which is made up of the armed workers. *All* citizens become employees and workers of *one* national state “syndicate.” All that is required is that they should work equally, should regularly do their share of work, and should receive equal pay. The accounting and control necessary for this have been

*simplified* by capitalism to the utmost, till they have become the extraordinarily simple operations of watching, recording and issuing receipts, within the reach of anybody who can read and write and knows the first four rules of arithmetic.\*

When the *majority* of the people begin everywhere to keep such accounts and maintain such control over the capitalists (now converted into employees) and over the intellectual gentry, who still retain capitalist habits, this control will really become universal, general, national; and there will be no way of getting away from it, there will be "nowhere to go."

The whole of society will have become one office and one factory, with equal work and equal pay.

But this "factory" discipline, which the proletariat will extend to the whole of society after the defeat of the capitalists and the overthrow of the exploiters, is by no means our ideal, or our final aim. It is but a *foothold* necessary for the radical cleansing of society of all the hideousness and foulness of capitalist exploitation, *in order to advance further*.

From the moment when all members of society, or even only the overwhelming majority, have learned how to govern the state *themselves*, have taken this business into their own hands, have "established" control over the insignificant minority of capitalists, over the gentry with capitalist leanings, and the workers thoroughly demoralised by capitalism—from this moment the need for any government begins to disappear. The more complete the democracy, the nearer the moment when it begins to be unnecessary. The more democratic the "state" consisting of armed workers, which is "no longer a state in the proper sense of the word," the more rapidly does *every* state begin to wither away.

For when *all* have learned to manage, and independently are actually managing by themselves social production, keeping accounts, controlling the idlers, the gentlefolk, the swindlers and similar "guardians of capitalist traditions," then the escape from this national accounting and control will inevitably become so increasingly difficult, such a rare exception, and will probably be accompanied by such swift and severe punishment (for the armed

\* When most of the functions of the state are reduced to this accounting and control by the workers themselves, then it ceases to be a "political state," and the "public functions will lose their political character and be transformed into simple administrative functions" (cf. above, Chap. IV, § 2 on Engels' polemic against the Anarchists).

workers are men of practical life, not sentimental intellectuals, and they will scarcely allow any one to trifle with them), that very soon the *necessity* of observing the simple, fundamental rules of every-day social life in common will have become a *habit*.

The door will then be wide open for the transition from the first phase of Communist society to its higher phase, and along with it to the complete withering away of the state.

## CHAPTER VI

### VULGARISATION OF MARX BY THE OPPORTUNISTS

THE question of the relation of the state to the social revolution, and of the social revolution to the state, like the question of revolution generally, occupied the best known theoreticians and publicists of the Second International (1889-1914) very little. But the most characteristic thing in that process of the gradual growth of opportunism, which led to the collapse of the Second International in 1914, is the circumstance that even when those people actually came into contact with this question they *tried to evade it* or else failed to notice it.

It may, in general, be said that the *evasiveness* on the question of the relation of the proletarian revolution to the state, an evasiveness which was convenient for opportunism and nourished it—resulted in a *distortion* of Marxism and in its complete vulgarisation.

To characterise, if only in brief, this lamentable process, let us take the best known theoreticians of Marxism: Plekhanov and Kautsky.

#### 1. PLEKHANOV'S POLEMIC AGAINST THE ANARCHISTS

Plekhanov devoted a special pamphlet to the question of the relation of Anarchism to Socialism, entitled *Anarchism and Socialism*, published in German in 1894.

Plekhanov managed somehow to treat this topic without touching on the most vital, timely, and politically essential point in the struggle with Anarchism: the relation of the revolution to the state, and the question of the state in general! His pamphlet is divided into two parts: one, historical and literary, containing valuable material for the history of the ideas of Stirner, Proudhon and others; the second is philistine, and contains a clumsy dissertation on the theme that an Anarchist cannot be distinguished from a bandit.

An amusing combination of subjects and most characteristic of Plekhanov's whole activity on the eve of the revolution and during

the revolutionary period in Russia. Indeed, in the years 1905 to 1917, Plekhanov showed himself to be half doctrinaire and half philistine, following politically in the wake of the bourgeoisie.

We have seen how Marx and Engels, in their polemics against the Anarchists, explained most thoroughly their views on the relation of the revolution to the state. Engels, upon the publication of Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme* in 1891, wrote that "we"—that is, Engels and Marx—"were then, hardly two years after the Hague Congress of the [First] International,<sup>9</sup> in the fiercest phase of our struggle with Bakunin and his Anarchists."

The Anarchists had tried to claim the Paris Commune as their "own," as a confirmation of their teachings, thus showing that they had not in the least understood the lessons of the Commune or the analysis of those lessons by Marx. Anarchism has failed to give anything even approaching a true solution of the concrete political problems: must the old state machinery be *shattered*, and *what* shall be put in its place?

But to speak of "Anarchism and Socialism," leaving the whole question of the state out of account and *taking no notice* of the whole development of Marxism before and after the Commune—meant an inevitable fall into opportunism. For that is just what opportunism wants—that the two questions just mentioned should *not* be raised at all. This is already a victory for opportunism.

## 2. KAUTSKY'S POLEMIC AGAINST THE OPPORTUNISTS

Undoubtedly an immeasurably larger number of Kautsky's works have been translated into Russian than into any other language. It is not without justification that German Social-Democrats sometimes say jokingly that Kautsky is more read in Russia than in Germany (we may say, in parentheses, that there is deeper historical significance in this joke than those who first made it suspected; for the Russian workers, having manifested in 1905 an extraordinarily strong, an unprecedented demand for the best works of the best Social-Democratic literature in the world, and having been supplied with translations and editions of these works in quantities unheard of in other countries, thereby transplanted, so to speak, with an accelerated tempo, the immense experience of a neighbouring, more advanced country to the almost virgin soil of our proletarian movement).



Besides his popularisation of Marxism, Kautsky is particularly well known in our country by his polemics against the opportunists, chiefly Bernstein. But one fact is almost unknown, which cannot be overlooked if we are to apply ourselves to the task of investigating how it was that Kautsky plunged into the unbelievably disgraceful morass of confusion and defence of social-chauvinism at a time of greatest crisis, in 1914-1915. This fact is that shortly before he came out against the best known representatives of opportunism in France (Millerand and Jaurès) and in Germany (Bernstein), Kautsky had shown very great vacillation. The Marxist journal, *Zarya*, which was published in Stuttgart in 1901-1902, and advocated revolutionary proletarian views, was forced to *polemise* against Kautsky, to characterise as "rubber-like" his evasive, temporising, and conciliatory attitude towards the opportunists as expressed in his resolution at the International Socialist Congress in Paris in 1900.<sup>10</sup> Letters have been published from Kautsky's pen in Germany, revealing no less hesitancy before he took the field against Bernstein.

Of immeasurably greater significance, however, is the circumstance that, in his very polemic against the opportunists, in his formulation of the question and his method of treating it, we can observe, now that we are investigating the *history* of his latest betrayal of Marxism, his systematic gravitation towards opportunism, precisely on the question of the state.

Let us take Kautsky's first big work against opportunism: *Bernstein und das sozialdemokratische Programm*. Kautsky refutes Bernstein in detail, but the characteristic thing about it is the following:

Bernstein, in his Herostrates-like famous *Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus*, accuses Marxism of "*Blanquism*" (an accusation since repeated thousands of times by the opportunists and liberal bourgeois in Russia against the representatives of revolutionary Marxism, the Bolsheviks). In this connection Bernstein dwells particularly on Marx's *The Civil War in France*, and tries—as we saw, quite unsuccessfully—to identify Marx's view of the lessons of the Commune with that of Proudhon. Bernstein pays particular attention to Marx's conclusion, emphasised by him in his 1872 preface to the *Communist Manifesto*, to the effect that "the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes."

The dictum "pleased" Bernstein so much that he repeated it no less than three times in his book—interpreting it in the most distorted opportunist sense.

We have seen what Marx means—that the working class must *shatter, break up, blow up* (*Sprengung*, explosion, is the expression used by Engels) the whole state machinery. But according to Bernstein it would appear as though Marx by these words warned the working class *against* excessive revolutionary zeal when seizing power.

A crasser and uglier perversion of Marx's ideas cannot be imagined.

How, then, did Kautsky act in his detailed refutation of Bernsteinism?

He avoided analysing the whole enormity of the perversion of Marxism by opportunism on this point. He cited the above-quoted passage from Engels' preface to Marx's *Civil War*, saying that, according to Marx, the working class cannot *simply* take possession of the *ready-made* state machinery, but, generally speaking, it *can* take possession of it—and that was all. As for the fact that Bernstein attributed to Marx the *direct opposite* of Marx's real views, that the real task of the proletarian revolution, as formulated by Marx ever since 1852, was to "break up" the state machinery—not a word of all this is to be found in Kautsky.

The result was that the most essential difference between Marxism and opportunism on the question of the proletarian revolution was glossed over!

"The solution of the problem of the proletarian dictatorship," wrote Kautsky "*in opposition*" to Bernstein, "we can safely leave to the future" (p. 172, German edition).

This is not a polemic *against* Bernstein, but really a *concession* to him, a surrender to opportunism; for at present the opportunists ask nothing better than to "safely leave to the future" all the fundamental questions on the tasks of the proletarian revolution.

Marx and Engels, from 1852 to 1891—for forty years—taught the proletariat that it must break up the state machinery. Kautsky, in 1899, confronted on this point with the complete betrayal of Marxism by the opportunists, fraudulently *substitutes* for the question as to whether it is necessary to break up the machinery, the question as to the concrete forms of breaking it up, and then saves himself behind the screen of the "indisputable" (and barren) philis-

tine truth, that concrete forms cannot be known in advance!!

Between Marx and Kautsky, between their respective attitudes to the task of a proletarian party in preparing the working class for revolution, there is an abyss.

Let us take the next, more mature, work by Kautsky, also devoted, to a large extent, to a refutation of opportunist errors. This is his pamphlet, *The Social Revolution*.<sup>11</sup> The author chose here as his special theme the question of "the proletarian revolution" and the "proletarian régime." He gave here a great deal of valuable material; but *evaded* this question of the state. Throughout the pamphlet the author speaks of the conquest of the state power—and nothing else; that is, a formulation is chosen which makes a concession to the opportunists, since it *admits* the possibility of the conquest of power *without* the destruction of the state machinery. The very thing which Marx, in 1872, declared to be "obsolete" in the programme of the *Communist Manifesto*, is *revived* by Kautsky in 1902!

In the pamphlet a special section is devoted to "the forms and weapons of the social revolution." Here he speaks of the political mass strike, of civil war, and of such "instruments of force at the disposal of the modern large state as the bureaucracy and the army"; but of that which the Commune had already taught the workers, not a syllable. Evidently Engels had issued no idle warning, for the German Social-Democrats particularly, against "superstitious reverence" for the state.

Kautsky propounds the matter in the following way: the victorious proletariat, he says, "will realise the democratic programme," and he formulates its clauses. But of that which the year 1871 taught us about bourgeois democracy being replaced by a proletarian one—not a syllable. Kautsky disposes of the question by such "profound" looking banalities as:

It is obvious that we shall not attain power under the present order of things. Revolution itself presupposes a prolonged and far-reaching struggle which, as it proceeds, will change our present political and social structure.

This is undoubtedly "obvious"; as much as that horses eat oats, or that the Volga flows into the Caspian Sea. It is only a pity that he should use this empty and bombastic phrase of "far-reaching" struggle to *slur over* the question essential for the revolutionary proletariat, namely, *wherein* exactly lies this "far-reaching" nature of *its* revolution with respect to the state, with respect to democracy,

as distinguished from the non-proletarian revolutions of the past.

By evading this question, Kautsky *in reality* makes a concession to opportunism in this most essential point, while declaring a terrible war against it *in words*, emphasising the importance of the "idea of revolution" (how much is this "idea" worth, if one is afraid to spread among the workers the concrete lessons of the revolution?) or declaring that "revolutionary idealism is above all," that the English workers represent now "little more than petty-bourgeois."

In a Socialist society—Kautsky writes—there can exist, side by side, the most varied forms of economic enterprises—bureaucratic [??], trade union, co-operative, private. . . . There are, for instance, such enterprises as cannot do without a bureaucratic [??] organisation: such are the railways. Here democratic organisation might take the following form: the workers elect delegates, who form something in the nature of a parliament, and this parliament determines the conditions of work, and superintends the management of the bureaucratic apparatus. Other enterprises may be transferred to the labour unions, and still others may be organised on a co-operative basis.

This reasoning is erroneous, and represents a step backward in comparison with what Marx and Engels explained in the 'seventies, using the lessons of the Commune as an example.

So far as this assumed necessity of "bureaucratic" organisation is concerned, there is no difference whatever between railways and any other enterprise of large-scale machine industry, any factory, any large store, or large-scale capitalist agricultural enterprise. The technique of all such enterprises requires the very strictest discipline, the greatest accuracy in the carrying out by every one of the work allotted to him, under peril of stoppage of the whole business or damage to mechanism or product. In all such enterprises the workers will, of course, "elect delegates who form *something in the nature of a parliament.*"

But here is the crux of the matter: this "something in the nature of a parliament" will *not* be a parliament in the sense of bourgeois-parliamentary institutions. The crux of the matter is that this "something in the nature of a parliament" will *not* merely "determine the conditions of work, and superintend the management of the bureaucratic apparatus," as imagined by Kautsky, whose ideas do not go beyond the framework of bourgeois parliamentarism. In a Socialist society, this "something in the nature of a parliament," consisting of workers' deputies, will of course determine the conditions of work, and superintend the management of the "apparatus"—*but* this apparatus will *not* be "bureaucratic." The workers,

having conquered political power, will break up the old bureaucratic apparatus, they will shatter it to its very foundations, until not one stone is left upon another; and they will replace it with a new one consisting of these same workers and employees, *against* whose transformation into bureaucrats measures will at once be undertaken, as pointed out in detail by Marx and Engels: (1) not only electiveness, but also instant recall; (2) payment no higher than that of ordinary workers; (3) immediate transition to a state of things when *all* fulfil the functions of control and superintendence, so that *all* become "bureaucrats" for a time, and *no one*, therefore, can become a "bureaucrat."

Kautsky has not reflected at all on Marx's words: "The Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary body, executive and legislative at the same time."

Kautsky has not in the least understood the difference between bourgeois parliamentarism, combining democracy (*not for the people*) with bureaucracy (*against the people*), and proletarian democracy, which will take immediate steps to cut down bureaucracy at the roots, and which will be able to carry out these measures to their conclusion, the complete destruction of bureaucracy, and the final establishment of democracy for the people.

Kautsky reveals here again the same "superstitious reverence" for the state, and "superstitious faith" in bureaucracy.

Let us pass to the last and best of Kautsky's works against the opportunists, his pamphlet, *Der Weg zur Macht* [*The Road to Power*] (which I believe has not been translated into Russian, for it came out during the severest period of reaction here, in 1909).<sup>12</sup> This pamphlet is a considerable step forward, inasmuch as it does not treat the revolutionary programme in general, as in the pamphlet of 1899 against Bernstein, nor the tasks of a social revolution irrespective of the time of its occurrence, as in the pamphlet, *The Social Revolution*, 1902, but the concrete conditions which compel us to recognise that the "revolutionary era" *is approaching*.

The author definitely calls attention to the intensification of class antagonisms in general and to imperialism, which plays a particularly important part in this connection. After the "revolutionary period of 1789-1871" in Western Europe, he says, an analogous period begins for the East in 1905. A world war is approaching with menacing rapidity. "The proletariat can no longer talk of premature revolution." "The revolutionary era is beginning."

These declarations are perfectly clear. The pamphlet ought to serve as a measure of comparison between the *high promise* of German Social-Democracy before the imperialist war and the depth of degradation to which it fell—Kautsky included—when the war broke out. "The present situation," Kautsky wrote in the pamphlet under consideration, "contains this danger, that we" (*i.e.*, German Social-Democracy), "may easily be considered more moderate than we are in reality." In reality, the German Social-Democratic Party turned out even more moderate and opportunist than it had seemed!

The more characteristic it is that, side by side with such definite declarations regarding the revolutionary era that had already begun, Kautsky, in the pamphlet which, he says himself, is devoted precisely to an analysis of the "political revolution," again completely dodges the question of the state.

From all these evasions of the question, omissions and equivocations, there inevitably followed that complete surrender to opportunism of which we shall soon have to speak.

German Social-Democracy, in the person of Kautsky, seems to have declared: I uphold revolutionary views (1899); I recognise, in particular, the inevitability of the social revolution of the proletariat (1902); I recognise the approach of a new revolutionary era (1909); still I disavow that which Marx said as early as 1852—if once the question is definitely raised as to the tasks confronting a proletarian revolution in relation to the state (1912).

It was precisely in this direct form that the question was put in the polemic of Kautsky against Pannekoek.

### 3. KAUTSKY'S POLEMIC AGAINST PANNEKOEK

Pannekoek came out against Kautsky as one of the representatives of the "left radical" movement which counted in its ranks Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Radek, and others, and which, while upholding revolutionary tactics, was united in the conviction that Kautsky was taking a "centre" position, that he was wavering in an unprincipled manner between Marxism and opportunism. The correctness of this view was fully proved by the war, when this "centre" current or Kautskyism, wrongly called Marxist, revealed itself in all its hideous squalor.

In an article touching on the question of the state, entitled "Mass Action and Revolution" (*Neue Zeit*, 1912, XXX-2), Pannekoek

characterised Kautsky's position as an attitude of "passive radicalism," as "a theory of inactive waiting." "Kautsky does not want to see the process of revolution," says Pannekoek (p. 616). In thus stating the problem, Pannekoek approached the subject which interests us, namely, the tasks of a proletarian revolution in relation to the state.

The struggle of the proletariat—he wrote—is not merely a struggle against the bourgeoisie for the purpose of acquiring state power, but a struggle *against* the state power. The content of a proletarian revolution is the destruction of the instruments of the state power, and their forcing out [literally: dissolution, *Auflösung*] by the instruments of the power of the proletariat. . . . The struggle will not end until, as its final result, the entire state organisation is destroyed. The organisation of the majority demonstrates its superiority by destroying the organisation of the ruling minority (p. 548).

The formulation in which Pannekoek presented his ideas has very great defects, but its meaning is sufficiently clear; and it is interesting to note how Kautsky combated it.

Up till now—he wrote—the difference between Social-Democrats and Anarchists has consisted in this: the former wished to conquer the state power while the latter wished to destroy it. Pannekoek wants to do both (p. 724).

If Pannekoek's exposition lacks precision and concreteness—not to speak of other defects which have no bearing on the present subject—Kautsky seized on just that one point in Pannekoek's article which is the essential principle of the whole matter; and *on this fundamental question of principle* Kautsky forsakes the Marxian position entirely and surrenders without reserve to the opportunists. His definition of the difference between Social-Democrats and Anarchists is absolutely wrong; and Marxism is thoroughly vulgarised and distorted.

The difference between the Marxists and Anarchists consists in this: (1) the former, while aiming at the complete destruction of the state, recognise that this aim can only be realised after the abolition of classes by a Socialist revolution, as the result of the establishment of Socialism, leading to the withering away of the state; the latter want the complete destruction of the state within twenty-four hours, not understanding the conditions under which such destruction can be carried out; (2) the former recognise that when once the proletariat has won political power it must utterly break up the old state machinery, and substitute for it a new one consisting of an organisation of armed workers, after the type of the

Commune; the latter, while advocating the destruction of the state machinery, have absolutely no clear idea as to *what* the proletariat will put in its place and *how* it will use its revolutionary power; the Anarchists even reject the utilisation by the revolutionary proletariat of state power, the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat; (3) the former insist upon making use of the modern state as a means of preparing the workers for revolution; the latter reject this.

In this controversy it is Pannekoek, not Kautsky, who represents Marxism, for it was Marx who taught that it is not enough for the proletariat simply to conquer state power in the sense of the old state apparatus passing into new hands, but that the proletariat must break up, smash this apparatus and replace it by a new one.

Kautsky goes over from Marxism to the opportunists, because, in his hands, this destruction of the state machinery, which is utterly unacceptable to the opportunists, completely disappears, and there remains for them a loophole in that they can interpret "conquest" as the simple gaining of a majority.

To cover up his distortion of Marxism, Kautsky acts like the religious debater in the village: he advances "quotations" from Marx himself. Marx wrote in 1850 of the necessity of "a decisive centralisation of power in the hands of the state"; and Kautsky triumphantly asks: does Pannekoek want to destroy "centralism"?

This is nothing but sleight-of-hand, similar to Bernstein's identification of the views of Marxism and Proudhonism on federalism versus centralism.

Kautsky's "quotation" is neither here nor there. The new state machinery admits centralism as much as the old; if the workers voluntarily unify their armed forces, this will be centralism, but it will be based on the "complete destruction" of the centralised state apparatus—the army, police, bureaucracy. Kautsky acts just like a swindler when he ignores the perfectly well known arguments of Marx and Engels on the Commune and comes out with a quotation which has nothing to do with the case.

He continues:

Perhaps Pannekoek wants to abolish the state functions of the officials? But we cannot do without officials even in our party and trade union organisations, much less in the state administration. Our programme demands, not abolition of state officials, but their election by the people. . . . It is not a question as to the precise form which the administrative apparatus will take in the "future state," but as to whether our political struggle destroys [literally: dissolves,



"auflöst"] the state *before we have conquered it* [Kautsky's italics]. What ministry with its officials could be abolished? [There follows an enumeration of the ministries of education, justice, finance and war.] No, not one of the present ministries will be removed by our political struggles against the government. . . . I repeat, to avoid misunderstanding: it is not here a question of what form a victorious Social-Democracy will give to the "future state," but of how our opposition changes the present state (p. 725).

This is an obvious trick: *revolution* was the question Pannekoek raised. Both the title of his article and the passages quoted above show that clearly. When Kautsky jumps over to the question of "opposition," he changes the revolutionary point of view for the opportunist. What he says is: opposition *now*, and a special talk about the matter *after* we have won power. *The revolution has vanished!* That is precisely what the opportunists wanted.

Opposition and general political struggle are beside the point; we are concerned with the *revolution*. And revolution consists in the proletariat's *destroying* the "administrative apparatus" and the *whole* state machinery, and replacing it by a new one consisting of the armed workers. Kautsky reveals a "superstitious reverence" for ministries; but why can they not be replaced, say, by commissions of specialists working under sovereign all-powerful Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies?

The essence of the matter is not at all whether the "ministries" will remain or "commissions of specialists" or any other kind of institutions will exist; this is quite unimportant. The main thing is whether the old state machinery (connected by thousands of threads with the bourgeoisie and saturated through and through with routine and inertia) shall remain or be *destroyed* and replaced by a *new* one. A revolution must not consist in a new class ruling, governing with the help of the *old* state machinery, but in this class *smashing* this machinery and ruling, governing by means of *new* machinery. This *fundamental* idea of Marxism Kautsky either slurs over or has not understood at all.

His question about officials shows clearly that he does not understand the lessons of the Commune or the teachings of Marx. "We cannot do without officials even in our party and trade union organisations. . . ."

We cannot do without officials *under capitalism, under the rule of the bourgeoisie*. The proletariat is oppressed, the labouring masses are enslaved by capitalism. Under capitalism, democracy is narrowed, crushed, curtailed, mutilated by all the conditions of

wage-slavery, the poverty and misery of the masses. This is the reason, and the only reason, why the officials of our political parties and trade unions become corrupt—or, more precisely, tend to become corrupt—under capitalist conditions, why they show a tendency to turn into bureaucrats, *i.e.*, privileged persons detached from the masses, and standing *above* the masses.

That is the *essence* of bureaucracy, and until the capitalists have been expropriated and the bourgeoisie overthrown, *even* proletarian officials will inevitably be to some extent “bureaucratised.”

From what Kautsky says, one might think that if elective officials remain under Socialism, bureaucrats and bureaucracy will also remain! That is entirely incorrect. Marx took the example of the Commune to show that under Socialism the functionaries cease to be “bureaucrats” and “officials”—they change *in the degree* as election is supplemented by the right of instant recall; when, *besides this*, their pay is brought down to the level of the pay of the average worker; when, *besides this*, parliamentary institutions are replaced by “working bodies, executive and legislative at the same time.”

All Kautsky's arguments against Pannekoek, and particularly his splendid point that we cannot do without officials even in our parties and trade unions, show, in essence, that Kautsky is repeating the old “arguments” of Bernstein against Marxism in general. Bernstein's renegade book, *Evolutionary Socialism*,<sup>\*</sup> is an attack on “primitive” democracy—“doctrinaire democracy” as he calls it—imperative mandates, functionaries without pay, impotent central representative bodies, and so on. To prove that “primitive democracy” is worthless, Bernstein refers to the British trade union experience, as interpreted by the Webbs. Seventy-odd years of development “in absolute freedom” (p. 137, German edition), have, he avers, convinced the trade unions that primitive democracy is useless, and led them to replace it with ordinary parliamentarism combined with bureaucracy.

In reality the trade unions developed not “in absolute freedom” *but in complete capitalist enslavement*, under which one, naturally, “cannot do without” concessions to the prevailing evil, force, falsehood, exclusion of the poor from the affairs of the “higher” administration. Under Socialism much of the “primitive” democracy is inevitably revived, since, for the first time in the history of civilised society, the *mass* of the population rises to *independent*

participation, not only in voting and elections, *but also in the every-day administration of affairs*. Under Socialism, *all* will take a turn in management, and will soon become accustomed to the idea of no managers at all.

Marx's critico-analytical genius perceived in the practical measures of the Commune that revolutionary *turning point* of which the opportunists are afraid, and which they do not want to recognise, out of cowardice, out of reluctance to break irrevocably with the bourgeoisie, and which the Anarchists do not want to perceive, either through haste or a general lack of understanding of the conditions of great social mass transformations. "One must not even think of such a thing as destroying the old state machinery, for how shall we do without ministries and without officials?" argues the opportunist, saturated through and through with philistinism, and in reality not merely devoid of faith in revolution, in the creative power of revolution, but actually in mortal dread of it (like our Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries).

"One must think *only* of the destruction of the old state machinery; never mind searching for *concrete* lessons in earlier proletarian revolutions and analysing *with what and how* to replace what has been destroyed," argues the Anarchist (the best of the Anarchists, of course, and not those who, with Messrs. Kropotkins and others, follow in the train of the bourgeoisie); consequently, the tactics of the Anarchist become the tactics of *despair* instead of a revolutionary grappling with concrete problems—ruthlessly courageous and at the same time cognisant of the practical conditions under which the masses progress.

Marx teaches us to avoid both kinds of error; he teaches us unswerving courage in destroying the entire old state machinery, and at the same time shows us how to put the situation concretely: the Commune was able, within a few weeks, to *start* building a *new*, proletarian state machinery by introducing such and such measures to secure a wider democracy, and to uproot bureaucracy. Let us learn revolutionary courage from the Communards; let us see in their practical measures *an outline* of practically urgent and immediately possible measures, and then, following this road, we shall arrive at the complete destruction of bureaucracy.

The possibility of such destruction is assured by the fact that Socialism will shorten the working day, raise the *masses* to a new life, create such conditions for the *majority* of the population as

to enable *everybody*, without exception, to perform "state functions," and this will lead to a *complete withering away* of every state in general.

The object of a general strike—Kautsky continues—can never be to destroy the state, but only to wring concessions from the government on some particular question, or to replace a hostile government with one willing to meet the proletariat half way [*entgegenkommend*]. . . . But never, under any conditions, can it (a proletarian victory over a hostile government) lead to the *destruction* of the state power; it can lead only to a certain *shifting* [*Verschiebung*] of forces *within the state* power. . . . The aim of our political struggle, then, remains as before, the conquest of state power by means of gaining a majority in parliament, and the conversion of parliament into the master of the government (pp. 726, 727, 732).

This is nothing but the most clear and vulgar opportunism: a repudiation of revolution in deeds, while accepting it in words. Kautsky's imagination goes no further than a "government . . . willing to meet the proletariat half way"; this is a step backward to philistinism compared with 1847, when the *Communist Manifesto* proclaimed "the organisation of the proletariat as the ruling class."

Kautsky will have to realise his beloved "unity" with the Scheidemanns, Plekhanovs and Vanderveldes, all of whom will agree to fight for a government "meeting the proletariat half way."

But we shall go forward to a break with these traitors to Socialism, and we shall fight for complete destruction of the old state machinery, in such a way that the armed proletariat itself *is the government*. Which is a very different thing.

Kautsky may enjoy the pleasant company of the Legiens, Davids, Plekhanovs, Potresovs, Tseretelis and Chernovs, who are quite willing to work for the "shifting of the relation of forces within the state," for "gaining a majority in parliament, and the conversion of parliament into the master of the government." A most worthy object, wholly acceptable to the opportunists, in which everything remains within the framework of a bourgeois parliamentary republic.

We shall go forward to a break with the opportunists; and the whole of the class-conscious proletariat will be with us—not for a "shifting of the relation of forces," but for the *overthrow of the bourgeoisie*, the *destruction* of bourgeois parliamentarism, for a democratic republic after the type of the Commune, or a republic of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

To the right of Kautsky there are, in international Socialism, such tendencies as the *Sozialistische Monatshefte* [Socialist Monthly] in Germany (Legien, David, Kolb, and many others, including the Scandinavians, Stauning and Branting); the followers of Jaurès and Vandervelde in France and Belgium; Turati, Treves, and other representatives of the Right Wing of the Italian party; the Fabians and "Independents" (the Independent Labour Party, always dependent, as a matter of fact, on the Liberals) in England; and the like. All these gentry, while playing a great, very often a predominant rôle, in parliamentary work and in the journalism of the party, reject outright the dictatorship of the proletariat and carry out a policy of unconcealed opportunism. In the eyes of these gentry, the "dictatorship" of the proletariat "contradicts" democracy!! There is really no essential difference between them and the petty-bourgeois democrats.

Taking these circumstances into consideration, we have a right to conclude that the Second International, in the persons of the overwhelming majority of its official representatives, has completely sunk into opportunism. The experience of the Commune has been not only forgotten, but distorted. Far from inculcating into the workers' minds the idea that the time is near when they are to rise up and smash the old *state* machinery and substitute for it a new one, thereby making their political domination the foundation for a Socialist reconstruction of society, they have actually taught the workers the direct opposite of this, and represented the "conquest of power" in a way that left thousands of loopholes for opportunism.

The distortion and hushing up of the question as to the relation of a proletarian revolution to the state could not fail to play an immense rôle at a time when the states, with their swollen military apparatus as a consequence of imperialist rivalry, had become monstrous military beasts devouring the lives of millions of people, in order to decide whether England or Germany—this or that finance capital—should dominate the world.\*

\* The manuscript continues:

## CHAPTER VII

### EXPERIENCE OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTIONS OF 1905 AND 1917

THE subject indicated in the title of this chapter is so vast that volumes can and must be written about it. In the present pamphlet it will be necessary to confine ourselves, naturally, to the most important lessons of the experience, those touching directly upon the tasks of the proletariat in a revolution relative to state power. . . . [Here the manuscript breaks off.—Ed.]

## POSTSCRIPT TO THE FIRST EDITION

THIS pamphlet was written in August and September, 1917. I had already drawn up the plan for the next, the seventh chapter, on the "Experience of the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917." But, outside of the title, I did not succeed in writing a single line of the chapter; what "interfered" was the political crisis—the eve of the October Revolution of 1917. Such "interference" can only be welcomed. However, the second part of the pamphlet (дovодя to the "Experience of the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917,") will probably have to be put off for a long time. It is more pleasant and useful to go through the "experience of the revolution" than to write about it.

THE AUTHOR.

PETROGRAD, December 13, 1917.

Written in August-September, 1917.

First published as a pamphlet by the publishing firm *Zhizn i Znaniye*, 1918.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES \*

1. *State and Revolution* was written by Lenin during August-September, 1917, while he was living in hiding in Helsingfors. It was not published, however, until 1918. According to the draft of the original plan made by Lenin, the work was to contain not only a theoretical analysis of the theory of the state by Marx and Engels, but also a consideration of "the experience of the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917" from the point of view of this theory. But the October Revolution and the necessity to devote every effort to the immediate practical work interfered with the conclusion of the work begun.—p. 5.

2. The Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), which was caused by the struggle of the European powers for hegemony within the feudally-dismembered Germany and on the coast of the Baltic Sea, resulted in complete ruin and disaster for Germany.—p. 19.

3. *The Gotha Programme* was adopted in 1875 at the unity congress in Gotha at which the two factions of German Socialists, the Lassalleans and the Eisenachers, merged into the Social-Democratic Workers' Party of Germany. The programme officially remained in force until the convention of the party in Erfurt in 1891, when it was replaced with a new programme (the Erfurt Programme). Marx and Engels subjected the Gotha Programme to most severe criticism.—p. 20.

4. "They should not have taken up arms"—the words of G. Plekhanov about the December, 1905, armed uprising.—p. 32.

5. The Erfurt Programme, which in the epoch of the II International was considered the most consistent programme from the point of view of Marxism and which for a long time served as a model for all other Social-Democratic parties, including the R. S.-D. L. P., was adopted at the congress of the German Social-Democracy in Erfurt, October 14-20, 1891, in place of the obsolete Gotha Programme (1875), which was the result of a compromise of two trends in German Socialism (Lassalleans and Eisenachers).—p. 57.

6. See Engels' Introduction to the 1891 edition of the *Civil War in France*.—p. 62.

7. Lenin here and further on makes a slip of the pen: the "historic" speech of Tsereteli was made not on June 22, but on June 24. For further details about this speech, see V. I. Lenin, *Revolution of 1917, Collected Works*, Volume XX, note 255.—p. 63.

\* Fuller notes on *State and Revolution* will be found in the Explanatory Notes of *Toward the Seizure of Power*, Lenin's *Collected Works*, Vol. XXI, Book II.

8. It must be kept in mind that the figures quoted by Lenin as possible rates of wages are given in the paper currency of the second half of 1917. *State and Revolution* was written in August, 1917, when the value of the Russian paper ruble had fallen to less than a third of its face value.—p. 64.

9. The Hague (V) Congress of the First International (1872), attended by Marx and Engels, was almost entirely devoted to the struggle with the Bakuninists. On the motion of Vaillant, the Congress adopted a resolution recognising the necessity of political struggle, contrary to the opinion of the Bakuninists. Bakunin and several of his adherents were expelled from the International. The Hague Congress was the last congress of the First International in Europe.—p. 87.

10. Concerning the Fifth International Socialist Congress held in Paris (1901), and the Kautsky resolution on Millerandism adopted by it, see V. I. Lenin, *The Iskra Period, Collected Works*, Volume IV, note 35.—p. 88.

11. Lenin refers to Karl Kautsky's book *Die Soziale Revolution*, I. *Sozial-reform und Soziale Revolution*, II. *Am Tage nach der Sozialen Revolution* (Social Revolution, I. Social Reform and Social Revolution, II. On the Morrow of the Social Revolution). Throughout the entire *State and Revolution*, Lenin almost everywhere quotes foreign authors from the original, making his own translations from German for each quotation, apparently not being satisfied with the existing translations.—p. 90.

12. Lenin refers to Kautsky's book; *Der Weg zur Macht. Politische Betrachtungen in die Revolution* (*The Road to Power. Political Considerations in the Revolution*), Berlin, 1909.—p. 92.



# FOUNDATIONS OF LENINISM

*by Joseph Stalin*

NEW TRANSLATION



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*Note: This book contains a series of lectures delivered at the Sverdlov University, Moscow, in the beginning of April 1924, shortly after the death of Lenin. The book was dedicated by the author to the new members of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union recruited in the Lenin memorial enrollment.*

## Introduction

THE foundations of Leninism is a big subject. To exhaust it a whole volume would be required. Indeed, a number of volumes would be required. Naturally, therefore, my lectures cannot pretend to be an exhaustive exposition of Leninism; at best they can offer but a concise synopsis of the principles of Leninism. Nevertheless, I consider it useful to give this synopsis, in order to lay down some basic points of departure necessary for the successful study of Leninism.

Expounding the foundations of Leninism does not yet mean expounding the basis of Lenin's world outlook. Lenin's world outlook and the foundations of Leninism are not conterminous. Lenin was a Marxist, and Marxism is, of course, the basis of his world outlook. But from this it does not at all follow that an exposition of Leninism ought to begin with an exposition of the foundations of Marxism. To expound Leninism means to expound the distinctive and new in the works of Lenin that Lenin contributed to the general treasury of Marxism and that is naturally connected with his name. Only in this sense will I speak in my lectures of the foundations of Leninism.

And so, what is Leninism?

Some say that Leninism is the application of Marxism to the peculiar conditions of the situation in Russia. This definition contains a particle of truth, but not the whole truth by any means. Lenin, indeed, applied Marxism to Russian conditions, and applied it in a masterly way. But if Leninism were only the application of Marxism to the peculiar situation in Russia it would be a purely national and only a national, a purely Russian and only a Russian, phenomenon. We know, however,

that Leninism is not merely a Russian, but an international phenomenon rooted in the whole of international development. That is why I think this definition suffers from onesidedness.

Others say that Leninism is the revival of the revolutionary elements of Marxism of the 'forties of the nineteenth century, as distinct from the Marxism of subsequent years, when, it is alleged, it became moderate, non-revolutionary. If we disregard this foolish and vulgar division of the teachings of Marx into two parts, revolutionary and moderate, we must admit that even this totally inadequate and unsatisfactory definition contains a particle of truth. That particle of truth is that Lenin did indeed restore the revolutionary content of Marxism, which had been immured by the opportunists of the Second International. Still, that is but a particle of the truth. The whole truth about Leninism is that Leninism not only restored Marxism, but also took a step forward, developing Marxism further under the new conditions of capitalism and of the class struggle of the proletariat.

What, then, in the last analysis, is Leninism?

Leninism is Marxism of the era of imperialism and of the proletarian revolution. To be more exact, Leninism is the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution in general, the theory and tactics of the dictatorship of the proletariat in particular. Marx and Engels pursued their activities in the pre-revolutionary period (we have the proletarian revolution in mind), when developed imperialism did not yet exist, in the period of the proletarians' preparation for a revolution, in the period when the proletarian revolution was not yet a direct, practical inevitability. Lenin, however, the disciple of Marx and Engels, pursued his activities in the period of developed imperialism, in the period of the unfolding proletarian revolution, when the proletarian revolution had already triumphed in one country, had

smashed bourgeois democracy and had ushered in the era of proletarian democracy, the era of the Soviets.

That is why Leninism is the further development of Marxism.

It is usual to point to the exceptionally militant and exceptionally revolutionary character of Leninism. This is quite correct. But this feature of Leninism is due to two causes: firstly, to the fact that Leninism emerged from the proletarian revolution, the imprint of which it cannot but bear; secondly, to the fact that it grew and became strong in contests with the opportunism of the Second International, the fight against which was and remains an essential preliminary condition for a successful fight against capitalism. It must not be forgotten that between Marx and Engels, on the one hand, and Lenin, on the other, there lies a whole period of undivided domination of the opportunism of the Second International, and the ruthless struggle against this opportunism could not but constitute one of the most important tasks of Leninism.

## I. The Historical Roots of Leninism

**LENINISM** grew up and took shape under the conditions of imperialism, when the contradictions of capitalism had reached their extreme, when the proletarian revolution had become an immediate practical question, when the old period of preparation of the working class for the revolution had culminated in a new period, the period of the direct onslaught upon capitalism.

Lenin called imperialism "moribund capitalism." Why? Because imperialism carries the contradictions of capitalism to their last bounds, to the extreme limit, beyond which revolution begins. Of these contradictions, there are three which must be regarded as the most important.

The *first contradiction* is the contradiction between labour and capital. Imperialism is the omnipotence of the monopolist trusts and syndicates, of the banks and the financial oligarchy, in the industrial countries. In the fight against this omnipotence, the customary methods of the working class—trade unions and co-operative organizations, parliamentary parties and the parliamentary struggle—have proved to be totally inadequate. Either place yourself at the mercy of capital, linger in misery as of old and sink lower and lower, or adopt a new weapon—this is the alternative imperialism puts before the vast masses of the proletariat. Imperialism brings the working class to revolution.

The *second contradiction* is the contradiction among the various financial groups and imperialist powers in their struggle for sources of raw materials, for foreign territory. Imperialism is the export of capital to the sources of raw materials, the frenzied struggle for monopolist possession of these sources, the struggle for a redivision of the already divided world, a struggle waged



with particular fury by new financial groups and powers seeking a "place in the sun" against the old groups and powers which cling tightly to what they have grabbed. This frenzied struggle among the various groups of capitalists is notable in that it includes as an inevitable element imperialist wars, wars for the annexation of foreign territories. This circumstance, in its turn, is notable in that it leads to the mutual weakening of the imperialists, to the weakening of the position of capitalism in general, to the acceleration of the advent of the proletarian revolution and to the practical inevitability of this revolution.

The *third contradiction* is the contradiction between the handful of ruling "civilised" nations and the hundreds of millions of the colonial and dependent peoples of the world. Imperialism is the most barefaced exploitation and the most inhuman oppression of hundreds of millions of people inhabiting vast colonies and dependent countries. The purpose of this exploitation and of this oppression is to squeeze out super-profits. But in exploiting these countries imperialism is compelled to build railroads, factories and mills there, to create industrial and commercial centres. The appearance of a class of proletarians, the emergence of a native intelligentsia, the awakening of national consciousness, the growth of the movement for emancipation—such are the inevitable results of this "policy." The growth of the revolutionary movement in all colonies and dependent countries without exception clearly testifies to this fact. This circumstance is of importance for the proletariat in that it radically undermines the position of capitalism by converting the colonies and dependent countries from reserves of imperialism into reserves of the proletarian revolution.

Such, in general, are the principal contradictions of imperialism which have converted the old, "flourishing" capitalism into moribund capitalism.

The significance of the imperialist war which broke loose ten

years ago lies, among other things, in the fact that it gathered all these contradictions into a single knot and threw them onto the scales, thereby accelerating and facilitating the revolutionary battles of the proletariat.

In other words, imperialism has brought it about, not only that revolution has become a practical inevitability, but also that favourable conditions have been created for a direct onslaught upon the citadels of capitalism.

Such is the international situation which gave birth to Leninism.

Some may say: this is all very well, but what has it to do with Russia, which was not and could not be a classical land of imperialism? What has it to do with Lenin, who worked primarily in Russia and for Russia? Why did Russia, of all countries, become the home of Leninism, the birthplace of the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution?

Because Russia represented the focus of all these contradictions of imperialism.

Because Russia, more than any other country, was pregnant with revolution, and she alone was therefore in a position to solve these contradictions in a revolutionary way.

To begin with, tsarist Russia was the home of every kind of oppression—capitalist, colonial and militarist—in its most inhuman and barbarous form. Who does not know that in Russia the omnipotence of capital coalesced with the despotism of tsarism, the aggressiveness of Russian nationalism with tsarism's role of executioner in regard to the non-Russian peoples, the exploitation of entire regions—Turkey, Persia, China—with the seizure of these regions by tsarism, with wars of conquest? Lenin was right in saying that tsarism was "militarist-feudal imperialism." Tsarism was the concentration of the worst features of imperialism, raised to the second power.

To proceed. Tsarist Russia was an immense reserve of Western

imperialism, not only in that it gave free entry to foreign capital, which controlled such basic branches of Russia's national economy as the fuel and metal industries, but also in that it could supply the Western imperialists with millions of soldiers. Remember the Russian army, twelve million strong, which shed its blood on the imperialist fronts to safeguard the staggering profits of the British and French capitalists.

Further. Tsarism was not only the watchdog of imperialism in the east of Europe, but, in addition, it was the agent of Western imperialism for squeezing out of the population hundreds of millions by way of interest on loans floated in Paris and London, Berlin and Brussels.

Finally, tsarism was the most faithful ally of Western imperialism in the partition of Turkey, Persia, China, etc. Who does not know that the imperialist war was waged by tsarism in alliance with the imperialists of the Entente, and that Russia was an essential element in that war?

That is why the interests of tsarism and of Western imperialism were interwoven and ultimately became merged in a single skein of imperialist interests. Could Western imperialism resign itself to the loss of such a powerful support in the East and of such a rich reservoir of power and resources as old, tsarist, bourgeois Russia was without exerting all its strength to wage a life and death struggle against the Russian revolution, with the object of defending and preserving tsarism? Of course not.

But from this it follows that whoever wanted to strike at tsarism necessarily raised his hand against imperialism, whoever rose against tsarism had to rise against imperialism as well; for whoever was bent on overthrowing tsarism had to overthrow imperialism too, if he really intended not merely to defeat tsarism, but to make a clean sweep of it. Thus the revolution

against tsarism verged on and had to pass into a revolution against imperialism, into a proletarian revolution.

Meanwhile, in Russia a tremendous popular revolution was rising, headed by the most revolutionary proletariat in the world, which possessed such an important ally as the revolutionary peasantry of Russia. Need it be argued that such a revolution could not stop halfway, that in the event of success it was bound to advance further and raise the banner of revolt against imperialism?

That is why Russia was bound to become the focus of the contradictions of imperialism, not only in the sense that it was in Russia that these contradictions were revealed most plainly, in view of their particularly repulsive and particularly intolerable character, and not only because Russia was the most important prop of Western imperialism, connecting Western finance capital with the colonies in the East, but also because Russia was the only country in which there existed a real force capable of solving the contradictions of imperialism in a revolutionary way.

From this it follows, however, that the revolution in Russia could not but become a proletarian revolution, that from its very inception it could not but assume an international character, and that, therefore, it could not but shake the very foundations of world imperialism.

Under these circumstances, could the Russian Communists confine their work within the narrow national bounds of the Russian revolution? Of course not. On the contrary, the whole situation, both domestic (the profound revolutionary crisis) and foreign (the war), impelled them to go beyond these bounds in their work, to transfer the struggle to the international arena, to expose the ulcers of imperialism, to prove that the collapse of capitalism was inevitable, to smash social-chauvinism and social-pacifism, and, finally, to overthrow capitalism in their own country and to forge a new fighting weapon for the proletariat—

the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution—in order to facilitate the task of overthrowing capitalism for the proletarians of all countries. Nor could the Russian Communists act otherwise, for only this path offered the chance of producing certain changes in the international situation which could safeguard Russia against the restoration of the bourgeois order.

That is why Russia became the home of Leninism, and why Lenin, the leader of the Russian Communists, became its creator.

The same thing, approximately, “happened” in the case of Russia and Lenin as had happened in the case of Germany and Marx and Engels in the 'forties of the last century. Like Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century, Germany was then pregnant with the bourgeois revolution. Marx wrote at that time in *The Communist Manifesto*:

“The Communists turn their attention chiefly to Germany, because that country is on the eve of a bourgeois revolution that is bound to be carried out under more advanced conditions of European civilisation and with a much more developed proletariat than that of England was in the seventeenth, and of France in the eighteenth century, and because the bourgeois revolution in Germany will be but the prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution.” (Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 241.)

In other words, the centre of the revolutionary movement was shifting to Germany.

There can hardly be any doubt that it was this very circumstance, noted by Marx in the above-quoted passage, that served as the probable reason why it was precisely Germany that became the birthplace of Scientific Socialism and why the leaders of the German proletariat, Marx and Engels, became its creators.

The same, only to a still greater degree, must be said of Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century. Russia was then on the eve of a bourgeois revolution; she had to accomplish this revolution at a time when conditions in Europe were more

advanced, and with a proletariat that was more developed than that of Germany (let alone England and France); moreover, all the evidence went to show that this revolution would serve as a ferment and as a prelude to the proletarian revolution. We cannot regard it as a mere accident that as early as 1902, when the Russian revolution was still in an embryonic state, Lenin wrote the following prophetic words in his pamphlet *What Is To Be Done?*:

"History has now confronted us [*i.e.*, the Russian Marxists—J.S.] 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 of Asiatic reaction, would make the Russian proletariat the vanguard of the international revolutionary proletariat." (V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, p. 50.) \*

In other words, the centre of the revolutionary movement was bound to shift to Russia.

As we know, the course of the revolution in Russia has more than vindicated Lenin's prediction.

Is it surprising, after all this, that a country which has accomplished such a revolution and possesses such a proletariat should have been the birthplace of the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution?

Is it surprising that Lenin, the leader of this proletariat, became the creator of this theory and tactics and the leader of the international proletariat?

\* Quotations from English translations of Lenin have been checked with the original and in some cases revised.—Ed.

## II. Method

I HAVE already said that between Marx and Engels, on the one hand, and Lenin, on the other, there lies a whole period of domination of the opportunism of the Second International. For the sake of exactitude I must add that it is not formal domination of opportunism I have in mind, but only its actual domination. Formally, the Second International was headed by "faithful" Marxists, by the "orthodox"—Kautsky and others. Actually, however, the main work of the Second International followed the line of opportunism. The opportunists adapted themselves to the bourgeoisie, because of their adaptive, petty-bourgeois nature; the "orthodox," in their turn, adapted themselves to the opportunists in order to "preserve unity" with them, to preserve "peace within the party." As a result, opportunism dominated; for there always proved to be a link between the policy of the bourgeoisie and the policy of the "orthodox."

This was the period of the relatively peaceful development of capitalism, the pre-war period, so to speak, when the catastrophic contradictions of imperialism had not yet become so glaringly evident, when workers' economic strikes and trade unions were developing more or less "normally," when election campaigns and parliamentary parties yielded "dizzying" successes, when legal forms of struggle were lauded to the skies, and when it was thought that capitalism would be "killed" by legal means—in short, when the parties of the Second International were vegetating and there was no inclination to think seriously about revolution, about the dictatorship of the proletariat, or about the revolutionary education of the masses.

Instead of an integral revolutionary theory there were con-

tradictory theoretical postulates and fragments of theory, which were divorced from the actual revolutionary struggle of the masses and had degenerated into threadbare dogmas. For the sake of appearances, Marx's theory was mentioned, of course, but only to rob it of its living, revolutionary spirit.

Instead of a revolutionary policy there was flabby philistinism and sober political bargaining, parliamentary diplomacy and parliamentary scheming. For the sake of appearances, of course, "revolutionary" resolutions and slogans were adopted, but only to be pigeonholed.

Instead of training the party and teaching it correct revolutionary tactics by helping it learn from its own mistakes, there was a studied evasion of acute questions, which they glossed over and veiled. For the sake of appearances, of course, they were not averse to talking about the acute questions, but only to wind up with some sort of "elastic" resolution.

Such was the physiognomy of the Second International, its method of work, its arsenal.

Meanwhile, a new period of imperialist wars and of revolutionary battles of the proletariat was approaching. The old methods of fighting were proving obviously inadequate and impotent in face of the omnipotence of finance capital.

It became necessary to overhaul the entire activity of the Second International, its entire method of work, and to drive out all philistinism, narrow-mindedness, political scheming, renegacy, social-chauvinism and social-pacifism. It became necessary to examine the entire arsenal of the Second International, to throw out all that was rusty and antiquated, to forge new weapons. Without this preliminary work it was useless embarking upon war against capitalism. Without this work the proletariat ran the risk of finding itself inadequately armed, or even completely unarmed, in the future revolutionary battles.

The honour of bringing about this general overhauling and



general cleansing of the Augean stables of the Second International fell to Leninism.

Such were the conditions under which the method of Leninism was born and hammered out.

What are the requirements of this method?

First, the *testing* of the theoretical dogmas of the Second International in the crucible of the revolutionary struggle of the masses, in the crucible of living practice—that is to say, the restoration of the disturbed unity between theory and practice, the healing of the rift between them; for only in this way can a truly proletarian party armed with revolutionary theory be created.

Second, the *testing* of the policy of the parties of the Second International, not by their slogans and resolutions (which cannot be trusted), but by their deeds, by their actions; for only in this way can the confidence of the proletarian masses be won and deserved.

Third, the *reorganization* of all Party work on new revolutionary lines, with a view to training and preparing the masses for the revolutionary struggle; for only in this way can the masses be prepared for the proletarian revolution.

Fourth, *self-criticism* inside the proletarian parties, their education and training by their learning from their own mistakes; for only in this way can genuine cadres and genuine leaders of the Party be trained.

Such is the basis and substance of the method of Leninism.

How was this method applied in practice?

The opportunists of the Second International have a number of theoretical dogmas to which they always revert as their starting point. Let us take a few of these.

First dogma: concerning the conditions for the seizure of power by the proletariat. The opportunists assert that the proletariat cannot and ought not to take power unless it constitutes

a majority in the country. No proofs are adduced, for there are no proofs, either theoretical or practical, that can justify this absurd thesis. Let us assume that this is so, Lenin replies to these gentlemen of the Second International; but suppose a historical situation has arisen (a war, an agrarian crisis, etc.) in which the proletariat, constituting a minority of the population, has an opportunity to rally around itself the vast majority of the labouring masses; why should it not take power then? Why should not the proletariat take advantage of a favourable international and internal situation to pierce the front of capitalism and hasten the general issue? Did not Marx say as far back as the 'fifties of the last century that things could have gone "splendidly" with the proletarian revolution in Germany had it been possible to assist it by, "so to speak, a second edition of the Peasant War"? Is it not a generally known fact that in those days the number of proletarians in Germany was relatively smaller than, for example, in Russia in 1917? Has not the practical experience of the Russian proletarian revolution shown that this favourite dogma of the heroes of the Second International is devoid of all vital significance for the proletariat? Is it not clear that the experience of the revolutionary struggle of the masses confutes and defeats this obsolete dogma?

Second dogma: the proletariat cannot retain power if it lacks an adequate number of trained educational and administrative cadres capable of organizing the administration of the country; these cadres must first be trained under capitalist conditions, and only then can power be taken. Let us assume that this is so, replies Lenin; but why not turn it this way: first take power, create favourable conditions for the development of the proletariat, then proceed with seven-league strides to raise the cultural level of the labouring masses and train numerous cadres of leaders and administrators from among the workers? Has not Russian experience shown that the cadres of leaders re-

cruited from the ranks of the workers grow a hundred times more rapidly and effectually under the rule of the proletariat than under the rule of capital? Is it not clear that the experience of the revolutionary struggle of the masses ruthlessly smashes also this theoretical dogma of the opportunists?

Third dogma: the proletariat cannot accept the method of the political general strike, because it is unsound in theory (see Engels' criticism) and dangerous in practice (it may disturb the normal course of economic life in the country, it may deplete the coffers of the trade unions), and cannot serve as a substitute for the parliamentary forms of struggle, which are the principal forms of the class struggle of the proletariat. Very well, reply the Leninists; but, firstly, Engels did not criticize every kind of general strike. He criticized a certain kind of general strike, namely, the *economic* general strike advocated by the Anarchists *in place of* the political struggle of the proletariat. What has this to do with the method of the *political* general strike? Secondly, where and by whom has it ever been proved that the parliamentary struggle is the principal form of struggle of the proletariat? Does not the history of the revolutionary movement show that the parliamentary struggle is only a school for and an aid in organizing the extra-parliamentary struggle of the proletariat, that under capitalism the fundamental problems of the working-class movement are solved by force, by the direct struggle of the proletarian masses, their general strike, their insurrection? Thirdly, who suggested that the method of the political general strike be substituted for the parliamentary struggle? Where and when have the supporters of the political general strike tried to substitute extra-parliamentary forms of struggle for parliamentary forms? Fourthly, has not the revolution in Russia shown that the political general strike is the greatest school for the proletarian revolution and an indispensable means of mobilizing and organizing the vast masses of

the proletariat on the eve of storming the citadels of capitalism? Why then the philistine lamentations over the disturbance of the normal course of economic life and over the coffers of the trade unions? Is it not clear that the experience of the revolutionary struggle smashes also this dogma of the opportunists?

And so on and so forth.

That is why Lenin said that "revolutionary theory is not a dogma," that it "undergoes final formulation only when brought into close contact with the practice of the really mass and really revolutionary movement" (*"Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder*); for theory must serve practice, for "theory must answer the questions raised by practice" (*What the "Friends of the People" Are*), for it must be tested by the data of practice.

As to the political slogans and the political resolutions of the parties of the Second International, it is sufficient to recall the history of the slogan "war against war" to realize how utterly false and utterly putrid are the political practices of these parties, which use pompous revolutionary slogans and resolutions to cloak their anti-revolutionary deeds. We all remember the pompous demonstration of the Second International at the Basle Congress, at which it threatened the imperialists with all the horrors of insurrection if they should dare to start war, and proclaimed the menacing slogan "war against war." But who does not remember that some time after, on the very eve of the war, the Basle resolution was pigeonholed and the workers were given a new slogan—to exterminate each other for the glory of their capitalist fatherlands? Is it not clear that revolutionary slogans and resolutions are not worth a farthing if they are not backed by deeds? One need only contrast the Leninist policy of transforming the imperialist war into civil war with the treacherous policy of the Second International during the war to under-

stand the utter vulgarity of the opportunist politicians and the full grandeur of the method of Leninism. I cannot refrain from quoting at this point a passage from Lenin's book, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, in which Lenin severely castigates an opportunist attempt by the leader of the Second International, K. Kautsky, to judge parties not by their deeds, but by their paper slogans and documents:

"Kautsky is pursuing a characteristically petty-bourgeois, philistine policy by pretending...that *putting forward a slogan* alters the position. The entire history of bourgeois democracy refutes this illusion; the bourgeois democrats have always advanced and still advance all sorts of 'slogans' in order to deceive the people. The point is to *test* their sincerity, to compare their words with their *deeds*, not to be satisfied with idealistic or charlatan *phrases*, but to get down to *class reality*." (*Selected Works*, Vol. VII, p. 172.)

I need not speak of the fear the parties of the Second International have of self-criticism, of their habit of concealing their mistakes, of glossing over sore questions, of covering up their shortcomings by a false parade of well-being—a habit which blunts living thought and hinders the Party's revolutionary training by its learning from its own mistakes, a habit which was ridiculed and pilloried by Lenin. Here is what Lenin wrote about self-criticism in proletarian parties in his pamphlet "*Left-Wing*" *Communism, an Infantile Disorder*:

"The attitude of a political party towards its own mistakes is one of the most important and surest ways of judging how earnest the party is, and how it *in practice* fulfils its obligations towards its *class* and the toiling *masses*. Frankly admitting a mistake, ascertaining the reasons for it, analysing the conditions which led to it, and thoroughly discussing the means of correcting it—that is the earmark of a serious party, that is the way it should perform its duties, that is the way it should educate and train the *class*, and then the masses." (*Selected Works*, Vol. X, p. 98.)

Some say that the exposure of its own mistakes and self-criticism are dangerous for the Party, because the enemy may use this against the Party of the proletariat. Lenin regarded such objections as trivial and entirely wrong. Here is what he wrote apropos of this as far back as 1904, in his pamphlet *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*, when our Party was still weak and small:

"They [*i.e.*, the opponents of the Marxists—*J.S.*] gloat and grimace over our controversies; they will try, of course, to pick isolated passages from my pamphlet, which deals with the defects and shortcomings of our Party, and use them for their own ends. The Russian Marxists have already been sufficiently steeled in battle not to let themselves be perturbed by these pinpricks and to continue, in spite of them, with their work of self-criticism and the ruthless exposure of their own shortcomings, which will inevitably and certainly be overcome as the working-class movement grows." (*Selected Works*, Vol. II, p. 410.)

Such, in general, are the characteristic features of the method of Leninism.

What is contained in Lenin's method was in the main already contained in the teachings of Marx, which, according to Marx himself, were "in essence critical and revolutionary." It is precisely this critical and revolutionary spirit that pervades Lenin's method from beginning to end. But it would be wrong to suppose that Lenin's method is merely the restoration of the method of Marx. As a matter of fact, Lenin's method is not only the restoration, but also the concretization and further development of the critical and revolutionary method of Marx, of his materialist dialectics.

### III. Theory

FROM this theme I take three questions: (1) the importance of theory for the proletarian movement; (2) criticism of the "theory" of spontaneity; (3) the theory of the proletarian revolution.

#### 1. THE IMPORTANCE OF THEORY

Some think that Leninism is the precedence of practice over theory in the sense that its main point is the translation of the Marxian theses into deeds, their "execution"; as for theory, it is alleged that Leninism is rather unconcerned about it. We know that Plekhanov occasionally chaffed Lenin about his "unconcern" for theory, and particularly for philosophy. We also know that theory is not held in great favour by many present-day Leninist practical workers, particularly in view of the overwhelming amount of practical work imposed upon them by present circumstances. I must declare that this more than odd opinion about Lenin and Leninism is quite wrong and bears no relation whatever to the truth; that the attempt of practical workers to brush theory aside runs counter to the whole spirit of Leninism and is fraught with serious dangers to the cause.

Theory is the experience of the working-class movement in all countries taken in its general aspect. Of course, theory becomes aimless if it is not connected with revolutionary practice, just as practice gropes in the dark if its path is not illumined by revolutionary theory. But theory can become a tremendous force in the working-class movement if it is built up in indissoluble connection with revolutionary practice; for it, and it

alone, can give the movement confidence, the power of orientation, and an understanding of the inherent connection between surrounding events; for it, and it alone, can help practice to discern not only how and in which direction classes are moving at the present time, but also how and in which direction they will move in the near future. None other than Lenin uttered and repeated scores of times the well-known thesis that:

*"Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement."* \* (*Selected Works*, Vol. II, p. 47.)

Lenin, better than anyone else, understood the great importance of theory, particularly for a Party such as ours, in view of the role of vanguard fighter of the international proletariat which has fallen to its lot, and in view of the complicated internal and international situation in which it finds itself. Foreseeing this special role of our Party as far back as 1902, he thought it necessary even then to point out that:

*"...the role of vanguard can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory."* (*Ibid.*, p. 48.)

It need hardly be proved that now, when Lenin's prediction about the role of our Party has come true, this thesis of Lenin's acquires particular force and particular importance.

Perhaps the most striking expression of the great importance which Lenin attached to theory is the fact that none other than Lenin undertook the very serious task of generalising, in line with the materialist philosophy, the most important achievements of science from the time of Engels down to his own time, as well as of subjecting to comprehensive criticism the anti-materialistic trends among Marxists. Engels said that "materialism must assume a new aspect with every new great discovery." It is well known that none other than Lenin accom-

\* My italics.—J.S.



plished this task for his own time in his remarkable work *Materialism and Empiro-Criticism*. It is well known that Plekhanov, who loved to chaff Lenin about his "unconcern" for philosophy, did not even dare to make a serious attempt to undertake such a task.

## 2. CRITICISM OF THE "THEORY" OF SPONTANEITY, OR THE ROLE OF THE VANGUARD IN THE MOVEMENT

The "theory" of spontaneity is a theory of opportunism, a theory of worshipping the spontaneity of the labour movement, a theory which actually repudiates the leading role of the vanguard of the working class, of the party of the working class.

The theory of worshipping spontaneity is decidedly opposed to the revolutionary character of the working-class movement; it is opposed to the movement taking the line of struggle against the foundations of capitalism; it stands for the idea of the movement proceeding exclusively along the line of "realizable" demands, of demands "acceptable" to capitalism; it stands entirely for the "line of least resistance." The theory of spontaneity is the ideology of trade unionism.

The theory of worshipping spontaneity is decidedly opposed to lending the spontaneous movement consciousness and system. It is opposed to the idea of the Party marching at the head of the working class, of the Party raising the masses to the level of class consciousness, of the Party leading the movement; it stands for the idea that the class-conscious elements of the movement must not hinder the movement from taking its own course; it stands for the idea that the Party is only to heed the spontaneous movement and follow in its tail. The theory of spontaneity is the theory of belittling the role of the conscious

element in the movement, the ideology of "*khvostism*"\*—the logical basis of *all* opportunism.

In practice this theory, which appeared on the scene even before the first revolution in Russia, led its adherents, the so-called "Economists," to deny the need for an independent workers' party in Russia, to oppose the revolutionary struggle of the working class for the overthrow of tsardom, to preach a purely trade unionist policy in the movement, and, in general, to surrender the labour movement to the hegemony of the liberal bourgeoisie.

The fight of the old *Iskra* and the brilliant criticism of the theory of "khvostism" in Lenin's pamphlet *What Is To Be Done?* not only smashed so-called "Economism," but also created the theoretical foundations for a truly revolutionary movement of the Russian working class.

Without this fight it would have been quite useless even to think of creating an independent workers' party in Russia and of its playing a leading part in the revolution.

But the theory of worshipping spontaneity is not peculiar to Russia. It is extremely widespread—in a somewhat different form, it is true—in all the parties of the Second International, without exception. I have in mind the so-called "productive forces" theory, vulgarized by the leaders of the Second International—a theory that justifies everything and conciliates everybody, that states facts and explains them only after everyone has become sick and tired of them, and, having stated them, rests content with that. Marx said that the materialist theory could not confine itself to explaining the world, that it must also change it. But Kautsky and Co. are not concerned with this; they prefer to rest content with the first part of Marx's formula. Here is one of the numerous examples of the application of this "theory." It is said that before the imperialist war

\* *I.e.*, following in the tail; from the Russian word *khvost*, meaning tail.—*Ed.*

the parties of the Second International threatened to declare "war against war" if the imperialists should start a war. It is said that on the very eve of the war these parties pigeon-holed the "war against war" slogan and applied an opposite slogan, *viz.*, "war for the imperialist fatherland." It is said that as a result of this change of slogans millions of workers were sent to their death. But it would be a mistake to think that there must have been people who were to blame for this, that someone was unfaithful to the working class or betrayed it. Not at all! Everything happened as it should have happened. Firstly, because the International is "an instrument of peace," and not of war. Secondly, because, in view of the "level of the productive forces" which then prevailed, there was nothing else that could be done. The "productive forces" are "to blame." This is the precise explanation vouchsafed to "us" by Mr. Kautsky's "productive forces" theory. And whoever does not believe in this "theory" is not a Marxist. The role of the parties? Their part in the movement? But what can a party do against so decisive a factor as the "level of the productive forces"?

One could cite a host of similar examples of the falsification of Marxism.

It is hardly necessary to prove that this spurious Marxism, designed to hide the nakedness of opportunism, is merely a European variety of the selfsame theory of "khvostism" which Lenin fought even before the first Russian revolution.

It is hardly necessary to prove that the demolition of this theoretical falsification is a prerequisite for the creation of truly revolutionary parties in the West.

### 3. THE THEORY OF THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

The Leninist theory of the proletarian revolution proceeds from three fundamental theses.

*First Thesis:* The domination of finance capital in the advanced capitalist countries; the issue of stocks and bonds as the principal operation of finance capital; the export of capital to the sources of raw materials, which is one of the foundations of imperialism; the omnipotence of a financial oligarchy, which is the result of the domination of finance capital—all this reveals the grossly parasitic character of monopolist capitalism, makes the yoke of the capitalist trusts and syndicates a hundred times more burdensome, quickens the revolt of the working class against the foundations of capitalism, and brings the masses to the proletarian revolution as their only salvation. (*Cf. Lenin, Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism.*)

Hence the first conclusion: intensification of the revolutionary crisis within the capitalist countries and growth of the elements of an explosion on the internal, proletarian front in the "mother countries."

*Second Thesis:* The increase in the export of capital to the colonies and dependent countries; the extension of "spheres of influence" and colonial possessions until they cover the whole globe; the transformation of capitalism into a *world system* of financial enslavement and colonial oppression of the vast majority of the population of the earth by a handful of "advanced" countries—all this has, on the one hand, converted the separate national economies and national territories into links in a single chain called world economy and, on the other hand, split the population of the globe into two camps: a handful of "advanced" capitalist countries which exploit and oppress vast

colonies and dependencies, and the vast majority of colonial and dependent countries which are compelled to fight for their liberation from the imperialist yoke. (*Cf. Imperialism.*)

Hence the second conclusion: intensification of the revolutionary crisis in the colonial countries and growth of the elements of revolt against imperialism on the external, colonial front.

*Third Thesis:* The monopolistic possession of "spheres of influence" and colonies; the uneven development of the different capitalist countries, leading to a frenzied struggle for the redivision of the world between the countries which have already seized territories and those claiming their "share"; imperialist wars as the only method of restoring the disturbed "equilibrium"—all this leads to the aggravation of the third front, the inter-capitalist front, which weakens imperialism and facilitates the amalgamation of the first two fronts against imperialism: the front of the revolutionary proletariat and the front of colonial emancipation. (*Cf. Imperialism.*)

Hence the third conclusion: that under imperialism wars cannot be averted, and that a coalition between the proletarian revolution in Europe and the colonial revolution in the East in a united world front of revolution against the world front of imperialism is inevitable.

Lenin combines all these conclusions into one general conclusion that "*imperialism is the eve of the socialist revolution.*"\* (*Selected Works*, Vol. V, p. 5.)

The very approach to the question of the proletarian revolution, of the character of the revolution, of its scope, of its depth, the scheme of the revolution in general, changes accordingly.

Formerly, the analysis of the conditions for the proletarian revolution was usually approached from the point of view of

\* My italics.—J.S.

the economic state of individual countries. Now, this approach is no longer adequate. Now the matter must be approached from the point of view of the economic state of all or the majority of countries, from the point of view of the state of world economy; for individual countries and individual national economies have ceased to be self-sufficient units, have become links in a single chain called world economy; for the old "cultured" capitalism has evolved into imperialism, and imperialism is a world system of financial enslavement and colonial oppression of the vast majority of the population of the earth by a handful of "advanced" countries.

Formerly, it was the accepted thing to speak of the existence or absence of objective conditions for the proletarian revolution in individual countries, or, to be more precise, in one or another developed country. Now this point of view is no longer adequate. Now we must speak of the existence of objective conditions for the revolution in the entire system of world imperialist economy as an integral unit; the existence within this system of some countries that are not sufficiently developed industrially cannot serve as an insurmountable obstacle to the revolution, *if* the system as a whole, or, more correctly, *because* the system as a whole is already ripe for revolution.

Formerly it was the accepted thing to speak of the proletarian revolution in one or another developed country as of something separate and self-sufficient, facing a separate national front of capital as its opposite. Now this point of view is no longer adequate. Now we must speak of the world proletarian revolution; for the separate national fronts of capital have become links in a single chain called the world front of imperialism, which must be opposed by a common front of the revolutionary movement in all countries.

Formerly, the proletarian revolution was regarded exclusively as the result of the internal development of a given country.

Now this point of view is no longer adequate. Now the proletarian revolution must be regarded primarily as the result of the development of the contradictions within the world system of imperialism, as the result of the snapping of the chain of the imperialist world front in one country or another.

Where will the revolution begin? Where, in what country, can the front of capital be pierced first?

Where industry is more developed, where the proletariat constitutes the majority, where there is more culture, where there is more democracy—that was the reply usually given formerly.

No, objects the Leninist theory of revolution; *not necessarily where industry is more developed*, and so forth. The front of capital will be pierced where the chain of imperialism is weakest, for the proletarian revolution is the result of the breaking of the chain of the world imperialist front at its weakest link; and it may turn out that the country which has started the revolution, which has made a breach in the front of capital, is less developed in a capitalist sense than other, more developed, countries, which have, however, remained within the framework of capitalism.

In 1917 the chain of the imperialist world front proved to be weaker in Russia than in the other countries. It was there that the chain gave way and provided an outlet for the proletarian revolution. Why? Because in Russia a great popular revolution was unfolding, and at its head marched the revolutionary proletariat, which had such an important ally as the vast mass of the peasantry who were oppressed and exploited by the landlords. Because the revolution there was opposed by such a hideous representative of imperialism as tsarism, which lacked all moral prestige and was deservedly hated by the whole population. The chain proved to be weaker in Russia, although that country was less developed in a capitalist sense than, say, France or Germany, England or America.

Where will the chain break in the near future? Again, where it is weakest. It is not precluded that the chain may break, say, in India. Why? Because that country has a young, militant, revolutionary proletariat, which has such an ally as the national liberation movement—an undoubtedly powerful and undoubtedly important ally. Because there the revolution is opposed by such a well-known foe as foreign imperialism, which lacks all moral credit and is deservedly hated by the oppressed and exploited masses of India.

It is also quite possible that the chain will break in Germany. Why? Because the factors which are operating, say, in India are beginning to operate in Germany as well; but, of course, the enormous difference in the level of development between India and Germany cannot but leave its impress on the progress and outcome of a revolution in Germany.

That is why Lenin said that:

"The West-European capitalist countries are accomplishing their development towards socialism not by the even 'ripening' of socialism, but by the exploitation of some countries by others, by the exploitation of the first of the countries to be vanquished in the imperialist war combined with the exploitation of the whole of the East. On the other hand, precisely as a result of the first imperialist war, the East has been finally drawn into the revolutionary movement, has been drawn into the common maelstrom of the world revolutionary movement." (*Selected Works*, Vol. IX, p. 399.)

Briefly, the chain of the imperialist front must, as a rule, give way where the links are weaker and, at all events, not necessarily where capitalism is more developed, where there is such and such a percentage of proletarians and such and such a percentage of peasants, and so on.

This is why in deciding the question of proletarian revolution statistical calculations of the percentage of the proletarian population in a given country lose the exceptional importance so



eagerly attached to them by the pedants of the Second International, who have not understood imperialism and who fear revolution like the plague.

To proceed: the heroes of the Second International asserted (and continue to assert) that between the bourgeois-democratic revolution and the proletarian revolution there is a chasm, or at any rate a Chinese Wall, separating one from the other by a more or less protracted interval of time, during which the bourgeoisie, having come into power, develops capitalism, while the proletariat accumulates strength and prepares for the "decisive struggle" against capitalism. This interval is usually calculated to extend over many decades, if not longer. It need hardly be proved that this Chinese Wall "theory" is totally devoid of scientific meaning under the conditions of imperialism, that it is and can be only a means of concealing and camouflaging the counter-revolutionary aspirations of the bourgeoisie. It need hardly be proved that under the conditions of imperialism, which is pregnant with collisions and wars; under the conditions of the "eve of the socialist revolution," when "flourishing" capitalism is becoming "moribund" capitalism and the revolutionary movement is growing in all countries of the world; when imperialism is allying itself with all reactionary forces without exception, down to and including tsarism and serfdom, thus making imperative the coalition of all revolutionary forces, from the proletarian movement of the West to the national liberation movement of the East; when the overthrow of the survivals of the regime of feudal serfdom becomes impossible without a revolutionary struggle against imperialism—it need hardly be proved that the bourgeois-democratic revolution, in a more or less developed country, must under such circumstances verge upon the proletarian revolution, that the former must pass into the latter. The history of the revolution in Russia has provided palpable proof that this thesis is correct and incon-

trovertible. It was not without reason that Lenin, as far back as 1905, on the eve of the first Russian revolution, in his pamphlet *Two Tactics*, depicted the bourgeois-democratic revolution and the socialist revolution as two links in the same chain, as a single and integral picture of the sweep of the Russian revolution:

*"The proletariat must carry to completion the democratic revolution, by allying to itself the mass of the peasantry in order to crush by force the resistance of the autocracy and to paralyse the instability of the bourgeoisie. The proletariat must accomplish the socialist revolution by allying to itself the mass of the semi-proletarian elements of the population in order to crush by force the resistance of the bourgeoisie and to paralyse the instability of the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie. Such are the tasks of the proletariat, which the new Iskra-ists always present so narrowly in their arguments and resolutions about the scope of the revolution." (Selected Works, Vol. III, pp. 110-11.)*

I do not even mention other, later works of Lenin's in which the idea of the bourgeois revolution passing into the proletarian revolution stands out in greater relief than in *Two Tactics* as one of the cornerstones of the Leninist theory of revolution.

It transpires that certain people believe that Lenin arrived at this idea only in 1916, that up to that time he had thought that the revolution in Russia would remain within the bourgeois framework, that power, consequently, would pass from the hands of the organ of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry to the hands of the bourgeoisie and not of the proletariat. It is said that this assertion has even penetrated into our Communist press. I must say that this assertion is absolutely wrong, that it is totally at variance with the facts.

I might refer to Lenin's well-known speech at the Third Congress of the Party (1905), in which he described the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, *i.e.*, the victory of

the democratic revolution, not as the "organization of order" but as the "organization of war." (Cf. *Collected Works*, Russian edition, Vol. VII, p. 264.)

Further, I might refer to Lenin's well-known articles *On the Provisional Government* (1905), where, depicting the prospects of the unfolding Russian revolution, he assigns to the Party the task of "striving to make the Russian revolution not a movement of a few months, but a movement of many years, so that it may lead, not merely to slight concessions on the part of the powers that be, but to the complete overthrow of those powers"; where, enlarging further on these prospects and linking them with the revolution in Europe, he goes on to say:

"And if we succeed in doing that, then . . . then the revolutionary conflagration will spread all over Europe; the European worker, languishing under bourgeois reaction, will rise in his turn and will show us 'how it is done'; then the revolutionary wave in Europe will sweep back again into Russia and will convert an epoch of a few revolutionary years into an epoch of several revolutionary decades. . . ." (*Selected Works*, Vol. III, p. 31.)

I might also refer to a well-known article by Lenin published in November 1915, in which he writes:

"The proletariat is fighting, and will fight valiantly, to capture power, for a republic, for the confiscation of the land . . . for the participation of the 'non-proletarian masses of the people' in freeing *bourgeois* Russia from *military-feudal* 'imperialism' (= tsarism). And the proletariat will *immediately* \* take advantage of this liberation of bourgeois Russia from tsarism, from the agrarian power of the landlords, not to aid the rich peasants in their struggle against the rural worker, but to bring about the socialist revolution in alliance with the proletarians of Europe." (*Selected Works*, Vol. V, p. 163.)

\* My italics.—J.S.

Finally, I might refer to the well-known passage in Lenin's pamphlet *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, where, referring to the above-quoted passage in *Two Tactics* on the scope of the Russian revolution, he arrives at the following conclusion:

"Things have turned out just as we said they would. The course taken by the revolution has confirmed the correctness of our reasoning. *First*, with the 'whole' of the peasantry against the monarchy, against the landlords, against the mediaeval regime (and to that extent, the revolution remains bourgeois, bourgeois-democratic). *Then*, with the poorest peasants, with the semi-proletarians, with all the exploited, *against capitalism*, including the rural rich, the kulaks, the profiteers, and to that extent the revolution becomes a *socialist* one. To attempt to raise an artificial Chinese Wall between the first and second, to separate them by *anything else than* the degree of preparedness of the proletariat and the degree of its unity with the poor peasants, means monstrously to distort Marxism, to vulgarize it, to substitute liberalism in its place." (*Selected Works*, Vol. VII, p. 191.)

Enough, I think.

Very well, we may be told; but if this be the case, why did Lenin combat the idea of "permanent (uninterrupted) revolution"?

Because Lenin proposed that the revolutionary capacities of the peasantry be utilized "to the utmost" and that the fullest use be made of their revolutionary energy for the complete liquidation of tsarism and for the transition to the proletarian revolution, whereas the adherents of "permanent revolution" did not understand the important role of the peasantry in the Russian revolution, underestimated the strength of the revolutionary energy of the peasantry, underestimated the strength and capacity of the Russian proletariat to lead the peasantry, and

thereby hampered the work of emancipating the peasantry from the influence of the bourgeoisie, the work of rallying the peasantry around the proletariat.

Because Lenin proposed that the work of the revolution *be crowned* with the transfer of power to the proletariat, whereas the adherents of "permanent" revolution wanted to *begin* at once with the establishment of the power of the proletariat, failing to realize that in so doing they were closing their eyes to such a "trifle" as the survivals of serfdom and were leaving out of account so important a force as the Russian peasantry, failing to understand that such a policy could only retard the winning of the peasantry to the side of the proletariat.

Consequently, Lenin fought the adherents of "permanent" revolution, not over the question of "uninterruptedness," for he himself maintained the point of view of uninterrupted revolution, but because they underestimated the role of the peasantry, which is an enormous reserve force for the proletariat, because they failed to understand the idea of the hegemony of the proletariat.

The idea of "permanent" revolution is not a new idea. It was first advanced by Marx at the end of the 'forties in his well-known *Address to the Communist League* (1850). It is from this document that our "permanentists" took the idea of uninterrupted revolution. It should be noted, however, that in taking it from Marx, our "permanentists" altered it somewhat, and in altering it spoilt it and made it unfit for practical use. The experienced hand of Lenin was needed to rectify this mistake, to take Marx's idea of uninterrupted revolution in its pure form and make it a cornerstone of his theory of revolution.

Here is what Marx, in his *Address*, after enumerating a number of revolutionary-democratic demands which he calls upon the Communists to win, says about uninterrupted revolution:

"While the democratic petty bourgeois wish to bring the revolution to a conclusion as quickly as possible, and with the achievement, at most, of the above demands, it is our interest and our task to make the revolution permanent, until all more or less possessing classes have been displaced from domination, until the proletariat has conquered state power, and the association of proletarians, not only in one country but in all the dominant countries of the world, has advanced so far that competition among the proletarians of these countries has ceased and that at least the decisive productive forces are concentrated in the hands of the proletarians." (Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, p. 161.)

In other words:

(a) Marx did not propose to *begin* the revolution in the Germany of the 'fifties with the immediate establishment of the proletarian power—*contrary* to the plans of our Russian "permanentists."

(b) Marx proposed only that the work of the revolution *be crowned* with the establishment of proletarian state power, by hurling, step by step, one section of the bourgeoisie after another from the heights of power, in order, after the attainment of power by the proletariat, to kindle the fire of revolution in every country—*fully in line* with everything that Lenin taught and carried out in the course of our revolution in pursuit of his theory of the proletarian revolution under the conditions of imperialism.

It follows, then, that our Russian "permanentists" have not only underestimated the role of the peasantry in the Russian revolution and the importance of the idea of the hegemony of the proletariat, but have altered (for the worse) Marx's idea of "permanent" revolution, making it unfit for practical use.

That is why Lenin ridiculed the theory of our "permanentists," calling it "original" and "fine," and accusing them of refusing to "stop to think why, for ten whole years, life has passed by

this fine theory." (Lenin's article was written in 1915, ten years after the appearance of the theory of the "permanentists" in Russia.) (Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. V, p. 162.)

That is why Lenin regarded this theory as a semi-Menshevik theory and said that it "borrows from the Bolsheviks their call for a decisive revolutionary struggle and the conquest of political power by the proletariat, and from the Mensheviks the 'repudiation' of the role of the peasantry." (*Ibid.*)

This, then, is the position in regard to Lenin's idea of the bourgeois-democratic revolution passing into the proletarian revolution, of utilising the bourgeois revolution for the "immediate" transition to the proletarian revolution.

To proceed. Formerly, the victory of the revolution in one country was considered impossible, on the assumption that it would require the combined action of the proletarians of all or at least of a majority of the advanced countries to achieve victory over the bourgeoisie. Now this point of view no longer accords with the facts. Now we must proceed from the possibility of such a victory, for the uneven and spasmodic character of the development of the various capitalist countries under the conditions of imperialism, the development, within imperialism, of catastrophic contradictions leading to inevitable wars, the growth of the revolutionary movement in all countries of the world—all this leads, not only to the possibility, but also to the necessity of the victory of the proletariat in individual countries. The history of the Russian revolution is direct proof of this. At the same time, however, it must be borne in mind that the overthrow of the bourgeoisie can be successfully accomplished only when certain absolutely necessary conditions exist, in the absence of which there can be even no question of the proletariat taking power.

Here is what Lenin says about these conditions in his pamphlet "*Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder*:"

"The fundamental law of revolution, which has been confirmed by all revolutions, and particularly by all three Russian revolutions in the twentieth century, consists in the following: it is not enough for revolution that the exploited and oppressed masses should understand the impossibility of living in the old way and demand changes; for revolution it is necessary that the exploiters should not be able to live and rule in the old way. Only when the 'lower classes' *do not want* the old way, and when the 'upper classes' *cannot carry on in the old way*—only then can revolution triumph. This truth may be expressed in other words: *Revolution is impossible without a nation-wide crisis (affecting both the exploited and the exploiters).*\* It follows that for revolution it is essential, first, that a majority of the workers (or at least a majority of the class conscious, thinking, politically active workers) should fully understand the necessity for revolution and be ready to sacrifice their lives for it; secondly, that the ruling classes should be passing through a governmental crisis which would draw even the most backward masses into politics...weaken the government and make it possible for the revolutionaries to overthrow it rapidly." (*Selected Works*, Vol. X, p. 127.)

But the overthrow of the power of the bourgeoisie and establishment of the power of the proletariat in one country still does not mean that the complete victory of socialism has been ensured. After consolidating its power and taking the peasantry in tow, the proletariat of the victorious country can and must build up a socialist society. But does this mean that it will thereby achieve the complete and final victory of socialism, *i.e.*, does it mean that with the forces of only one country it can finally consolidate socialism and fully guarantee that country against intervention and, consequently, also against restoration? No, it does not. For this the victory of the revolution in at least several countries is needed. Therefore, the development and

\* My italics.—J.S.



support of revolution in other countries is an essential task of the victorious revolution. Therefore, the revolution in the victorious country must regard itself not as a self-sufficient entity but as an aid, as a means of hastening the victory of the proletariat in other countries.

Lenin expressed this thought in a nutshell when he said that the task of the victorious revolution is to do "the utmost possible in one country *for* the development, support and awakening of the revolution *in all countries*." (*Selected Works*, Vol. VII, p. 182.)

These, in general, are the characteristic features of Lenin's theory of proletarian revolution.

## IV. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat

FROM this theme I take the three main questions: (1) the dictatorship of the proletariat as the instrument of the proletarian revolution; (2) the dictatorship of the proletariat as the domination of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie; (3) the Soviet power as the state form of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

### I. THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT AS THE INSTRUMENT OF THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

The question of the proletarian dictatorship is above all a question of the main content of the proletarian revolution. The proletarian revolution, its movement, its scope and its achievements acquire flesh and blood only through the dictatorship of the proletariat. The dictatorship of the proletariat is the instrument of the proletarian revolution, its organ, its most important mainstay, brought into being for the purpose of, firstly, crushing the resistance of the overthrown exploiters and consolidating the achievements of the proletarian revolution, and, secondly, carrying the proletarian revolution to its completion, carrying the revolution to the complete victory of socialism. The revolution can vanquish the bourgeoisie, can overthrow its power, without the dictatorship of the proletariat. But the revolution will be unable to crush the resistance of the bourgeoisie, to maintain its victory and to push forward to the final victory of socialism unless, at a certain stage in its development, it creates a special organ in the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat as its principal mainstay.

"The fundamental question of revolution is the question of power." (*Lenin.*) Does this mean that all that is required is to assume power, to seize it? No, it does not mean that. The seizure of power is only the beginning. For many reasons the bourgeoisie that is overthrown in one country remains for a long time stronger than the proletariat which has overthrown it. Therefore, the whole point is to retain power, to consolidate it, to make it invincible. What is needed to attain this? To attain this it is necessary to carry out at least the three main tasks that confront the dictatorship of the proletariat "on the morrow" of victory:

(a) to break the resistance of the landlords and capitalists who have been overthrown and expropriated by the revolution, to liquidate every attempt on their part to restore the power of capital;

(b) to organize construction in such a way as to rally all the labouring people around the proletariat, and to carry on this work along the lines of preparing for the liquidation, the abolition of classes;

(c) to arm the revolution, to organize the army of the revolution for the struggle against foreign enemies, for the struggle against imperialism.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is needed to carry out, to fulfil these tasks.

"The transition from capitalism to communism," says Lenin, "represents an entire historical epoch. Until this epoch has terminated, the exploiters will inevitably cherish the hope of restoration, and this *hope* will be converted into *attempts* at restoration. And after their first serious defeat, the overthrown exploiters—who had not expected their overthrow, never believed it possible, never conceded the thought of it—will throw themselves with tenfold energy, with furious passion and hatred grown a hundredfold, into the battle for the recovery of their lost 'paradise,' on behalf of their families, who

had been leading such a sweet and easy life and whom now the 'common herd' is condemning to ruin and destitution (or to 'common' work)...In the train of the capitalist exploiters will be found the broad masses of the petty bourgeoisie, with regard to whom the historical experience of every country for decades testifies that they vacillate and hesitate, one day marching behind the proletariat and the next day taking fright at the difficulties of the revolution; that they become panic-stricken at the first defeat or semi-defeat of the workers, grow nervous, run about aimlessly, snivel, and rush from one camp to the other." (*Selected Works*, Vol. VII, pp. 140-41.)

And the bourgeoisie has its grounds for making attempts at restoration, because for a long time after its overthrow it remains stronger than the proletariat which has overthrown it.

"If the exploiters are defeated in one country only," says Lenin, "and this, of course, is typical, since a simultaneous revolution in a number of countries is a rare exception, they *still* remain *stronger* than the exploited." (*Ibid.*, p. 140.)

Wherein lies the strength of the overthrown bourgeoisie?

Firstly, "in the strength of international capital, in the strength and durability of the international connections of the bourgeoisie." (Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. X, p. 60.)

Secondly, in the fact that:

"for a long time after the revolution the exploiters inevitably continue to enjoy a number of great practical advantages: they still have money (since it is impossible to abolish money all at once), some movable property—often fairly considerable; they still have various connections, habits of organization and management, knowledge of all the 'secrets' (customs, methods, means and possibilities) of management, superior education, close connections with the higher technical personnel (who live and think like the bourgeoisie), incom-

parably greater experience in the art of war (this is very important), and so on, and so forth." (Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. VII, p. 140.)

Thirdly,

"in the *force of habit*, in the strength of *small-scale production*. For unfortunately, there is still very, very much of small-scale production left in the world, and small-scale production *engenders* capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously, and on a mass scale;..." for "the abolition of classes means not only driving out the landlords and capitalists—that we accomplished with comparative ease; it means also *getting rid of the small commodity producers*, and they *cannot be driven out*, they cannot be crushed, we must live *in harmony* with them; they can (and must) be remoulded and re-educated only by very prolonged, slow, cautious organizational work." (Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. X, pp. 60, 83.)

That is why Lenin says:

"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"; that "the dictatorship of the proletariat is a persistent struggle—sanguinary and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, educational and administrative—against the forces and traditions of the old society." (*Selected Works*, Vol. X, pp. 60, 84.)

It need hardly be proved that there is not the slightest possibility of carrying out these tasks in a short period, of doing all this in a few years. Therefore, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the transition from capitalism to communism, must not be regarded as a fleeting period of "super-revolutionary" acts and decrees, but as an entire historical era, replete with civil wars and external conflicts, with persistent organizational work and economic construction, with advances and retreats, victories and defeats. This historical era is needed not only to create the

economic and cultural prerequisites for the complete victory of socialism, but also to enable the proletariat, first, to educate itself and become steeled as a force capable of governing the country, and, secondly, to re-educate and remould the petty-bourgeois strata along such lines as will assure the organization of socialist production.

Marx said to the workers:

"You will have to go through fifteen, twenty or fifty years of civil wars and international conflicts, not only to change existing conditions, but also to change yourselves and to make yourselves capable of wielding political power."

Continuing and developing Marx's idea still further, Lenin wrote that: It will be necessary under the dictatorship of the proletariat to re-educate:

"millions of peasants and small proprietors and hundreds of thousands of office employees, officials and bourgeois intellectuals," to subordinate "all these to the proletarian state and to proletarian leadership," to overcome "their bourgeois habits and traditions . . ." just as it will be necessary "to re-educate—in a protracted struggle, on the basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat—the proletarians themselves, who do not abandon their petty-bourgeois prejudices at one stroke, by a miracle, at the behest of the Virgin Mary, at the behest of a slogan, resolution or decree, but only in the course of a long and difficult mass struggle against mass petty-bourgeois influences." (*Selected Works*, Vol. X, pp. 157, 156.)

## 2. THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT AS THE DOMINATION OF THE PROLETARIAT OVER THE BOURGEOISIE

From the foregoing it is evident that the dictatorship of the proletariat is not a mere change of personalities in the govern-

ment, a change of "cabinet," etc., leaving the old economic and political order intact. The Mensheviks and opportunists of all countries, who fear dictatorship like fire and in their fright substitute the concept "conquest of power" for the concept "dictatorship of the proletariat," usually reduce the meaning of "conquest of power" to a change of "cabinet," to the accession to power of a new ministry made up of people like Scheidemann and Noske, MacDonald and Henderson. It is hardly necessary to explain that these and similar cabinet changes have nothing in common with the dictatorship of the proletariat, with the conquest of real power by the real proletariat. The MacDonalds and Scheidemanns in power, while the old bourgeois order is allowed to remain, their so-called governments cannot be anything else than an apparatus serving the bourgeoisie, a screen to hide the ulcers of imperialism, a weapon in the hands of the bourgeoisie against the revolutionary movement of the oppressed and exploited masses. Capital needs such governments as a screen when it finds it inconvenient, unprofitable, difficult to oppress and exploit the masses without the aid of a screen. Of course, the appearance of such governments is a symptom that "over there" (*i.e.*, in the capitalist camp) "all is not quiet at the Shipka Pass"\*; nevertheless, governments of this kind necessarily remain governments of capital in disguise. The government of a MacDonald or a Scheidemann is as far removed from the conquest of power by the proletariat as the sky from the earth. The dictatorship of the proletariat is not a mere change of government, but a new state, with new organs of power, both central and local; it is the state of the

\* A Russian saying carried over from the Russo-Turkish War. Heavy fighting was taking place at the Shipka Pass, in which the Russians were suffering severe losses; but Russian Headquarters in their communiques reported: "All quiet at the Shipka Pass."—*Ed.*

proletariat, which has arisen on the ruins of the old state, the state of the bourgeoisie.

The dictatorship of the proletariat arises not on the basis of the bourgeois order, but in the process of the breaking up of this order after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, in the process of the expropriation of the landlords and capitalists, in the process of the socialization of the principal instruments and means of production, in the process of violent proletarian revolution. The dictatorship of the proletariat is a revolutionary power based on the use of force against the bourgeoisie.

The state is a machine in the hands of the ruling class for suppressing the resistance of its class enemies. *In this respect* the dictatorship of the proletariat does not differ essentially from the dictatorship of any other class, for the proletarian state is a machine for the suppression of the bourgeoisie. But there is one *substantial* difference. This difference consists in the fact that all hitherto existing class states have been dictatorships of an exploiting minority over the exploited majority, whereas the dictatorship of the proletariat is the dictatorship of the exploited majority over the exploiting minority.

Briefly: *the dictatorship of the proletariat is the rule—unrestricted by law and based on force—of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, a rule enjoying the sympathy and support of the labouring and exploited masses. (The State and Revolution.)*

From this follow two main conclusions:

*First conclusion:* The dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be "complete" democracy, democracy for *all*, for the rich as well as for the poor; the dictatorship of the proletariat "must be a state that is democratic *in a new way*—for \* the proletarians and the propertyless in general—and dictatorial *in a new way*—against \* the bourgeoisie..." (Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. VII, p. 34.) The talk of Kautsky and Co. about universal equality,

\* My italics.—J.S.



about "pure" democracy, about "perfect" democracy, and the like, is but a bourgeois screen to conceal the indubitable fact that equality between exploited and exploiters is impossible. The theory of "pure" democracy is the theory of the upper stratum of the working class, which has been broken in and is being fed by the imperialist robbers. It was brought into being for the purpose of concealing the ulcers of capitalism, of touching up imperialism and lending it moral strength in the struggle against the exploited masses. Under capitalism there are no real "liberties" for the exploited, nor can there be, if for no other reason than that the premises, printing plants, paper supplies, etc., indispensable for the actual enjoyment of "liberties" are the privilege of the exploiters. Under capitalism the exploited masses do not, nor can they, really participate in the administration of the country, if for no other reason than that, even under the most democratic regime, governments, under the conditions of capitalism, are not set up by the people but by the Rothschilds and Stinneses, the Rockefellers and Morgans. Democracy under capitalism is *capitalist* democracy, the democracy of the exploiting minority, based on the restriction of the rights of the exploited majority and directed against this majority. Only under the dictatorship of the proletariat are real "liberties" for the exploited and real participation in the administration of the country by the proletarians and peasants possible. Under the dictatorship of the proletariat, democracy is *proletarian* democracy, the democracy of the exploited majority, based upon the restriction of the rights of the exploiting minority and directed against this minority.

*Second conclusion:* The dictatorship of the proletariat cannot arise as the result of the peaceful development of bourgeois society and of bourgeois democracy; it can arise only as the result of the smashing of the bourgeois state machine, the bourgeois army, the bourgeois bureaucratic machine, the bourgeois police.

In a preface to *The Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels wrote, quoting from *The Civil War in France*:

“The working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machine and wield it for its own purposes.” (Marx, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 190.)

In a letter to Kugelmann (1871) Marx wrote that the task of the proletarian revolution is

“no longer as before, to transfer the bureaucratic military machine from one hand to another, but to *smash* it, and that is a preliminary condition for every real people’s revolution on the Continent.” (Marx, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, p. 528.)

Marx’s qualifying phrase about the Continent gave the opportunists and Mensheviks of all countries a pretext for proclaiming that Marx had thus conceded the possibility of the peaceful evolution of bourgeois democracy into a proletarian democracy, at least in certain countries outside the European continent (England, America). Marx did in fact concede that possibility, and he had good grounds for conceding it in regard to England and America in the ’seventies of the last century, when monopoly capitalism and imperialism did not yet exist, and when these countries, owing to the special conditions of their development, had as yet no developed militarism and bureaucracy. That was the situation before the appearance of developed imperialism. But later, after a lapse of thirty or forty years, when the situation in these countries had radically changed, when imperialism had developed and had embraced all capitalist countries without exception, when militarism and bureaucracy had appeared in England and America also, when the special conditions for peaceful development in England and the United States had disappeared—then the qualification in regard to these countries necessarily could no longer hold good.

"Today," said Lenin, "in 1917, in the epoch of the first great imperialist war, this qualification made by Marx is no longer valid. Both England and America, the greatest and the last representatives—in the whole world—of Anglo-Saxon 'liberty,' in the sense that militarism and bureaucracy were absent, have slid down entirely into the all-European, filthy, bloody morass of military-bureaucratic institutions to which everything is subordinated and which trample everything underfoot. Today, both in England and in America, the 'preliminary condition for every real people's revolution' is the smashing, the *destruction* of the 'ready-made state machine' (brought in those countries, between 1914 and 1917, to general 'European' imperialist perfection)." (*Selected Works*, Vol. VII, p. 37.)

In other words, the law of violent proletarian revolution, the law of the smashing of the bourgeois state machine as a preliminary condition for such a revolution, is an inevitable law of the revolutionary movement in the imperialist countries of the world.

Of course, in the remote future, if the proletariat is victorious in the most important capitalist countries, and if the present capitalist encirclement is replaced by a socialist encirclement, a "peaceful" path of development is quite possible for certain capitalist countries, whose capitalists, in view of the "unfavourable" international situation, will consider it expedient "voluntarily" to make substantial concessions to the proletariat. But this supposition applies only to a remote and possible future. With regard to the immediate future, there is no ground whatsoever for this supposition.

Therefore, Lenin is right in saying:

"The proletarian revolution is impossible without the forcible destruction of the bourgeois state machine and the substitution for it of a *new one*..." (*Selected Works*, Vol. VII, p. 121.)

### 3. THE SOVIET POWER AS THE STATE FORM OF THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

The victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat signifies the suppression of the bourgeoisie, the smashing of the bourgeois state machine, and the substitution of proletarian democracy for bourgeois democracy. That is clear. But by means of what organizations can this colossal task be carried out? The old forms of organization of the proletariat, which grew up on the basis of bourgeois parliamentarism, are inadequate for this task—of that there can hardly be any doubt. What then, are the new forms of organization of the proletariat that are capable of serving as the grave-diggers of the bourgeois state machine, that are capable not only of smashing this machine, not only of substituting proletarian democracy for bourgeois democracy, but also of becoming the foundation of the proletarian state power?

This new form of organization of the proletariat is the Soviets.

Wherein lies the strength of the Soviets as compared with the old forms of organization?

In that the Soviets are the most *all-embracing* mass organizations of the proletariat, for they and they alone embrace all workers without exception.

In that the Soviets are the *only* mass organizations which embrace all the oppressed and exploited, workers and peasants, soldiers and sailors, and in which the vanguard of the masses, the proletariat, can, for this reason, most easily and most completely exercise its political leadership of the mass struggle.

In that the Soviets are the *most powerful organs* of the revolutionary struggle of the masses, of the political actions of the masses, of the insurrection of the masses—organs capable of breaking the omnipotence of finance capital and of its political appendages.

In that the Soviets are the *immediate* organizations of the masses themselves, *i.e.*, they are *the most democratic* and therefore the most authoritative organizations of the masses, which facilitate to the utmost their participation in the work of building up the new state and in its administration, and which bring into full play the revolutionary energy, initiative and creative abilities of the masses in the struggle for the destruction of the old order, in the struggle for the new, proletarian order.

The Soviet power is the amalgamation and formation of the local Soviets into one common state organization, into the state organization of the proletariat as the vanguard of the oppressed and exploited masses and as the ruling class—their amalgamation into the republic of Soviets.

The essence of the Soviet power is contained in the fact that these organizations of a most pronounced mass character, these most revolutionary organizations of precisely those classes that were oppressed by the capitalists and landlords are now the “*permanent and sole* basis of the whole power of the state, of the whole state apparatus”; that

“precisely those masses which even in the most democratic bourgeois republics, while being equal in law, have in fact been prevented by thousands of tricks and devices from taking part in political life and from enjoying democratic rights and liberties, are now drawn unfailingly into *constant* and, moreover, *decisive* participation in the democratic administration of the state.”\* (Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. VII, p. 231.)

This is why the Soviet power is a *new form* of state organization, different in principle from the old bourgeois-democratic and parliamentary form, a *new type* of state, adapted not to the task of exploiting and oppressing the labouring masses, but to the task of completely emancipating them from all oppression and

\* My italics.—J.S.

exploitation, to the tasks facing the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Lenin rightly says that with the appearance of the Soviet power "the era of bourgeois-democratic parliamentarism has come to an end, and a new chapter in world history—the era of proletarian dictatorship—has commenced."

What are the characteristic features of the Soviet power?

The Soviet power has a most pronounced mass character and is the most democratic state organization of all possible state organizations while classes continue to exist; for, being the arena of the bond and collaboration between the workers and the exploited peasants in their struggle against the exploiters, and basing itself in its work on this bond and on this collaboration, it represents, by virtue of this, the power of the majority of the population over the minority, it is the state of the majority, the expression of its dictatorship.

The Soviet power is the most internationalist of all state organizations in class society, for, since it destroys every kind of national oppression and rests on the collaboration of the labouring masses of the various nationalities, it facilitates, by virtue of this, the amalgamation of these masses into a single state union.

The Soviet power, by its very structure, facilitates the task of leading the oppressed and exploited masses for the vanguard of these masses—for the proletariat, as the most consolidated and most class-conscious core of the Soviets.

"The experience of all revolutions and of all movements of the oppressed classes, the experience of the world socialist movement teaches," says Lenin, "that the proletariat alone is able to unite and lead the scattered and backward strata of the toiling and exploited population" (*Selected Works*, Vol. VII, p. 232.)

The structure of the Soviet power facilitates the practical application of the lessons drawn from this experience.

The Soviet power, by combining the legislative and executive

functions in a single state body and replacing territorial electoral constituencies by industrial units, factories and mills, thereby directly links the workers and the labouring masses in general with the apparatus of state administration, teaches them how to administer the country.

The Soviet power alone is capable of releasing the army from its subordination to bourgeois command and of converting it from the instrument of oppression of the people, which it is under the bourgeois order, into an instrument for the liberation of the people from the yoke of the bourgeoisie, both native and foreign.

"The Soviet organization of the state alone is capable of immediately and effectively smashing and finally destroying the old, *i.e.*, the bourgeois, bureaucratic and judicial apparatus." (*Ibid.*)

The Soviet form of state alone, by drawing the mass organizations of the toilers and exploited into constant and unrestricted participation in state administration, is capable of preparing the ground for the withering away of the state, which is one of the basic elements of the future stateless communist society.

The republic of Soviets is thus the political form, so long sought and finally discovered, within the framework of which the economic emancipation of the proletariat, the complete victory of socialism, is to be accomplished.

The Paris Commune was the embryo of this form; the Soviet power is its development and culmination.

That is why Lenin says:

"The republic of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies is not only the form of a higher type of democratic institution . . . but is the *only* \* *form* capable of securing the most painless transition to socialism." (*Selected Works*, Vol. VI, p. 447.)

\* My italics.—J.S.

## V. The Peasant Problem

FROM this theme I take four questions: (1) the presentation of the problem; (2) the peasantry during the bourgeois-democratic revolution; (3) the peasantry during the proletarian revolution; (4) the peasantry after the consolidation of the Soviet power.

### 1. THE PRESENTATION OF THE PROBLEM

Some think that the fundamental thing in Leninism is the peasant problem, that the point of departure of Leninism is the problem of the peasantry, of its role and relative importance. This is absolutely wrong. The fundamental problem of Leninism, its point of departure, is not the peasant problem, but the problem of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of the conditions under which it can be achieved, of the conditions under which it can be consolidated. The peasant problem, as the problem of the ally of the proletariat in its struggle for power, is a derivative problem.

This circumstance, however, does not in the least deprive the peasant problem of the serious and vital importance it unquestionably has for the proletarian revolution. It is known that the serious study of the peasant problem in the ranks of Russian Marxists began precisely on the eve of the first revolution (1905), when the question of overthrowing tsarism and of realizing the hegemony of the proletariat confronted the Party in its full scope, and when the question of the ally of the proletariat in the impending bourgeois revolution assumed immediate vital importance. It is also known that the peasant problem in Russia assumed a still more urgent character during the proletarian revolution, when the problem of the dictatorship of the proletariat,



of achieving and maintaining it, led to the problem of allies for the proletariat in the impending proletarian revolution. And this was natural. Those who are marching towards and preparing to assume power cannot but be interested in the question of who are their real allies.

In this sense the peasant problem is part of the general problem of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and as such it is one of the most vital problems of Leninism.

The attitude of indifference and sometimes even of positive dislike displayed by the parties of the Second International towards the peasant problem is to be explained not only by the specific conditions of development in the West. It is to be explained primarily by the fact that these parties do not believe in the proletarian dictatorship, that they fear revolution and do not think of leading the proletariat to power; and those who are afraid of revolution, who do not want to lead the proletarians to power, cannot be interested in the question of allies for the proletariat in the revolution—to them the question of allies is a matter of indifference, a question of no immediate significance. An ironical attitude towards the peasant problem is regarded by the heroes of the Second International as a sign of good breeding, a sign of “true” Marxism. As a matter of fact, there is not a grain of Marxism in this, for indifference towards so important a problem as the peasant problem on the eve of the proletarian revolution is the reverse side of the repudiation of the dictatorship of the proletariat; it is an unmistakable sign of downright betrayal of Marxism.

The question presents itself as follows: Are the revolutionary possibilities latent in the peasantry by virtue of certain conditions of its existence *already exhausted*, or not; and if not, *is there any hope, any basis*, for utilizing these possibilities for the proletarian revolution, for transforming the peasantry, the exploited majority of it, from the reserve of the bourgeoisie which it was during

the bourgeois revolutions in the West and still is even now, into a reserve of the proletariat, into its ally?

Leninism replies to this question in the affirmative, *i.e.*, to the effect that it recognizes the existence of revolutionary capabilities in the ranks of the majority of the peasantry, and to the effect that it is possible to use these in the interests of the proletarian dictatorship. The history of the three revolutions in Russia fully corroborates the conclusions of Leninism on this score.

Hence the practical conclusion that the toiling masses of the peasantry must be supported—supported without fail—in their struggle against bondage and exploitation, in their struggle for deliverance from oppression and poverty. This does not mean, of course, that the proletariat must support *every* peasant movement. What we have in mind here is support for those movements and those struggles of the peasantry which, directly or indirectly, assist the emancipation movement of the proletariat, which, in one way or another, bring grist to the mill of the proletarian revolution, which help to transform the peasantry into a reserve and ally of the working class.

## 2. THE PEASANTRY DURING THE BOURGEOIS-DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

This period extends from the first Russian revolution (1905) to the second revolution (February 1917), inclusive. The characteristic feature of this period is the emancipation of the peasantry from the influence of the liberal bourgeoisie, the *defection* of the peasantry from the Cadets (Constitutional-Democrats), the *turn* of the peasantry towards the proletariat, towards the Bolshevik Party. The history of this period is the history of the struggle between the Cadets (the liberal bourgeoisie) and the Bolsheviks (the proletariat) for the peasantry. The outcome of this struggle was decided by the Duma period, for the period

of the four Dumas served as an object lesson to the peasantry, and this lesson brought home to the peasantry the fact that they would receive neither land nor liberty at the hands of the Cadets; that the tsar was entirely in favour of the landlords, and that the Cadets were supporting the tsar; that the only force they could count on was the urban workers, the proletariat. The imperialist war merely confirmed the lessons of the Duma period and completed the defection of the peasantry from the bourgeoisie, completed the isolation of the liberal bourgeoisie; for the years of the war revealed the utter futility, the utter deceptiveness of all hopes of obtaining peace from the tsar and his bourgeois allies. Without the object lessons of the Duma period the hegemony of the proletariat would have been impossible.

This is how the alliance between the workers and the peasants in the bourgeois-democratic revolution was brought about. This is how the hegemony (leadership) of the proletariat in the common struggle for the overthrow of tsarism was brought about—the hegemony which led to the February Revolution of 1917.

The bourgeois revolutions in the West (England, France, Germany and Austria) took, as is well known, a different road. There, hegemony in the revolution belonged not to the proletariat, which by reason of its weakness did not and could not represent an independent political force, but to the liberal bourgeoisie. There the peasantry obtained its emancipation from feudal usages, not from the hands of the proletariat, which was numerically weak and unorganized, but from the hands of the bourgeoisie. There the peasantry marched against the old order side by side with the liberal bourgeoisie. There the peasantry acted as the reserve of the bourgeoisie. There the revolution, in consequence of this, led to an enormous increase in the political weight of the bourgeoisie.

In Russia, on the contrary, the bourgeois revolution produced quite opposite results. The revolution in Russia led not to the

strengthening, but to the weakening of the bourgeoisie as a political force, not to an increase in its political reserves, but to the loss of its main reserve, to the loss of the peasantry. The bourgeois revolution in Russia brought to the forefront not the liberal bourgeoisie but the revolutionary proletariat, rallying around the latter the millions of the peasantry.

Incidentally, this explains why the bourgeois revolution in Russia passed into a proletarian revolution in a comparatively short space of time. The hegemony of the proletariat was the embryo of, and the transition stage to, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

How is this peculiar phenomenon of the Russian revolution, which has no precedent in the history of the bourgeois revolutions of the West, to be explained? Whence this peculiarity?

It is to be explained by the fact that the bourgeois revolution unfolded in Russia under more advanced conditions of class struggle than in the West; that the Russian proletariat had at that time already become an independent political force, whereas the liberal bourgeoisie, frightened by the revolutionary spirit of the proletariat, lost all semblance of a revolutionary attitude (especially after the lessons of 1905) and entered into an alliance with the tsar and the landlords against the revolution, against the workers and peasants.

We should bear in mind the following circumstances, which determined the peculiar character of the Russian bourgeois revolution.

(a) The unprecedented concentration of Russian industry on the eve of the revolution. It is known, for instance, that in Russia more than 54 per cent of all the workers were employed in enterprises employing over 500 workers each, whereas in so highly developed a country as the United States of America no more than 33 per cent of all the workers were employed in such enterprises. It need hardly be proved that this circumstance alone,

in view of the existence of such a revolutionary party as the Party of the Bolsheviks, transformed the working class of Russia into an immense force in the political life of the country.

(b) The hideous forms of exploitation in the factories, coupled with the intolerable police regime of the tsarist hangmen—a circumstance which transformed every important strike of the workers into an imposing political action and steeled the working class as a force that was revolutionary to the end.

(c) The political flabbiness of the Russian bourgeoisie, which after the Revolution of 1905 turned into servility to tsarism and downright counter-revolution—a fact to be explained not only by the revolutionary spirit of the Russian proletariat, which flung the Russian bourgeoisie into the arms of tsarism, but also by the direct dependence of this bourgeoisie upon government contracts.

(d) The existence in the rural districts of the most hideous and most unbearable survivals of serfdom, coupled with the domineering of the landlords—a circumstance which threw the peasantry into the arms of the revolution.

(e) Tsarism, which stifled everything that was alive, and whose tyranny aggravated the oppression of the capitalist and the landlord, a circumstance which united the struggle of the workers and of the peasants into a single torrent of revolution.

(f) The imperialist war, which fused all these contradictions in the political life of Russia into one profound revolutionary crisis, and which lent the revolution tremendous striking force.

Whither could the peasantry turn under these circumstances? Where could it seek support against the domineering of the landlords, against the tyranny of the tsar, against the devastating war which was ruining it? The liberal bourgeoisie? But it was an enemy, as the long years of experience of all four Dumas had proved. The Socialist-Revolutionary Party? The Socialist-Revolutionaries were "better" than the Cadets, of course, and their program was more "suitable," almost a peasant program; but what

could the Socialist-Revolutionaries offer, considering that they thought of relying only on the peasants and were weak in the cities, which the enemy drew upon primarily in recruiting his forces? Where was the new force which would stop at nothing either in town or country, which would boldly march in the front ranks to fight the tsar and the landlords, which would help the peasantry to extricate itself from bondage, from land hunger, from oppression, from war? Was there such a force in Russia at all? Yes, there was. It was the Russian proletariat, which had shown its strength, its ability to fight to the end, its boldness and revolutionary spirit, as far back as 1905.

At any rate, there was no other such force; nor could any other be found anywhere.

That is why the peasantry, when it turned its back on the Cadets and attached itself to the Socialist-Revolutionaries, at the same time came to realize the necessity of submitting to the leadership of such a courageous leader of the revolution as the Russian proletariat.

Such were the circumstances which determined the peculiar character of the Russian bourgeois revolution.

### 3. THE PEASANTRY DURING THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

This period extends from the February Revolution of 1917 to the October Revolution of 1917. This period is comparatively short, eight months in all; but from the point of view of the political enlightenment and revolutionary training of the masses these eight months can safely be put on a par with decades of ordinary constitutional development, for they were eight months of *revolution*. The characteristic feature of this period was the further revolutionization of the peasantry, their disillusionment with the Socialist-Revolutionaries, the *defection* of the peasantry

from the Socialist-Revolutionaries, a new *turn* of the peasantry towards *rallying directly* around the proletariat as the only consistently revolutionary force, capable of leading the country to peace. The history of this period is the history of the struggle between the Socialist-Revolutionaries (petty-bourgeois democracy) and the Bolsheviks (proletarian democracy) for the peasantry, for winning the majority of the peasantry. The outcome of this struggle was decided by the coalition period, the Kerensky period, the refusal of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks to confiscate the land of the landlords, the fight of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks to continue the war, the June offensive at the front, the introduction of capital punishment for soldiers, the Kornilov mutiny.

Whereas before, in the preceding period, the fundamental problem of the revolution had been the overthrow of the tsar and of the power of the landlords, now, in the period after the February Revolution, when there was no longer any tsar, and when the interminable war had exhausted the economic forces of the country and had utterly ruined the peasantry, the problem of liquidating the war became the main problem of the revolution. The centre of gravity had manifestly shifted from purely internal problems to the main problem—the war. “End the war,” “Let’s get out of this war”—these were the cries heard everywhere throughout the war-weary land, and primarily among the peasantry.

But in order to get out of the war it was necessary to overthrow the Provisional Government, it was necessary to overthrow the power of the bourgeoisie, it was necessary to overthrow the power of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks, for they, and they alone, were dragging out the war to a “victorious finish.” Practically, there was no way of getting out of the war except by overthrowing the bourgeoisie.

This was a new revolution, a proletarian revolution, for it ousted from power the last, the extreme Left wing of the imperialist bourgeoisie, the Socialist-Revolutionary Party and the Mensheviks, in order to set up a new, proletarian power, the power of the Soviets, in order to put in power the party of the revolutionary proletariat, the Bolshevik Party, the party of the revolutionary struggle against the imperialist war and for a democratic peace. The majority of the peasantry supported the struggle of the workers for peace and for the power of the Soviets.

There was no other way out for the peasantry. Nor could there be any other way out.

Thus, the Kerensky period was a great object lesson for the toiling masses of the peasantry, for it showed clearly that with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks in power the country would not extricate itself from the war, and the peasants would never get either land or liberty; that the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries differed from the Cadets only in their honeyed phrases and false promises, while they actually pursued the same imperialist, Cadet policy; that the only power that could lead the country on to the proper road was the power of the Soviets. The further prolongation of the war merely confirmed the truth of this lesson, spurred on the revolution, and drove millions of peasants and soldiers to *rally directly* around the proletarian revolution. The isolation of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks became an incontrovertible fact. Without the object lessons of the coalition period the dictatorship of the proletariat would have been impossible.

Such were the circumstances which facilitated the process of the bourgeois revolution passing into the proletarian revolution.

That is how the dictatorship of the proletariat took shape in Russia.



#### 4. THE PEASANTRY AFTER THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE SOVIET POWER

Whereas before, in the first period of the revolution, the main objective was the overthrow of tsarism, and later, after the February Revolution, the primary objective was to get out of the imperialist war by overthrowing the bourgeoisie, now, after the liquidation of the Civil War and the consolidation of the Soviet power, problems of economic construction come to the forefront. Strengthen and develop the nationalized industry; for this purpose link up industry with agriculture through state-regulated trade; replace the surplus-appropriation system by the tax in kind so as, later on, by gradually lowering the tax in kind, to reduce it to the exchange of products of industry for the products of peasant farming; revive trade and develop the cooperative societies by drawing into them the vast masses of the peasantry—this is how Lenin depicted the immediate tasks of economic construction on the way to laying the foundation of socialist economy.

It is said that this task may prove beyond the strength of a peasant country like Russia. Some sceptics even say that it is simply utopian, impossible, for the peasantry is a peasantry—it consists of small producers, and therefore cannot be of use in organizing the foundations of socialist production.

But the sceptics are mistaken; for they fail to take into account certain circumstances which in the present case are of decisive significance. Let us examine the most important of these:

*First.* The peasantry in the Soviet Union must not be confused with the peasantry in the West. A peasantry that has been schooled in three revolutions, that fought against the tsar and the power of the bourgeoisie side by side with the proletariat and under the leadership of the proletariat, a peasantry that has received land and peace at the hands of the proletarian revolution and by reason of this has become the reserve of the proletariat—

such a peasantry cannot but be different from a peasantry which during the bourgeois revolution fought under the leadership of the liberal bourgeoisie, which received land at the hands of that bourgeoisie, and in view of this became the reserve of the bourgeoisie. It need hardly be proved that the Soviet peasantry, which has learnt to appreciate its political friendship and political collaboration with the proletariat and which obtained its freedom because of this friendship and collaboration, cannot but represent exceptionally favourable material for economic collaboration with the proletariat.

Engels said that "the conquest of political power by the Socialist Party has become a question of the near future," that "in order to achieve power the Party must first go from the towns into the countryside and become strong in the rural districts." (Engels, *The Peasant Question*.) He wrote this in the 'nineties of the last century, having in mind the Western peasantry. Need it be proved that the Russian Communists, after accomplishing an enormous amount of work in this field in the course of three revolutions, have already succeeded in creating for themselves an influence and backing in the rural districts such as our Western comrades dare not even dream of? How can it be denied that this circumstance must decidedly facilitate the organization of economic collaboration between the working class and the peasantry of Russia?

The sceptics maintain that the small peasants are a factor that is incompatible with socialist construction. But listen to what Engels says about the small peasants of the West:

"And indeed we stand decidedly on the side of the small peasant; we will do everything possible to make his lot more bearable, to facilitate his transition to the cooperative, if he decides to take this step; if he cannot as yet bring himself to this decision, we will give him plenty of time to ponder over it on his holding. We shall do this not only because we consider it possible for the small peasant

who does his own work to come over to our side, but also in the direct interest of the Party. The greater the number of peasants whom we can save from actual downfall into the proletariat and win for ourselves while they are still peasants, the more rapidly and easily will the social transformation take place. It cannot be to our advantage to wait with this transformation until capitalist production has developed everywhere up to its final consequences, until the last petty artisan and the last small peasant has fallen a victim to capitalist large-scale production. The material sacrifices which will have to be made out of public funds in this direction in the interests of the peasants can only appear as money thrown away from the point of view of capitalist economy, but they are nevertheless an excellent investment, for they will save perhaps ten times the amount in the costs of social reorganization in general. In this sense, therefore, we can afford to deal very liberally with the peasants." (*Ibid.*)

This is what Engels said, having in mind the Western peasantry. But is it not clear that nowhere can what Engels said be realized so easily and so completely as in the land of the dictatorship of the proletariat? Is it not clear that only in Soviet Russia is it possible now and to the fullest extent for "the small peasant who does his own work to come over to our side," can the "material sacrifices" necessary for this be made, and the "liberality towards the peasants" necessary for this displayed? Is it not clear that these and similar measures for the benefit of the peasantry are already being carried out in Russia? How can it be denied that this circumstance, in its turn, must facilitate and advance the work of economic construction in the Land of the Soviets?

*Second.* Agriculture in Russia must not be confused with agriculture in the West. There, agriculture is developing along the ordinary lines of capitalism, under conditions of profound differentiation among the peasantry, with large landed estates and private capitalist latifundia at one extreme, and pauperism, destitution and wage slavery at the other. Owing to this, disintegration

and decay are quite natural there. Not so in Russia. Here agriculture cannot develop along such a path, if for no other reason than that the existence of the Soviet power and the nationalization of the principal instruments and means of production do not permit of such a development. In Russia the development of agriculture must proceed along a different path, along the path of organizing millions of small and middle peasants in cooperative societies, along the path of developing in the countryside mass cooperation supported by the state by means of credit on easy terms. Lenin rightly pointed out in his articles on cooperation that the development of agriculture in our country must proceed along a new path, along the path of drawing the majority of the peasants into socialist construction through the cooperative societies, along the path of gradually introducing into agriculture the principles of collectivism, first in the sphere of marketing and later in the sphere of production of agricultural products.

Of extreme interest in this respect are several new phenomena observed in the countryside in connection with the work of the farming cooperatives. It is well known that new, large organizations have sprung up in the *Selsksoyuz*,\* in different branches of agriculture, such as flax, potatoes, butter, etc., which have a great future before them. Of these, the Flax Centre,\*\* for instance, unites a whole network of peasant flax growers' associations. The Flax Centre supplies the peasants with seeds and implements; then it buys all the flax raised by these peasants, disposes of it on the market in mass quantities, guarantees the peasants a share in the profits, and in this way links peasant farming with state industry through the *Selsksoyuz*. What shall we call this form of organization of production? In my opinion, it is the domestic system of large-scale state-socialist production in the sphere of agriculture. In speaking of the domestic system of

\* *Selsksoyuz*, the central organization of rural cooperative societies.—Ed.

\*\* The Central Cooperative Society for Flax Growing and Marketing.—Ed.

state-socialist production I draw an analogy with the domestic system under capitalism, let us say, in the textile industry, where the handicraftsmen received their raw material and tools from the capitalist and turned over to him the entire product of their labour, thus being in fact semi-wage earners working in their own homes. This is one of numerous indices showing the path along which our agriculture must develop. I will not mention similar indices in other branches of agriculture.

It is hardly necessary to prove that the vast majority of the peasantry will eagerly take this new path of development and abandon the old path of private capitalist latifundia and wage slavery, the path of poverty and ruin.

Here is what Lenin says about the path of development of our agriculture:

"The power of the state over all large-scale means of production, the power of state in the hands of the proletariat, the alliance of this proletariat with the many millions of small and very small peasants, the assured leadership of the peasantry by the proletariat, etc.—is not this all that is necessary in order to build a complete socialist society from the cooperatives, from the cooperatives alone, which we formerly treated as huckstering and which from a certain aspect we have the right to treat as such now, under N.E.P.\*? Is this not all that is necessary for the purpose of building a complete socialist society? This is not yet the building of socialist society, but it is all that is necessary and sufficient for this building." (*Selected Works*, Vol. IX, p. 403.)

Further on, in speaking of the necessity of giving financial and other assistance to the cooperatives, as a "new principle of organizing the population" and a new "social system" under the dictatorship of the proletariat, Lenin continues:

\* New Economic Policy.—Ed.

"Every social system arises only with the financial assistance of a definite class. There is no need to mention the hundreds and hundreds of millions of rubles that the birth of 'free' capitalism costs. Now we must realize, and apply in our practical work, the fact that the social system which we must now assist more than usual is the cooperative system. But it must be assisted in the real sense of the word, *i.e.*, it will not be enough to interpret assistance to mean assistance for any kind of cooperative trade; by assistance we must mean assistance for cooperative trade in which *really large masses of the population really take part.*" (*Ibid.*, p. 404.)

What do all these things prove?

That the sceptics are wrong.

That Leninism is right in regarding the masses of labouring peasants as the reserve of the proletariat.

That the proletariat in power can and must use this reserve in order to link industry with agriculture, to advance socialist construction, and to provide for the dictatorship of the proletariat that necessary foundation without which the transition to socialist economy is impossible.

## VI. The National Problem

FROM this theme I take the two main questions: (1) the presentation of the problem; (2) the liberation movement of the oppressed peoples and the proletarian revolution.

### I. THE PRESENTATION OF THE PROBLEM

During the last twenty years the national problem has undergone a number of very important changes. The national problem in the period of the Second International and the national problem in the period of Leninism are far from being the same thing. They differ profoundly from each other, not only in their scope, but also in their intrinsic character.

Formerly, the national problem was usually confined to a narrow circle of questions, concerning, primarily, "cultured" nationalities. The Irish, the Hungarians, the Poles, the Finns, the Serbs and several other European nationalities—that was the circle of disfranchised peoples in whose destinies the heroes of the Second International were interested. The scores and hundreds of millions of Asiatic and African peoples who are suffering national oppression in its most savage and cruel form usually remained outside of their field of vision. They hesitated to put white and black, "civilized" and "uncivilized" on the same plane. Two or three meaningless, lukewarm resolutions, which carefully evaded the question of liberating the colonies—that was all the leaders of the Second International could boast of. Now we can say that this duplicity and half-heartedness in dealing with the national problem has been brought to an end. Leninism laid bare this crying incongruity, broke down the wall between

whites and blacks, between Europeans and Asiatics, between the "civilized" and "uncivilized" slaves of imperialism, and thus linked the national problem with the problem of the colonies. The national problem was thereby transformed from a particular and internal state problem into a general and international problem, into a world problem of emancipating the oppressed peoples in the dependent countries and colonies from the yoke of imperialism.

Formerly, the principle of self-determination of nations was usually misinterpreted, and not infrequently it was narrowed down to the idea of the right of nations to autonomy. Certain leaders of the Second International even went so far as to represent the right to self-determination as meaning the right to cultural autonomy, *i.e.*, the right of oppressed nations to have their own cultural institutions, leaving all political power in the hands of the ruling nation. As a consequence the idea of self-determination stood in danger of becoming transformed from an instrument for combating annexations into an instrument for justifying them. Now we can say that this confusion has been cleared up. Leninism broadened the conception of self-determination and interpreted it as the right of the oppressed peoples of the dependent countries and colonies to complete secession, as the right of nations to independent existence as states. This precluded the possibility of justifying annexations by interpreting the right of self-determination to mean the right to autonomy. Thus the principle of self-determination itself was transformed from an instrument for deceiving the masses, which it undoubtedly was in the hands of the social-chauvinists during the imperialist war, into an instrument for exposing all and sundry imperialist aspirations and chauvinist machinations, into an instrument for the political education of the masses in the spirit of internationalism.

Formerly, the question of the oppressed nations was usually regarded as purely a juridical question. Solemn proclamations



regarding "national equality," innumerable declarations about the "equality of nations"—that was the fare of the parties of the Second International which glossed over the fact that "equality of nations" under imperialism, where one group of nations (a minority) lives by exploiting another group of nations, is sheer mockery of the oppressed nations. Now we can say that this bourgeois-juridical point of view on the national question has been exposed. Leninism brought the national problem down from the lofty heights of high-sounding declarations to solid ground, and declared that pronouncements about the "equality of nations" which are not backed by the direct support of the proletarian parties for the liberation struggle of the oppressed nations are meaningless and false. In this way the question of the oppressed nations became a question of supporting, of rendering real and continuous assistance to the oppressed nations in their struggle against imperialism for real equality of nations, for their independent existence as states.

Formerly, the national problem was regarded from a reformist point of view, as an independent problem having no connection with the general problems of the rule of capital, of the overthrow of imperialism, of the proletarian revolution. It was tacitly assumed that the victory of the proletariat in Europe was possible without a direct alliance with the liberation movement in the colonies, that the national-colonial problem could be solved on the quiet, "of its own accord," off the high road of the proletarian revolution, without a revolutionary struggle against imperialism. Now we can say that this anti-revolutionary point of view has been exposed. Leninism has proved, and the imperialist war and the revolution in Russia have confirmed, that the national problem can be solved only in connection with and on the basis of the proletarian revolution, and that the road to victory of the revolution in the West lies through the revolutionary alliance with the liberation movement of the colonies and dependent countries

against imperialism. The national problem is a part of the general problem of the proletarian revolution, a part of the problem of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The question presents itself as follows: Are the revolutionary possibilities latent in the revolutionary liberation movement of the oppressed countries *already exhausted* or not; and if not, is there any hope, any ground to expect that these possibilities can be utilized for the proletarian revolution, that the dependent and colonial countries can be transformed from a reserve of the imperialist bourgeoisie into a reserve of the revolutionary proletariat, into an ally of the latter?

Leninism replies to this question in the affirmative, *i.e.*, it recognizes the latent revolutionary capacities of the national liberation movement of the oppressed countries and the possibility of utilizing these capacities for the purpose of overthrowing the common enemy, for the purpose of overthrowing imperialism. The mechanics of the development of imperialism, the imperialist war and the revolution in Russia wholly confirm the conclusions of Leninism on this score.

Hence the necessity for the proletariat to support—resolutely and actively to support—the national liberation movement of the oppressed and dependent peoples.

This does not mean, of course, that the proletariat must support *every* national movement, everywhere and always, in every single concrete case. It means that support must be given to such national movements as tend to weaken, to overthrow imperialism, and not to strengthen and preserve it. Cases occur when the national movements in certain oppressed countries come into conflict with the interests of the development of the proletarian movement. In such cases support is, of course, entirely out of the question. The question of the rights of nations is not an isolated, self-sufficient question; it is a part of the general problem

of the proletarian revolution, subordinate to the whole, and must be considered from the point of view of the whole. In the 'forties of the last century Marx supported the national movement of the Poles and Hungarians and was opposed to the national movement of the Czechs and the South Slavs. Why? Because the Czechs and the South Slavs were then "reactionary nations," "Russian outposts" in Europe, outposts of absolutism; whereas the Poles and the Hungarians were "revolutionary nations," fighting against absolutism. Because support of the national movement of the Czechs and the South Slavs was at that time equivalent to indirect support for tsarism, the most dangerous enemy of the revolutionary movement in Europe.

"The various demands of democracy," writes Lenin, "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." (*Collected Works*, Russian edition, Vol. XIX, pp. 257-58.) \*

This is the position in regard to the question of certain national movements, of the possible reactionary character of these movements—if, of course, they are appraised not from the formal point of view, not from the point of view of abstract rights, but concretely, from the point of view of the interests of the revolutionary movement.

The same must be said of the revolutionary character of national movements in general. The unquestionably revolutionary character of the overwhelming majority of national movements is as relative and peculiar as is the possible reactionary character of certain particular national movements. The revolutionary character of a national movement under the conditions of imperialist oppression

\* Cf. Lenin, *Marx-Engels-Marxism* (N. Y., 1935), p. 147.—Ed.

does not necessarily presuppose the existence of proletarian elements in the movement, the existence of a revolutionary or a republican program of the movement, the existence of a democratic basis of the movement. The struggle the Emir of Afghanistan is waging for the independence of Afghanistan is objectively a *revolutionary* struggle, despite the monarchist views of the Emir and his associates, for it weakens, disintegrates and undermines imperialism; whereas the struggle waged by "desperate" Democrats and "Socialists," "revolutionaries" and republicans, such as, for example, Kerensky and Tsereteli, Renaudel and Scheidemann, Chernov and Dan, Henderson and Clynes, during the imperialist war was a *reactionary* struggle, for its result was the whitewashing, the strengthening, the victory of imperialism. For the same reasons the struggle the Egyptian merchants and bourgeois intellectuals are waging for the independence of Egypt is objectively a *revolutionary* struggle, despite the bourgeois origin and bourgeois title of the leaders of the Egyptian national movement, despite the fact that they are opposed to socialism; whereas the fight the British Labour Government is waging to perpetuate Egypt's dependent position is for the same reasons a *reactionary* struggle, despite the proletarian origin and the proletarian title of the members of that government, despite the fact that they are "for" socialism. I need not speak of the national movement in other, larger, colonial and dependent countries, such as India and China, every step of which along the road to liberation, even if it runs counter to the demands of formal democracy, is a steam-hammer blow at imperialism, *i.e.*, is undoubtedly a *revolutionary* step.

Lenin was right in saying that the national movement of the oppressed countries should be appraised not from the point of view of formal democracy, but from the point of view of the actual results obtained, as shown by the general balance sheet

of the struggle against imperialism, that is to say, "not in isolation, but on . . . a world scale." (*Collected Works*, Russian edition, Vol. XIX, p. 257.) \*

## 2. THE LIBERATION MOVEMENT OF THE OPPRESSED PEOPLES AND THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

In solving the national problem Leninism proceeds from the following theses:

(a) The world is divided into two camps: the camp of a handful of civilized nations, which possess finance capital and exploit the vast majority of the population of the globe; and the camp of the oppressed and exploited peoples in the colonies and dependent countries, who comprise that majority.

(b) The colonies and the dependent countries, oppressed and exploited by finance capital, constitute a very large reserve and a very important source of strength for imperialism.

(c) The revolutionary struggle of the oppressed peoples in the dependent and colonial countries against imperialism is the only road that leads to their emancipation from oppression and exploitation.

(d) The most important colonial and dependent countries have already taken the path of the national liberation movement, which cannot but lead to the crisis of world capitalism.

(e) The interests of the proletarian movement in the developed countries and of the national liberation movement in the colonies call for the amalgamation of these two forms of the revolutionary movement into a common front against the common enemy, against imperialism.

(f) The victory of the working class in the developed countries

\* Cf. Lenin, *Marx-Engels-Marxism*, p. 147.—Ed.

and the liberation of the oppressed peoples from the yoke of imperialism are impossible without the formation and the consolidation of a common revolutionary front.

(g) The formation of a common revolutionary front is impossible unless the proletariat of the oppressor nations renders direct and determined support to the liberation movement of the oppressed peoples against the imperialism of its "own country," for "no nation can be free if it oppresses other nations" (Marx).

(h) This support implies the advocacy, defence and carrying out of the slogan of the right of nations to secession, to independent existence as states.

(i) Unless this slogan is carried out, the union and collaboration of nations within a single world economic system, which is the material basis for the victory of socialism, cannot be brought about.

(j) This union can only be voluntary, and can arise only on the basis of mutual confidence and fraternal relations among nations.

Hence the two sides, the two tendencies in the national problem: the tendency towards political emancipation from the shackles of imperialism and towards the formation of an independent national state—a tendency which arose as a consequence of imperialist oppression and colonial exploitation; and the tendency towards an economic rapprochement among nations, which arose as a result of the formation of a world market and a world economic system.

"Developing capitalism," says Lenin, "knows of two historical tendencies in the national problem. First: the awakening of national life and of national movements, the struggle against all national oppression, the creation of national states. Second: the development and growing frequency of all sorts of intercourse among nations; the breaking down of national barriers; the creation of the inter-

national unity of capital, of economic life in general, of politics, of science, and so forth. Both tendencies are the universal law of capitalism. The first predominates at the beginning of the development of capitalism; the second characterises mature capitalism, heading towards its transformation into socialist society." (*Collected Works*, Russian edition, Vol. XVII, pp. 139-40.)

For imperialism these two tendencies represent irreconcilable contradictions; because imperialism cannot exist without exploiting colonies and forcibly retaining them within the framework of the "integral whole"; because imperialism can bring nations together only by means of annexations and colonial conquest, without which it is, generally speaking, inconceivable.

For communism, on the contrary, these tendencies are but two sides of a single cause—the cause of the emancipation of the oppressed peoples from the yoke of imperialism; because communism knows that the union of the nations in a single world economic system is possible only on the basis of mutual confidence and voluntary agreement, and that the road to the formation of a voluntary union of nations lies through the separation of the colonies from the "integral" imperialist "whole," through the transformation of the colonies into independent states.

Hence the necessity of a stubborn, continuous and determined struggle against the imperialist chauvinism of the "Socialists" of the ruling nations (Great Britain, France, America, Italy, Japan, etc.), who do not want to fight their imperialist governments, who do not want to support the struggle of the oppressed peoples in "their" colonies for emancipation from oppression, for succession.

Without such a struggle the education of the working class of the ruling nations in the spirit of true internationalism, in the spirit of rapprochement with the toiling masses of the dependent countries and colonies, in the spirit of real preparation for the proletarian revolution, is inconceivable. The revolution

would not have been victorious in Russia, and Kolchak and Denikin would not have been crushed, had not the Russian proletariat enjoyed the sympathy and support of the oppressed peoples of the former Russian empire. But to win the sympathy and support of these peoples it had first of all to break the fetters of Russian imperialism and free these peoples from the yoke of national oppression. Without this it would have been impossible to consolidate the Soviet power, to implant true internationalism and to create that remarkable organization for the collaboration of nations which is called the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics—the living prototype of the future union of nations in a single world economic system.

Hence the necessity of fighting against the national insularity, narrowness and aloofness of the Socialists in the oppressed countries, who do not want to rise above their national steeple and who do not understand the connection between the liberation movement in their various countries and the proletarian movement in the ruling countries.

Without such a struggle it is inconceivable that the proletariat of the oppressed nations can maintain an independent policy and its class solidarity with the proletariat of the ruling countries in the fight for the overthrow of the common enemy, in the fight for the overthrow of imperialism; without such a struggle, internationalism would be impossible.

This is how the toiling masses of the ruling nations and of the oppressed nations should be educated in the spirit of revolutionary internationalism.

Here is what Lenin says about this twofold task of communism in educating the workers in the spirit of internationalism:

“...Can such education...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 Socialist belonging to a great, oppressing, annexing nation, while advocating the amalgamation of nations in general, were to forget even for a 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 'amalgamating' with Galicia, Wilhelm II for 'amalgamating' with Belgium, etc.—such a Socialist 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 Socialist 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 is only one in a thousand. . . .

"On the other hand, a Socialist 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, insularity 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 Socialists of oppressing nations insisting on 'freedom of *secession*,' while Socialists of oppressed nations insist on 'freedom of *union*.' However, a little reflection will show that

there is not, nor can there be, any *other* road leading from the *given* situation to internationalism and the amalgamation of nations, any other road to this goal." (*Collected Works*, Russian edition, Vol. XIX, pp. 261-62.) \*

\* Cf. Lenin, *Marx-Engels-Marxism*, pp. 151-53.—Ed.

## VII. Strategy and Tactics

FROM this theme I take six questions: (1) strategy and tactics as the science of leadership in the class struggle of the proletariat; (2) stages of the revolution, and strategy; (3) the flow and ebb of the movement, and tactics; (4) strategic leadership; (5) tactical leadership; (6) reformism and revolutionism.

### I. STRATEGY AND TACTICS AS THE SCIENCE OF LEADERSHIP IN THE CLASS STRUGGLE OF THE PROLETARIAT

The period of the domination of the Second International was mainly a period of the formation and training of the proletarian armies amidst conditions of more or less peaceful development. This was the period when parliamentarism was the principal form of class struggle. Questions of great class conflicts, of preparing the proletariat for revolutionary battles, of the ways and means of achieving the dictatorship of the proletariat, did not seem to be on the order of the day at that time. The task was confined to utilizing all paths of legal development for the purpose of forming and training the proletarian armies, to utilizing parliamentarism in conformity with the conditions under which the status of the proletariat was (and as it seemed then, had to remain) that of an Opposition. It need hardly be proved that in such a period and with such a conception of the tasks of the proletariat there could be neither an integral strategy nor any elaborated tactics. There were fragmentary and detached ideas about tactics and strategy, but no tactics or strategy as such.

The mortal sin of the Second International was not that it pursued the tactics of utilizing the parliamentary forms of struggle, but that it overestimated the importance of these forms, that it considered them virtually the only forms; and that when the period of open revolutionary battles set in and the question of extra-parliamentary forms of struggle came to the fore the parties of the Second International turned their backs on these new tasks, refused to shoulder them.

Only in the subsequent period, in the period of direct action by the proletariat, in the period of proletarian revolution, when the question of overthrowing the bourgeoisie became a question of immediate action; when the question of the reserves of the proletariat (strategy) became one of the most burning questions; when all forms of struggle and of organization, parliamentary and extra-parliamentary (tactics) had fully manifested themselves and became well-defined—only in this period could an integral strategy and elaborated tactics for the struggle of the proletariat be drawn up. It was precisely in that period that Lenin brought out into the light of day the brilliant ideas of Marx and Engels on tactics and strategy that had been immured by the opportunists of the Second International. But Lenin did not confine himself to restoring certain tactical propositions of Marx and Engels. He developed them further and supplemented them with new ideas and propositions, combining them all into a system of rules and guiding principles for the leadership of the class struggle of the proletariat. Lenin's pamphlets, such as *What Is To Be Done?*; *Two Tactics*; *Imperialism*; *State and Revolution*; *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*; *"Left-Wing" Communism*, etc., will undoubtedly always be treasured as priceless contributions to the general store of Marxism, to its revolutionary arsenal. The strategy and tactics of Leninism constitute the science of leadership of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat.

## 2. STAGES OF THE REVOLUTION, AND STRATEGY

Strategy is the determination of the direction of the main blow of the proletariat at a given stage of the revolution, the elaboration of a corresponding plan for the disposition of the revolutionary forces (the main and secondary reserves), the fight to carry out this plan throughout the given stage of the revolution.

Our revolution already passed through two stages, and after the October Revolution it has entered a third stage. Our strategy changed accordingly.

*First stage.* 1903 to February 1917. Objective: to overthrow tsarism and completely wipe out the survivals of mediaevalism. The main force of the revolution: the proletariat. Immediate reserves: the peasantry. Direction of the main blow: the isolation of the liberal-monarchist bourgeoisie, which was striving to win over the peasantry and liquidate the revolution by *compromising* with tsarism. Plan for the disposition of forces: alliance of the working class with the peasantry.

"The proletariat must carry to completion the democratic revolution, by allying to itself the mass of the peasantry in order to crush by force the resistance of the autocracy and to paralyse the instability of the bourgeoisie." (Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. III, p. 110.)

*Second stage.* March 1917 to October 1917. Objective: to overthrow imperialism in Russia and to withdraw from the imperialist war. The main force of the revolution: the proletariat. Immediate reserves: the poor peasantry. The proletariat of neighbouring countries as probable reserves. The protracted war and the crisis of imperialism as the favourable factor. Direction of the main blow: isolation of the petty-bourgeois democrats (Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries), who were striving to win over the toiling masses of the peasantry and to terminate the revolution

by *compromising* with imperialism. Plan for the disposition of forces: alliance of the proletariat with the poor peasantry.

"The proletariat must accomplish the socialist revolution by allying to itself the mass of the semi-proletarian elements of the population in order to crush by force the resistance of the bourgeoisie and to paralyse the instability of the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie." (*Ibid.*, p. III.)

*Third stage.* Commenced after the October Revolution. Objective: to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat in one country, using it as a base for the overthrow of imperialism in all countries. The revolution is spreading beyond the confines of one country; the period of world revolution has commenced. The main forces of the revolution: the dictatorship of the proletariat in one country, the revolutionary movement of the proletariat in all countries. Main reserves: the semi-proletarian and small-peasant masses in the developed countries, the liberation movement in the colonies and dependent countries. Direction of the main blow: isolation of the petty-bourgeois democrats, isolation of the parties of the Second International, which constitute the main support of the policy of *compromise* with imperialism. Plan for the disposition of forces: alliance of the proletarian revolution with the liberation movement in the colonies and the dependent countries.

Strategy deals with the main forces of the revolution and their reserves. It changes with the passing of the revolution from one stage to another, but remains essentially unchanged throughout a given stage.

### 3. THE FLOW AND EBB OF THE MOVEMENT, AND TACTICS

Tactics are the determination of the line of conduct of the proletariat in the comparatively short period of the flow or ebb of the movement, of the rise or decline of the revolution, the fight to carry out this line by means of replacing old forms of struggle and organization by new ones, old slogans by new ones, by combining these forms, etc. While the object of strategy is to win the war against tsarism, let us say, or against the bourgeoisie, to carry the struggle against tsarism or against the bourgeoisie to its end, tactics concern themselves with less important objects, for they aim not at winning the war as a whole, but at winning a particular engagement, or a particular battle, at carrying through successfully a particular campaign or a particular action corresponding to the concrete circumstances in the given period of rise or decline of the revolution. Tactics are a part of strategy, subordinate to it and serving it.

Tactics change according to flow and ebb. While the strategic plan remained unchanged during the first stage of the revolution (1903 to February 1917) tactics changed several times during that period. In the period from 1903 to 1905 the Party pursued offensive tactics, for the tide of the revolution was rising, the movement was on the upgrade, and tactics had to proceed from this fact. Accordingly, the forms of struggle were revolutionary, corresponding to the requirements of the rising tide of the revolution. Local political strikes, political demonstrations, the general political strike, boycott of the Duma, insurrection, revolutionary fighting slogans—such were the successive forms of the struggle during that period. These changes in the forms of struggle were accompanied by corresponding changes in the forms of organization. Factory committees, revolutionary peasant committees, strike committees, Soviets of workers' deputies, a workers' party oper-

ating more or less openly—such were the forms of organization during that period.

In the period from 1907 to 1912 the Party was compelled to resort to tactics of retreat; for we then experienced a decline in the revolutionary movement, the ebb of the revolution, and tactics necessarily had to take this fact into consideration. The forms of struggle, as well as the forms of organization, changed accordingly: Instead of boycott of the Duma there was participation in the Duma; instead of open, direct revolutionary action outside the Duma, there were parliamentary speeches and work in the Duma; instead of general political strikes, there were partial economic strikes, or simply a lull in activities. Of course, the Party had to go underground during that period, while the revolutionary mass organizations were superseded by cultural, educational, cooperative, insurance and other legal organizations.

The same must be said of the second and third stages of the revolution, during which tactics changed dozens of times, whereas the strategical plans remained unchanged.

Tactics deal with the forms of struggle and the forms of organization of the proletariat, with their changes and combinations. During a given stage of the revolution tactics may change several times, depending on the flow and ebb, the rise and decline, of the revolution.

#### 4. STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

The reserves of the revolution can be:

*Direct:* (a) the peasantry and in general the intermediate strata of the population within the country; (b) the proletariat of the neighbouring countries; (c) the revolutionary movement in the colonies and dependent countries; (d) the gains and achievements of the dictatorship of the proletariat—part of which the proletariat may give up temporarily, while retaining su-



periority of forces, in order to buy off a powerful enemy and gain a respite; and

*Indirect:* (a) the contradictions and conflicts among the non-proletarian classes within the country, which can be utilized by the proletariat to weaken the enemy and to strengthen its own reserves; (b) contradictions, conflicts and wars (the imperialist war, for instance) among the bourgeois states hostile to the proletarian state, which can be utilized by the proletariat in its offensive or in manoeuvring in the event of a forced retreat.

There is no need to speak at length about the reserves of the first category, as their significance is understood by everyone. As for the reserves of the second category, whose significance is not always clear, it must be said that sometimes they are of prime importance for the progress of the revolution. One can hardly deny the enormous importance, for example, of the conflict between the petty-bourgeois democrats (Socialist-Revolutionaries) and the liberal-monarchist bourgeoisie (the Constitutional-Democrats) during and after the first revolution, which undoubtedly played its part in freeing the peasantry from the influence of the bourgeoisie. Still less reason is there for denying the colossal importance of the fact that the principal groups of imperialists were engaged in a deadly war during the period of the October Revolution, when the imperialists, engrossed in war among themselves, were unable to concentrate their forces against the young Soviet power, and the proletariat, for this very reason, was able to get down to the work of organizing its forces and consolidating its power, and to prepare the rout of Kolchak and Denikin. It must be presumed that now, when the contradictions among the imperialist groups are becoming more and more profound, and when a new war among them is becoming inevitable, reserves of this description will assume ever greater importance for the proletariat.

The task of strategic leadership is to make proper use of all

these reserves for the achievement of the main object of the revolution at the given stage of its development.

What does making proper use of reserves mean?

It means fulfilling certain necessary conditions, of which the following must be regarded as the principal ones:

*First:* the concentration of the main forces of the revolution at the enemy's most vulnerable spot at the decisive moment, when the revolution has already become ripe, when the offensive is going full-steam ahead, when insurrection is knocking at the door, and when bringing the reserves up to the vanguard is the decisive condition of success. The Party's strategy during the period from April to October 1917 well illustrates this manner of utilizing reserves. Undoubtedly, the enemy's most vulnerable spot at that time was the war. Undoubtedly, it was on this question, as the fundamental one, that the Party rallied the broadest masses of the population around the proletarian vanguard. The Party's strategy during that period was, while training the vanguard for street action by means of manifestations and demonstrations, to bring the reserves up to the vanguard through the medium of the Soviets in the rear and the soldiers' committees at the front. The outcome of the revolution has shown that the reserves were properly utilized.

Here is what Lenin, paraphrasing the well-known theses of Marx and Engels on insurrection, says about this condition of the strategic utilization of the forces of the revolution:

"Never *play* with insurrection, but when beginning it firmly realize that you must *go to the end*. You must 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. 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.' You must try to take the enemy by

surprise and seize the moment when his forces are scattered. 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 '*moral ascendancy*.'" (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXI, Russian edition, pp. 319-20.) \*

*Second*: the selection of the moment for the decisive blow, of the moment for starting the insurrection, so timed as to coincide with the moment when the crisis has reached its climax, when it is fully apparent that the vanguard is prepared to fight to the end, the reserves are prepared to support the vanguard, and maximum consternation reigns in the ranks of the enemy.

The decisive battle, says Lenin, may be deemed to have fully matured *when* "all the class forces hostile to us have become sufficiently entangled, are sufficiently at loggerheads with each other, have sufficiently weakened themselves in a struggle which is beyond their strength"; *when* "all the vacillating, wavering, unstable, intermediate elements—the petty bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeois democrats as distinct from the bourgeoisie—have sufficiently exposed themselves before the people, have sufficiently disgraced themselves through their practical bankruptcy"; *when* "among the proletariat a mass sentiment in favour of supporting the most determined, supremely bold, revolutionary action against the bourgeoisie has arisen and begun vigorously to grow. Then, indeed, revolution is ripe; then, indeed, if we have correctly gauged all the conditions indicated above... and if we have chosen the moment rightly, our victory is assured." (*Selected Works*, Vol. X, pp. 137-38.)

The manner in which the October insurrection was carried out may be taken as a model of such strategy.

Failure to observe this condition leads to a dangerous error called "loss of tempo," when the Party lags behind the movement or runs far ahead of it, courting the danger of failure.

\* Cf. Lenin and Stalin, *The Russian Revolution* (N. Y., 1938), p. 207.—Ed.

An example of such "loss of tempo," an example of how the moment of insurrection should not be chosen, may be seen in the attempt made by a section of our comrades to begin the insurrection by arresting the Democratic Conference in August, 1917, when hesitation was still rife in the Soviets, when the front was still at the crossroads, when the reserves had not yet been brought up to the vanguard.

*Third:* undeviating pursuit of the course adopted, no matter what difficulties and complications are encountered on the road towards the goal; this is necessary in order that the vanguard may not lose sight of the main goal of the struggle and that the masses may not stray from the road while marching towards that goal and striving to rally around the vanguard. Failure to observe this condition leads to a grave error, well known to sailors as "losing the course." As an example of this "loss of course" we may mention the erroneous conduct of our Party when, immediately after the Democratic Conference, it adopted a resolution to participate in the Pre-parliament. For the moment the Party, as it were, forgot that the Pre-parliament was an attempt of the bourgeoisie to switch the country from the path of the Soviets to the path of bourgeois parliamentarism, that the Party's participation in such a body might result in mixing up all the cards and confusing the workers and peasants, who were waging a revolutionary struggle under the slogan: "All power to the Soviets." This mistake was rectified by the withdrawal of the Bolsheviks from the Pre-parliament.

*Fourth:* manoeuvring the reserves with a view to effecting a proper retreat when the enemy is strong, when retreat is inevitable, when to accept battle forced upon us by the enemy is obviously disadvantageous, when, with the given alignment of forces, retreat becomes the only way to ward off a blow against the vanguard and to keep the reserves intact.

"The revolutionary parties," says Lenin, "must complete their education. They have learned to attack. Now they have to realize that this knowledge must be supplemented with the knowledge how to retreat properly. They have to realize—and the revolutionary class is taught to realize by its own bitter experience—that victory is impossible unless they have learned both how to attack and how to retreat properly." (*Selected Works*, Vol. X, pp. 65-66.)

The object of this strategy is to gain time, to demoralize the enemy, and to accumulate forces in order later to assume the offensive.

The signing of the Brest-Litovsk Peace may be taken as a model of this strategy, for it enabled the Party to gain time, to take advantage of the conflicts in the camp of the imperialists, to demoralize the forces of the enemy, to retain the support of the peasantry, and to accumulate forces in preparation for the offensive against Kolchak and Denikin.

"In concluding a separate peace," said Lenin at that time, "we free ourselves *as much as is possible at the present moment* from both hostile imperialist groups, we take advantage of their mutual enmity and warfare, which hamper concerted action on their part against us, and for a certain period have our hands free to advance and to consolidate the socialist revolution." (*Collected Works*, Russian edition, Vol. XXII, p. 198.)

"Now even the biggest fool," said Lenin, three years after the Brest-Litovsk Peace, "can see that the 'Brest Peace' was a concession that strengthened us and broke up the forces of international imperialism." (*Selected Works*, Vol. IX, p. 247.)

Such are the principal conditions which ensure correct strategic leadership.

## 5. TACTICAL LEADERSHIP

Tactical leadership is a part of strategic leadership, subordinated to the tasks and the requirements of the latter. The task of tactical leadership is to master all forms of struggle and organization of the proletariat and to ensure that they are used properly so as to achieve, with the given alignment of forces, the maximum results necessary to prepare for strategic success.

What does making proper use of the forms of struggle and organization of the proletariat mean?

It means fulfilling certain necessary conditions, of which the following must be regarded as the principal ones:

*First:* to put in the forefront precisely those forms of struggle and organization which are best suited to the conditions prevailing during the flow or ebb of the movement at a given moment, and which therefore can facilitate and ensure the bringing of the masses to the revolutionary positions, the bringing of the millions to the revolutionary front, and their disposition at the revolutionary front.

The point here is not that the vanguard shall realize the impossibility of preserving the old order of things and the inevitability of its overthrow. The point is that the masses, the millions, shall understand this inevitability and display their readiness to support the vanguard. But the masses can understand this only from their own experience. The task is to enable the vast masses to realize from their own experience the inevitability of the overthrow of the old regime, to promote such methods of struggle and forms of organization as will make it easier for the masses to learn from experience to recognize the correctness of the revolutionary slogans.

The vanguard would have become detached from the working class, and the working class would have lost contact with the masses, if the Party had not decided at the time to participate

in the Duma, if it had not decided to concentrate its forces on work in the Duma and to base the struggle on this work, in order to make it easier for the masses to realize from their own experience the futility of the Duma, the falsity of the promises of the Constitutional-Democrats, the impossibility of compromise with tsarism, and the inevitability of an alliance between the peasantry and the working class. Had the masses not gained their experience during the period of the Duma, the exposure of the Constitutional-Democrats and the hegemony of the proletariat would have been impossible.

The danger of the "Otzovist" \* tactics was that they threatened to detach the vanguard from the millions of its reserves.

The Party would have become detached from the working class, and the working class would have lost its influence among the broad masses of the peasants and soldiers, if the proletariat had followed the "Left" Communists, who called for insurrection in April 1917, when the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries had not yet exposed themselves as advocates of war and imperialism, when the masses had not yet learned from their own experience to recognize the falsity of the speeches of the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries about peace, land and freedom. Had the masses not gained this experience during the Kerensky period, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries would not have been isolated and the dictatorship of the proletariat would have been impossible. Therefore, the tactics of "patiently explaining" the mistakes of the petty-bourgeois parties and of open struggle in the Soviets were the only correct tactics.

The danger of the tactics of the "Left" Communists was that they threatened to transform the Party from the leader of the

\* From the Russian *Otozvat*—to recall; the name given to a group of Bolsheviks who advocated the recall of the Social-Democratic deputies from the Duma.—Ed.

proletarian revolution into a handful of inane conspirators with no ground to stand on.

"With the vanguard alone victory cannot be achieved," says Lenin. "To throw the vanguard alone into the decisive battle, before the whole class, before the broad masses have taken up a position either of direct support of the vanguard, or at least of benevolent neutrality towards it . . . would not merely be folly but a crime. And in order that actually the whole class, that actually the broad masses of the toilers and those oppressed by capital may take up such a position, propaganda and agitation alone are not sufficient. For this the masses must have their own political experience. Such is the fundamental law of all great revolutions, now confirmed with amazing force and vividness not only in Russia but also in Germany. It has been necessary, not only for the uncultured, often illiterate, masses of Russia, but also for the highly cultured, entirely literate masses of Germany, to realize from their own painful experience the absolute impotence and spinelessness, the absolute helplessness and servility before the bourgeoisie, the utter vileness of the government of the knights of the Second International, the absolute inevitability of a dictatorship of the extreme reactionaries (Kornilov in Russia, Kapp and Co. in Germany) as the only alternative to a dictatorship of the proletariat, in order to turn resolutely toward communism." (*Selected Works*, Vol. X, p. 136.)

*Second:* To locate at any given moment that particular link in the chain of processes which, if grasped, will enable us to hold the whole chain and to prepare the conditions for achieving strategic success.

The point here is to single out from all the problems confronting the Party that particular immediate problem, the answer to which constitutes the central point, and the solution of which will ensure the successful solution of the other immediate problems.

The importance of this thesis may be illustrated by two



examples, one of which may be taken from the remote past (the period of the formation of the Party) and the other from the immediate present (the period of the New Economic Policy).

In the period of the formation of the Party, when the innumerable circles and organizations had not yet been linked together, when amateurishness and the parochial outlook of the circles were corroding the Party from top to bottom, when ideological confusion was a characteristic feature of the internal life of the Party, the main link and the main task in the chain of links and in the chain of tasks then confronting the Party proved to be the establishment of an all-Russian illegal newspaper. Why? Because only by means of an all-Russian illegal newspaper was it possible under the conditions then prevailing to create a harmonious nucleus of a party, one capable of linking up the innumerable circles and organizations into a single organization, to prepare the conditions for ideological and tactical unity, and thus to lay the foundations for the formation of a real Party.

During the period of transition from war to economic construction, when industry was in the clutches of ruin and agriculture was suffering from a shortage of city manufactures, when the establishment of a bond between state industry and peasant economy became the fundamental condition for successful socialist construction—in that period it turned out that the main link in the chain of processes, the main task among a number of tasks, was to develop trade. Why? Because under the conditions of the New Economic Policy (N.E.P.) the bond between industry and peasant economy cannot be established except through trade; because under the conditions of N.E.P. production without sale is fatal for industry; because industry can be expanded only by the expansion of sales as a result of developing trade; because only after we have consolidated our position in the sphere of trade, only after we have secured control

of trade, only after we have secured this link can there be any hope of linking industry with the peasant market and successfully fulfilling the other immediate tasks, thus creating the conditions for building the foundations of socialist economy.

"It is not enough to be a revolutionary and an adherent of socialism or a communist in general," says Lenin. "One must be able at each particular moment to find the particular link in the chain which one must grasp with all one's might in order to hold the whole chain and to prepare firmly for the transition to the next link. . . . At the present time . . . this link is the revival of internal trade under proper state regulation (direction). Trade—that is the 'link' in the historical chain of events, in the transitional forms of our socialist construction in 1921-22, which we . . . must 'grasp with all our might.'" (*Selected Works*, Vol. IX, pp. 298-99.)

These are the principal conditions which ensure correct tactical leadership.

## 6. REFORMISM AND REVOLUTIONISM

What is the difference between revolutionary tactics and reformist tactics?

Some think that Leninism is opposed to reforms, opposed to compromises and to agreements in general. This is absolutely wrong. Bolsheviks know as well as anybody else that in a certain sense "every little helps," that under certain conditions reforms in general, and compromises and agreements in particular, are necessary and useful.

"To carry on a war for the overthrow of the international bourgeoisie," says Lenin, "a war which is a hundred times more difficult, protracted and complicated than the most stubborn of ordinary wars between states, and to refuse beforehand to manoeuvre, to utilize the conflict of interests (even though temporary) among one's enemies, to refuse to temporise and compromise with possible (even

though transient, unstable, vacillating and conditional) allies—is not this ridiculous in the extreme? Is it not the same as if in the difficult ascent of an unexplored and heretofore inaccessible mountain we were to renounce beforehand the idea that at times we might have to go in zigzags, sometimes retracing our steps, sometimes giving up the course once selected and trying various others?" (*Selected Works*, Vol. X, p. 111.)

Obviously, therefore, it is not a matter of reforms or of compromises and agreements, but of the use people make of reforms and compromises.

To a reformist, reforms are everything, while revolutionary work is something incidental, something just to talk about, mere eyewash. That is why, with reformist tactics under the bourgeois regime, reforms are inevitably transformed into an instrument for strengthening that regime, an instrument for disintegrating the revolution.

To a revolutionary, on the contrary, the main thing is revolutionary work and not reforms; to him reforms are by-products of the revolution. That is why, with revolutionary tactics under the bourgeois regime, reforms are naturally transformed into instruments for disintegrating this regime, into instruments for strengthening the revolution, into a base for the further development of the revolutionary movement.

The revolutionary will accept a reform in order to use it as an aid in combining legal work with illegal work, to intensify, under its cover, the illegal work for the revolutionary preparation of the masses for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie.

*This* is what making revolutionary use of reforms and agreements under the conditions of imperialism means.

The reformist, on the contrary, will accept reforms in order to renounce all illegal work, to thwart the preparation of the masses for the revolution and to rest in the shade of "bestowed" reforms.

*This* is what reformist tactics mean.

This is the position in regard to reforms and agreements under imperialism.

The situation changes somewhat, however, after the overthrow of imperialism, under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Under certain conditions, in a certain situation, the proletarian power may find itself constrained temporarily to leave the path of the revolutionary reconstruction of the existing order of things and to take the path of its gradual transformation, the "reformist path," as Lenin says in his well-known article "On the Importance of Gold," the path of flanking movements, of reforms and concessions to the non-proletarian classes—in order to disintegrate these classes, to give the revolution a respite, to recuperate and prepare the conditions for a new offensive. It cannot be denied that in a sense this is a reformist path. But it must be borne in mind that there is a fundamental distinction here, which consists in the fact that in this case the reform emanates from the proletarian power, it strengthens the proletarian power, it procures for it a necessary respite; its purpose is to disintegrate, not the revolution, but the non-proletarian classes.

Under such conditions a reform is thus transformed into its opposite.

The proletarian power is able to adopt such a policy because, and only because, the sweep of the revolution in the preceding period was broad enough and therefore provided a sufficiently wide expanse within which to retreat, substituting for offensive tactics the tactics of temporary retreat, the tactics of flanking movements.

Thus, while formerly, under the bourgeois regime, reforms were a by-product of revolution, now, under the dictatorship of the proletariat, the source of reforms is the revolutionary

gains of the proletariat, the reserves accumulated in the hands of the proletariat and consisting of these gains.

"Only Marxism," says Lenin, "has precisely and correctly defined the relation of reforms to revolution. However, Marx was able to see this relation only from one aspect, namely, under the conditions preceding the first to any extent permanent and lasting victory of the proletariat, if only in a single country. Under those conditions, the basis of the proper relation was: reforms are a by-product of the revolutionary class struggle of the proletariat. . . . After the victory of the proletariat, if only in a single country, something new enters into the relation between reforms and revolution. In principle, it is the same as before, but a change in form takes place, which Marx himself could not foresee, but which can be appreciated only on the basis of the philosophy and politics of Marxism. . . . After the victory (while still remaining a 'by-product' on the international scale) they [*i.e.*, reforms—J.S.] are, in addition, for the country in which victory has been achieved, a necessary and legitimate respite in those cases when, after the utmost exertion of effort, it becomes obvious that sufficient strength is lacking for the revolutionary accomplishment of this or that transition. Victory creates a 'reserve of strength' upon which one can sustain oneself even in a forced retreat, sustain oneself both materially and morally." (*Selected Works*, Vol. IX, pp. 301-02.)

## VIII. The Party

IN THE pre-revolutionary period, in the period of more or less peaceful development, when the parties of the Second International were the predominant force in the working-class movement and parliamentary forms of struggle were regarded as the principal forms, the Party neither had nor could have had that great and decisive importance which it acquired afterwards, under conditions of open revolutionary battle. Defending the Second International against attacks made upon it, Kautsky says that the parties of the Second International are instruments of peace and not of war, and that for this very reason they were powerless to take any important steps during the war, during the period of revolutionary action by the proletariat. That is quite true. But what does it mean? It means that the parties of the Second International are unfit for the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat, that they are not militant parties of the proletariat, leading the workers to power, but election machines adapted for parliamentary elections and parliamentary struggle. This, in fact, explains why, in the days when the opportunists of the Second International were in the ascendancy, it was not the Party but its parliamentary group that was the chief political organization of the proletariat. It is well known that the Party at that time was really an appendage and subsidiary of the parliamentary group. It goes without saying that under such circumstances and with such a Party at the helm there could be no question of preparing the proletariat for revolution.

But matters have changed radically with the dawn of the new period. The new period is one of open class collisions, of

revolutionary action by the proletariat, of proletarian revolution, a period when forces are being directly mustered for the overthrow of imperialism and the seizure of power by the proletariat. In this period the proletariat is confronted with new tasks, the tasks of reorganizing all Party work on new, revolutionary lines; of educating the workers in the spirit of revolutionary struggle for power; of preparing and moving up the reserves; of establishing an alliance with the proletarians of neighbouring countries; of establishing firm ties with the liberation movement in the colonies and dependent countries, etc., etc. To think that these new tasks can be performed by the old Social-Democratic parties, brought up as they were under the peaceful conditions of parliamentarism, is to doom oneself to hopeless despair and inevitable defeat. If, with such tasks to shoulder, the proletariat remained under the leadership of the old parties it would be completely unarmed. It goes without saying that the proletariat could not consent to such a state of affairs.

Hence the necessity for a new party, a militant party, a revolutionary party, one bold enough to lead the proletarians to the struggle for power, sufficiently experienced to find its bearings amidst the complex conditions of a revolutionary situation, and sufficiently flexible to steer clear of all submerged rocks on the way to its goal.

Without such a party it is useless even to think of overthrowing imperialism and achieving the dictatorship of the proletariat.

This new party is the party of Leninism.

What are the specific features of this new party?

## 1. THE PARTY AS THE VANGUARD OF THE WORKING CLASS

The Party must be, first of all, the *vanguard* of the working class. The Party must absorb all the best elements of the working class, their experience, their revolutionary spirit, their selfless devotion to the cause of the proletariat. But in order that it may really be the vanguard, the Party must be armed with revolutionary theory, with a knowledge of the laws of the movement, with a knowledge of the laws of revolution. Without this it will be incapable of directing the struggle of the proletariat, of leading the proletariat. The Party cannot be a real party if it limits itself to registering what the masses of the working class feel and think, if it follows in the tail of the spontaneous movement, if it is unable to overcome the inertness and the political indifference of the spontaneous movement, if it is unable to rise above the momentary interests of the proletariat, if it is unable to elevate the masses to the level of the class interests of the proletariat. The Party must stand at the head of the working class; it must see farther than the working class; it must lead the proletariat, and not follow in the tail of the spontaneous movement. The parties of the Second International, which preach "khvostism," are vehicles of bourgeois policy, which condemn the proletariat to the role of a tool in the hands of the bourgeoisie. Only a party which takes the standpoint of the vanguard of the proletariat and is able to elevate the masses to the level of the class interests of the proletariat—only such a party can divert the working class from the path of trade unionism and convert it into an independent political force. The Party is the political leader of the working class.

I have spoken of the difficulties of the struggle of the working class, of the complicated conditions of the struggle, of strategy



and tactics, of reserves and manoeuvring, of attack and retreat. These conditions are no less complicated, if not more so, than the conditions of war. Who can find his bearings in these conditions, who can give correct guidance to the proletarian millions? No army at war can dispense with an experienced General Staff if it does not want to court certain defeat. Is it not clear that the proletariat can still less dispense with such a General Staff if it does not want to give itself up to be devoured by its mortal enemies? But where is this General Staff? Only the revolutionary party of the proletariat can serve as this General Staff. The working class without a revolutionary party is an army without a General Staff. The Party is the General Staff of the proletariat.

But the Party cannot be only a *vanguard* detachment. It must at the same time be a detachment of the *class*, part of the class, closely bound up with it by all the fibres of its being. The distinction between the vanguard and the main body of the working class, between Party members and non-Party people, cannot disappear until classes disappear; it will exist as long as the ranks of the proletariat continue to be replenished with newcomers from other classes, as long as the working class as a whole lacks the possibility of rising to the level of the vanguard. But the Party would cease to be a party if this distinction were widened into a gap, if it shut itself up in its own shell and became divorced from the non-Party masses. The Party cannot lead the class if it is not connected with the non-Party masses, if there is no bond between the Party and the non-Party masses, if these masses do not accept its leadership, if the Party enjoys no moral and political credit among the masses. Recently two hundred thousand new members from the ranks of the workers were admitted into our Party. The remarkable thing about this is the fact that these people did not merely join the Party themselves, but were rather sent there

by the main body of non-Party workers, who took an active part in the work of accepting the new members, and without whose approval no new member was accepted. This fact proves that the broad masses of non-Party workers regard our Party as *their* Party, as a Party *near and dear* to them, in whose expansion and consolidation they are vitally interested and to whose leadership they voluntarily entrust their destiny. It need hardly be proved that without these intangible moral threads which connect the Party with the non-Party masses, the Party could not have become the decisive force of its class. The Party is an inseparable part of the working class.

"We are the Party of a class," says Lenin, "and therefore *almost the entire class* (and in times of war, in the period of civil war, the entire class) should act under the leadership of our Party, should adhere to our Party as closely as possible. But it would be Manilovism \* and 'khvostism' to think that at any time under capitalism the entire class, or almost the entire class, would be able to rise to the level of consciousness and activity of its vanguard, of its socialist party. No sensible socialist has ever yet doubted that under capitalism even the trade union organizations (which are more primitive and more comprehensible to the undeveloped strata) are unable to embrace the entire, or almost the entire, working class. To forget the distinction between the vanguard and the whole of the masses which gravitate towards it, to forget the constant duty of the vanguard to *raise* ever wider strata to this most advanced level, means merely to deceive oneself, to shut one's eyes to the immensity of our tasks, and to narrow down these tasks." (*Collected Works*, Russian edition, Vol. VI, pp. 205-06.)

\* Smug complacency. From the name of Manilov, a character in Gogol's *Dead Souls*.—Ed.

## 2. THE PARTY AS THE ORGANIZED DETACHMENT OF THE WORKING CLASS

The Party is not only the *vanguard* of the working class. If it desires really to direct the struggle of the class it must at the same time be the *organized* detachment of its class. The Party's tasks under the conditions of capitalism are extremely serious and varied. The Party must direct the struggle of the proletariat under the exceptionally difficult conditions of internal and external development; it must lead the proletariat in the offensive when the situation calls for an offensive; it must lead the proletariat in retreat when the situation calls for retreat in order to ward off the blows of a powerful enemy; it must imbue the millions of unorganized non-Party workers with the spirit of discipline and system in the struggle, with the spirit of organization and endurance. But the Party can fulfil these tasks only if it is itself the embodiment of discipline and organization, if it is itself the *organized* detachment of the proletariat. Without these conditions there can be no talk of the Party really leading the proletarian millions. The Party is the organized detachment of the working class.

The conception of the Party as an organized whole is embodied in Lenin's well-known formulation of the first paragraph of our Party Rules, in which the Party is regarded as the *sum* of its organizations, and the Party member as a member of one of the organizations of the Party. The Mensheviks, who objected to this formulation as early as 1903, proposed to substitute for it a "system" of self-enrolment in the Party, a "system" of conferring the "title" of Party member upon every "professor" and "high school student," upon every "sympathizer" and "striker" who supported the Party in one way or another, but who did not join and did not desire to join any one of the

Party organizations. It need hardly be proved that had this singular "system" become firmly entrenched in our Party it would inevitably have led to our Party becoming inundated with professors and high school students and to its degeneration into a loose, amorphous, disorganized "formation," lost in a sea of "sympathizers," that would have obliterated the dividing line between the Party and the class and would have upset the Party's task of elevating the unorganized masses to the level of the vanguard. Needless to say, under such an opportunist "system" our Party would have been unable to fulfil the role of the organizing nucleus of the working class in the course of our revolution.

"From Martov's point of view," says Lenin, "the boundary line of the Party remains entirely undefined, for 'every striker' can 'declare himself a member of the Party.' What advantage is there in this looseness? The widespread dissemination of an 'appellation.' Its harmfulness lies in that it introduces the *disorganizing* idea of confusing the class with the Party." (*Collected Works*, Russian edition, Vol. VI, p. 211.)

But the Party is not merely the *sum* of Party organizations. The Party at the same time represents a single *system* of these organizations, their formal amalgamation into a single whole, with higher and lower leading bodies, with subordination of the minority to the majority, with practical decisions binding on all members of the Party. Without these conditions the Party cannot be a single organized whole capable of exercising systematic and organized leadership in the struggle of the working class.

"Formerly," says Lenin, "our Party was not a formally organized whole, but only the sum of separate groups, and therefore no other relations except those of ideological influence were possible between these groups. Now we have become an organized Party, and this

implies the establishment of authority, the transformation of the power of ideas into the power of authority, the subordination of lower Party bodies to higher Party bodies." (*Ibid.*, p. 291.)

The principle of the minority submitting to the majority, the principle of directing Party work from a centre, not infrequently gives rise to attacks on the part of wavering elements, to accusations of "bureaucracy," "formalism," etc. It need hardly be proved that systematic work by the Party, as one whole, and the directing of the struggle of the working class would have been impossible if these principles had not been adhered to. Leninism in the organizational question means unswerving application of these principles. Lenin terms the fight against these principles "Russian nihilism" and "aristocratic anarchism," deserving only of being ridiculed and swept aside.

Here is what Lenin has to say about these wavering elements in his book *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*:

"This aristocratic anarchism is particularly characteristic of the Russian nihilist. He thinks of the Party organization as a monstrous 'factory'; he regards the subordination of the part to the whole and of the minority to the majority as 'serfdom'... division of labour under the direction of a centre evokes from him a tragi-comical outcry against people being transformed into 'wheels and cogs'... mention of the organizational rules of the Party calls forth a contemptuous grimace and the disdainful remark... that one can very well dispense with rules altogether.... It is clear, I think, that the outcries against the much talked of bureaucracy are simply a screen to conceal dissatisfaction with the personnel of these centres, a fig leaf.... You are a bureaucrat, because you were appointed by the Congress not in accordance with my wishes but in spite of them; you are a formalist, because you base yourself on the formal decisions of the Congress and not on my consent; you act in a crudely mechanical way, because your authority is the 'mechanical' majority of the Party Congress and you do not consult my desire to be co-

opted; you are an autocrat, because you do not want to deliver power into the hands of the old gang." \* (*Collected Works*, Russian edition, Vol. VI, pp. 310, 287.)

### 3. THE PARTY AS THE HIGHEST FORM OF CLASS ORGANIZATION OF THE PROLETARIAT

The Party is the organized detachment of the working class. But the Party is not the only organization of the working class. The proletariat has also a number of other organizations, without which it cannot properly wage the struggle against capital: trade unions, cooperative societies, factory and works organizations, parliamentary groups, non-Party women's associations, the press, cultural and educational organizations, youth leagues, revolutionary fighting organizations (in times of open revolutionary action), Soviets of deputies as the form of state organization (if the proletariat is in power), etc. The overwhelming majority of these organizations are non-Party, and only a certain part of them adhere directly to the Party, or represent its offshoots. All these organizations, under certain conditions, are absolutely necessary for the working class, for without them it would be impossible to consolidate the class positions of the proletariat in the diverse spheres of struggle; for without them it would be impossible to steel the proletariat as the force whose mission it is to replace the bourgeois order by the socialist order. But how can single leadership be exercised with such an abundance of organizations? What guarantee is there that this multiplicity of organizations will not lead to divergency in leadership? It might be argued that each of these organizations

\* The "old gang" here referred to is that of Axelrod, Martov, Potresov and others, who would not submit to the decisions of the Second Congress and who accused Lenin of being a "bureaucrat."—/S.

carries on its work in its own special field, and that therefore these organizations cannot hinder one another. This, of course, is true. But it is also true that all these organizations should work in one direction, for they serve *one* class, the class of the proletarians. The question then arises: who is to determine the line, the general direction, along which the work of all these organizations is to be conducted? Where is that central organization which is not only able, because it has the necessary experience, to work out such a general line, but, in addition, is in a position, because it has sufficient prestige for that, to induce all these organizations to carry out this line, so as to attain unity of leadership and to preclude the possibility of working at cross purposes?

This organization is the Party of the proletariat.

The Party possesses all the necessary qualifications for this because, in the first place, it is the rallying centre of the finest elements in the working class, who have direct connections with the non-Party organizations of the proletariat and very frequently lead them; because, secondly, the Party, as the rallying centre for the finest members of the working class, is the best school for training leaders of the working class, capable of directing every form of organization of their class; because, thirdly, the Party, as the best school for training leaders of the working class, is by reason of its experience and prestige the only organization capable of centralising the leadership of the struggle of the proletariat, thus transforming each and every non-Party organization of the working class into an auxiliary body and transmission belt linking the Party with the class. The Party is the highest form of class organization of the proletariat.

This does not mean, of course, that non-Party organizations, trade unions, cooperative societies, etc., should be officially sub-

ordinated to the Party leadership. It only means that the members of the Party who belong to these organizations and are doubtlessly influential in them, should do all they can to persuade these non-Party organizations to draw nearer to the Party of the proletariat in their work and to accept voluntarily its political guidance.

That is why Lenin says that "the Party is the *highest* form of class association of the proletarians," whose political leadership must extend to every other form of organization of the proletariat. (*Selected Works*, Vol. X, p. 91.)

That is why the opportunist theory of the "independence" and "neutrality" of the non-Party organizations, which breeds *independent* members of parliament and journalists *isolated* from the Party, *narrow-minded* trade unionists and cooperative society officials *grown smug and philistine*, is wholly incompatible with the theory and practice of Leninism.

#### 4. THE PARTY AS THE INSTRUMENT OF THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

The Party is the highest form of organization of the proletariat. The Party is the principal guiding force within the class of the proletarians and among the organizations of that class. But it does not by any means follow from this that the Party can be regarded as an end in itself, as a self-sufficient force. The Party is not only the highest form of class association of the proletarians; it is at the same time an *instrument* in the hands of the proletariat *for* achieving the dictatorship where that has not yet been achieved and *for* consolidating and expanding the dictatorship where it has already been achieved. The Party could not have risen so high in importance and could not have overshadowed all other forms of organization



of the proletariat, if the latter were not confronted with the problem of power, if the conditions of imperialism, the inevitability of wars, and the existence of a crisis did not demand the concentration of all the forces of the proletariat at one point, the gathering of all the threads of the revolutionary movement into one spot in order to overthrow the bourgeoisie and to achieve the dictatorship of the proletariat. The proletariat needs the Party first of all as its General Staff, which it must have for the successful seizure of power. It need hardly be proved that without a Party capable of rallying around itself the mass organizations of the proletariat, and of centralizing the leadership of the entire movement during the progress of the struggle, the proletariat in Russia could never have established its revolutionary dictatorship.

But the proletariat needs the Party not only to achieve the dictatorship; it needs it still more to maintain the dictatorship, to consolidate and expand it in order to achieve the complete victory of socialism.

"Certainly almost everyone now realizes," says Lenin, "that the Bolsheviks could not have maintained themselves in power for two and a half months, let alone for two and a half years, without the strictest and truly iron discipline in our Party, and without the fullest and most unreserved support rendered it by the whole mass of the working class, that is, by all thinking, honest, self-sacrificing and influential elements in it who are capable of leading or of attracting the backward strata." (*Selected Works*, Vol. X, p. 60.)

Now, what does it mean to "maintain" and "expand" the dictatorship? It means imbuing the millions of proletarians with the spirit of discipline and organization; it means creating among the proletarian masses a cementing force and a bulwark against the corrosive influences of the petty-bourgeois elements and petty-bourgeois habits; it means enhancing the

organizing work of the proletarians in re-educating and re-moulding the petty-bourgeois strata; it means helping the masses of the proletarians to educate themselves as a force capable of abolishing classes and of preparing the conditions for the organization of socialist production. But it is impossible to accomplish all this without a Party which is strong by reason of its solidarity and discipline.

"The dictatorship of the proletariat," says Lenin, "is a persistent struggle—sanguinary and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, educational and administrative—against the forces and traditions of the old society. The force of habit of millions and tens of millions is a most terrible force. Without an iron party tempered in the struggle, without a party enjoying the confidence of all that is honest in the given class, without a party capable of watching and influencing the mood of the masses, it is impossible to conduct such a struggle successfully." (*Selected Works*, Vol. X, p. 84.)

The proletariat needs the Party for the purpose of achieving and maintaining the dictatorship. The Party is an instrument of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

But from this it follows that when classes disappear and the dictatorship of the proletariat withers away, the Party will also wither away.

##### 5. THE PARTY AS THE EMBODIMENT OF UNITY OF WILL, INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE EXISTENCE OF FACTIONS

The achievement and maintenance of the dictatorship of the proletariat is impossible without a party which is strong by reason of its solidarity and iron discipline. But iron discipline in the Party is inconceivable without unity of will, without

complete and absolute unity of action on the part of all members of the Party. This does not mean, of course, that the possibility of contests of opinion within the Party is thereby precluded. On the contrary, iron discipline does not preclude but presupposes criticism and contest of opinion within the Party. Least of all does it mean that discipline must be "blind." On the contrary, iron discipline does not preclude but presupposes conscious and voluntary submission, for only conscious discipline can be truly iron discipline. But after a contest of opinion has been closed, after criticism has been exhausted and a decision has been arrived at, unity of will and unity of action of all Party members are the necessary condition without which neither Party unity nor iron discipline in the Party is conceivable.

"In the present epoch of acute civil war," says Lenin, "a Communist Party will be able to perform its duty only if it is organised in the most centralised manner, only if iron discipline bordering on military discipline prevails in it, and if its Party centre is a powerful and authoritative organ, wielding wide powers and enjoying the universal confidence of the members of the Party." (*Selected Works*, Vol. X, p. 204.)

This is the position in regard to discipline in the Party in the period of struggle preceding the achievement of the dictatorship.

The same, but to an even greater degree, must be said about discipline in the Party after the dictatorship has been achieved.

"Whoever in the least," says Lenin, "weakens the iron discipline of the Party of the proletariat (especially during its dictatorship) actually aids the bourgeoisie against the proletariat." (*Selected Works*, Vol. X, p. 84.)

But from this it follows that the existence of factions is incompatible either with the Party's unity or with its iron discipline.

It need hardly be proved that the existence of factions leads to the existence of a number of centres, and the existence of a number of centres connotes the absence of one common centre in the Party, the breaking up of the unity of will, the weakening and disintegration of discipline, the weakening and disintegration of the dictatorship. Of course, the parties of the Second International, which are fighting against the dictatorship of the proletariat and have no desire to lead the proletarians to power, 'can afford such liberalism as freedom of factions, for they have no need at all for iron discipline. But the parties of the Communist International, which base their activities on the task of achieving and consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat, cannot afford to be "liberal" or to permit freedom of factions. The Party represents unity of will, which precludes all factionalism and division of authority in the Party.

Hence Lenin's warning about the "danger of factionalism from the point of view of Party unity and of effecting the unity of will of the vanguard of the proletariat as the fundamental condition for the success of the dictatorship of the proletariat," which is embodied in the special resolution of the Tenth Congress of our Party "On Party Unity." (Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. IX, p. 132.)

Hence Lenin's demand for the "complete elimination of all factionalism" and the "immediate dissolution of all groups, without exception, that had been formed on the basis of various platforms," on pain of "unconditional and immediate expulsion from the Party." (*Ibid.*, pp. 133-34.)

## 6. THE PARTY IS STRENGTHENED BY PURGING ITSELF OF OPPORTUNIST ELEMENTS

The source of factionalism in the Party is its opportunist elements. The proletariat is not an isolated class. It is constantly replenished by the influx of peasants, petty bourgeois and intellectuals who have become proletarianized by the development of capitalism. At the same time the upper stratum of the proletariat, principally trade union leaders and labour members of parliament who are fed by the bourgeoisie out of the superprofits extracted from the colonies, is undergoing a process of decay.

"This stratum of bourgeoisified workers, of the 'labour aristocracy,'" says Lenin, "who are quite philistine in their mode of life, in the size of their earnings, and in their outlook, serves as the principal prop of the Second International, and, in our days, the principal social (not military) *prop of the bourgeoisie*. They are the real *agents of the bourgeoisie in the labour movement*, the labour lieutenants of the capitalist class, real channels of reformism and chauvinism." (*Selected Works*, Vol. V, p. 12.)

In one way or another, all these petty-bourgeois groups penetrate into the Party and introduce into it the spirit of hesitancy and opportunism, the spirit of demoralization and uncertainty. It is they, principally, that constitute the source of factionalism and disintegration, the source of disorganization and disruption of the Party from within. To fight imperialism with such "allies" in one's rear means to expose oneself to the danger of being caught between two fires, from the front and from the rear. Therefore, ruthless struggle against such elements, their expulsion from the Party, is a prerequisite for the successful struggle against imperialism.

The theory of "overcoming" opportunist elements by ideologi-

cal struggle within the Party, the theory of "outliving" these elements within the confines of a single Party, is a rotten and dangerous theory, which threatens to condemn the Party to paralysis and chronic infirmity, threatens to make the Party a prey to opportunism, threatens to leave the proletariat without a revolutionary party, threatens to deprive the proletariat of its main weapon in the fight against imperialism. Our Party could not have emerged onto the high road, it could not have seized power and organized the dictatorship of the proletariat, it could not have emerged victorious from the Civil War, if it had had within its ranks people like Martov and Dan, Potresov and Axelrod. Our Party succeeded in creating internal unity and unexampled cohesion in its ranks primarily because it was able in good time to purge itself of the opportunist pollution, because it was able to rid its ranks of the Liquidators, the Mensheviks. Proletarian parties develop and become strong by purging themselves of opportunists and reformists, social-imperialists and social-chauvinists, social-patriots and social-pacifists. The Party becomes consolidated by purging itself of opportunist elements.

"With reformists, Mensheviks, in our ranks," says Lenin, "it is *impossible* to achieve victory in the proletarian revolution, it is *impossible* to retain it. That is obvious in principle, and it has been strikingly confirmed by the experience both of Russia and Hungary. ... In Russia difficult situations have arisen *many times*, when the Soviet regime would *most certainly* have been overthrown had Mensheviks, reformists and petty-bourgeois democrats remained in our Party. ... In Italy ... as is generally admitted, decisive battles between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie for the possession of state power are imminent. At such a moment it is not only absolutely necessary to remove the Mensheviks, reformists, the Turatists from the Party, but it may even be useful to remove excellent Communists who are liable to waver, and who reveal a tendency to waver towards 'unity' with the reformists, to remove them from all

responsible posts.... On the eve of a revolution, and at a moment when a most fierce struggle is being waged for its victory, the slightest wavering in the ranks of the Party may *wreck everything*, frustrate the revolution, wrest the power from the hands of the proletariat; for this power is not yet consolidated, the attack upon it is still very strong. The retirement of wavering leaders at such a time does not weaken but strengthens the Party, the working-class movement and the revolution." (*Selected Works*, Vol. X, pp. 256-58.)

## IX. Style in Work

I AM not referring to literary style. What I have in mind is style in work, that which is specific and peculiar in the practice of Leninism which creates the special type of Leninist worker. Leninism is a school of theory and practice which trains a special type of Party and state worker, creates a special Leninist style in work. What are the characteristic features of this style? What are its peculiarities?

It has two specific features: (a) the Russian revolutionary sweep and (b) American efficiency. The style of Leninism is a combination of these two specific features in Party and state work.

The Russian revolutionary sweep is an antidote to inertness, routine, conservatism, mental stagnation and slavish submission to ancestral traditions. The Russian revolutionary sweep is the life-giving force which stimulates thought, impels things forward, breaks the past and opens up perspectives. Without it no progress is possible. But there is every chance of it degenerating in practice into empty "revolutionary" Manilovism if it is not combined with American efficiency in work. Examples of this degeneration are only too numerous. Who does not know the disease of "revolutionary" improvisation and "revolutionary" plan concocting, which springs from the belief in the power of decrees to arrange everything and reform everything? A Russian writer, I. Ehrenbourg, in his story *The Percommman* (*The Perfect Communist Man*), has portrayed the type of "Bolshevik" afflicted with this "disease," who set himself the task of finding a formula for the ideally perfect man and...became "submerged" in this "work." Some gross exaggerations are spun



into this story, but it certainly gives a correct likeness of the disease. But no one, I think, has so ruthlessly and bitterly ridiculed those afflicted with this disease as Lenin has done. Lenin stigmatised this morbid belief in improvisation and in concocting decrees as "Communist vanity."

"Communist vanity," says Lenin, "is characteristic of a man who, while still a member of the Communist Party, not having yet been combed out of it, imagines that he can solve all his problems by issuing Communist decrees." (*Selected Works*, Vol. IX, p. 273.)

Lenin usually contrasted *hollow "revolutionary" phrase-mongering* with plain everyday work, thus emphasising that "revolutionary" improvisation is repugnant to the spirit and the letter of true Leninism.

"Fewer pompous phrases, more plain *everyday work*," says Lenin. "Less political fireworks and more attention to the simplest but vital . . . facts of Communist construction. . . ." (*Selected Works*, Vol. IX, pp. 440, 430.)

American efficiency, on the other hand, is an antidote to "revolutionary" Manilovism and fantastic improvisation. American efficiency is that indomitable force which neither knows nor recognizes obstacles; which with its business-like perseverance brushes aside all obstacles; which continues at a task once started until it is finished, even if it is a minor task; and without which serious constructive work is inconceivable. But American efficiency has every chance of degenerating into narrow and unprincipled commercialism if not combined with the Russian revolutionary sweep. Who has not heard of that disease of narrow practicality and unprincipled commercialism which has not infrequently caused certain "Bolsheviks" to degenerate and to abandon the cause of the revolution? We find a reflection of this peculiar disease in a story by B. Pilnyak, entitled *The*

*Barren Year*, which depicts types of Russian "Bolsheviks" of strong will and practical determination, who "function" very "energetically," but without vision, without knowing "what it is all about," and who, therefore, stray from the path of revolutionary work. No one has been more incisive in his ridicule of this disease of narrow commercialism than Lenin. He branded it as "narrow-minded practicality" and "brainless commercialism." He usually contrasted it with vital revolutionary work and the necessity of having a revolutionary perspective in all our daily activities, thus emphasizing that this unprincipled commercialism is as repugnant to true Leninism as "revolutionary" improvisation.

The combination of the Russian revolutionary sweep with American efficiency is the essence of Leninism in Party and state work.

This combination alone produces the finished type of Leninist worker, the style of Leninism in work.

# "Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder

A POPULAR ESSAY

IN MARXIAN STRATEGY AND TACTICS

*by V. I. Lenin*

NEW TRANSLATION



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DEDICATION

*I dedicate this pamphlet to the Right Honourable Mr. Lloyd George as a token of my gratitude for his speech of March 18, 1920, which was almost Marxist and, in any case, exceedingly useful for Communists and Bolsheviks throughout the world.*

AUTHOR

April 27, 1920

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

### I. IN WHAT SENSE CAN WE SPEAK OF THE INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION?

DURING the first months after the conquest of political power by the proletariat in Russia (October 25 [November 7], 1917) it might have appeared that the tremendous difference between backward Russia and the advanced countries of Western Europe would cause the proletarian revolution in these latter countries to have very little resemblance to ours. Now we already have very considerable international experience which very definitely shows that some of the fundamental features of our revolution have a significance which is not local, not peculiarly national, not Russian only, but international. I speak here of international significance not in the broad sense of the term: not a few, but all the fundamental and many of the secondary features of our revolution are of international significance in regard to the influence it has upon all countries. No, taking it in the narrowest sense, *i.e.*, understanding international significance to mean the international validity or the historical inevitability of a repetition on an international scale of what has taken place here, it must be admitted that some of the fundamental features of our revolution do possess such a significance.

Of course, it would be a great mistake to exaggerate this truth and to apply it to more than a few of the fundamental features of our revolution. It would also be a mistake to lose sight of the fact that after the victory of the proletarian revolution in at least one of the advanced countries things in all probability will take a sharp turn, *viz.*, Russia will soon after cease to be the model country and once again become a backward country (in the “Soviet” and in the Socialist sense).

But at the present moment of history the situation is precisely such that the Russian model reveals to *all* countries something, and something very essential, of their near and inevitable future. The advanced workers in every land have long understood this; most often they have not so much understood it as grasped it, sensed it, by revolutionary class instinct. Herein lies the international "significance" (in the narrow sense of the term) of the Soviet power, as well as of the fundamentals of Bolshevik theory and tactics. This the "revolutionary" leaders of the Second International, such as Kautsky in Germany and Otto Bauer and Friedrich Adler in Austria, failed to understand, and they thereby proved to be reactionaries and advocates of the worst kind of opportunism and social treachery. Incidentally, the anonymous pamphlet entitled *The World Revolution (Weltrevolution)*\* which appeared in 1919 in Vienna (*Sozialistische Bücherei*, Heft 11; Ignaz Brand) very clearly reveals their whole process of thought and their whole circle of ideas, or, rather, the full depth of their stupidity, pedantry, baseness and betrayal of working class interests—and all this under the guise of "defending" the idea of "world revolution."

But we shall have to discuss this pamphlet in greater detail some other time. Here we shall note only one more point: long, long ago, Kautsky, when he was still a Marxist and not a renegade, approaching the question as a historian, foresaw the possibility of a situation arising in which the revolutionary spirit of the Russian proletariat would serve as a model for Western Europe. This was in 1902, when Kautsky wrote an article entitled "The Slavs and Revolution" for the revolutionary *Iskra*. In this article he wrote as follows:

"At the present time (in contrast to 1848) it would seem that not only have the Slavs entered the ranks of the revolutionary nations, but that the centre of revolutionary thought and revolutionary action is shifting more and more to the Slavs. The revolutionary centre is shifting from the West to the East. In the first half of the nineteenth century it was located in France, at times in England. In 1848 Germany too joined the ranks of revolutionary nations.... The new century opens with events which induce us to think that we are approaching a further shift of the revolutionary centre, namely, to Russia.... Russia, which has borrowed so much revolutionary initiative from the West, is now perhaps herself ready to serve as a source of revolutionary energy for the West.

\* Written by Otto Bauer.—Ed.



The Russian revolutionary movement that is now flaring up will perhaps prove to be a most potent means of exorcising that spirit of flabby philistinism and temperate politics which is beginning to spread in our midst and may cause the thirst for battle and the passionate devotion to our great ideals to flare up in bright flames again. Russia has long ceased to be merely a bulwark of reaction and absolutism in Western Europe. It might be said that the very opposite is the case. Western Europe is becoming a bulwark of reaction and absolutism in Russia. . . . The Russian revolutionaries might perhaps have settled with the tsar long ago had they not been compelled at the same time to fight his ally, European capital. Let us hope that this time they will succeed in settling with both enemies, and that the new 'Holy Alliance' will collapse more quickly than its predecessors. But however the present struggle in Russia may end, the blood and felicity of the martyrs, whom, unfortunately, she is producing in too great numbers, will not have been sacrificed in vain. They will nourish the shoots of social revolution throughout the civilised world and cause them to grow more luxuriantly and rapidly. In 1848 the Slavs were a black frost which blighted the flowers of the people's spring. Perhaps they are now destined to be the storm that will break the ice of reaction and will irresistibly bring a new and happy spring for the nations." (Karl Kautsky, "The Slavs and Revolution," *Iskra*, Russian Social-Democratic revolutionary newspaper, No. 18, March 10, 1902.)

How well Karl Kautsky wrote eighteen years ago!

## II. ONE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL CONDITIONS FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE BOLSHEVIKS

CERTAINLY nearly everyone now realises that the Bolsheviks could not have maintained themselves in power for two and a half months, let alone for two and a half years, unless the strictest, truly iron discipline 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 attracting 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 continuously, 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 centralisation and the strictest discipline of the proletariat constitute one of the fundamental conditions for victory over the bourgeoisie.

This is often discussed. But far from enough thought is given to what it means, and to the conditions that make it possible. Would it not be better if greetings to the Soviet power and the Bolsheviks were *more frequently* accompanied 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 the most difficult conditions the iron discipline that is 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, to keep in close touch with, and to a certain extent, if you like, to merge itself with the broadest masses of the toilers—primarily with the proletarian, *but also with the non-proletarian* toiling masses. Thirdly, by the correctness of the political leadership exercised by this vanguard and of its political strategy and tactics, provided that the broadest masses have been convinced *by their own experiences* that they are correct. Without these condi-

tions, discipline in a revolutionary party that is really capable of being a 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 centralisation 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 the experience of all countries 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 thinkers in Russia, under the oppression of an unprecedented, savage and reactionary tsardom, eagerly sought for the correct revolutionary theory and followed each and every "last word" in Europe and America in this sphere with astonishing diligence and thoroughness. Russia achieved Marxism, the only correct revolutionary theory, virtually through *suffering*, by a half century of unprecedented torment and sacrifice, of unprecedented revolutionary heroism, incredible energy, devoted searching, study, testing in practice, 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 a wealth of international connections and excellent information about world forms and theories of the revolutionary movement such as no other country in the world possessed.

On the other hand, having arisen on this granite theoretical basis, Bolshevism passed through fifteen years (1903-17) of practical history which in wealth of experience has had no equal any-

where 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 involving *all* classes of modern society, and moreover, a struggle which, owing to the backwardness of the country and the heaviness of the yoke of tsardom, matured with exceptional rapidity and assimilated most eagerly and successfully the appropriate “last word” of American and European political experience.

### III. THE PRINCIPAL STAGES IN THE HISTORY OF BOLSHEVISM

THE years of preparation for the revolution (1903-05): The approach of a great storm is everywhere felt. All classes are in a state of ferment and preparation. Abroad, the emigrant press discusses the theoretical side of *all* the fundamental problems of the revolution. The representatives of the three main classes, of the three principal political trends, *viz.*, the liberal-bourgeois, the petty-bourgeois democratic (concealed under the labels “social-democratic” and “social-revolutionary”), and the proletarian-revolutionary trends, anticipate and prepare for the approaching open class struggle by a most bitter fight on questions of programme and tactics. All the questions around which the masses waged an armed struggle in 1905-07 and 1917-20 can (and should) be traced in their embryonic form in the press of that time. Between these three main trends, there were, of course, a host of intermediate, transitional, indefinite forms. Or, more correctly, in the struggle of the press, parties, factions and groups, there were crystallised those political ideological trends which are actually class trends; the classes forged for themselves the requisite political ideological weapons for the impending battles.

The years of revolution (1905-07): All classes come out into the open. All views on programme and tactics are tested by the action of the masses. There is a strike movement unprecedented any-

where in the world for its extent and acuteness. The economic strike grows into a political strike, and the latter into insurrection. The relations between the proletariat, as the leader, and the vacillating, unstable peasantry, as the led, are tested in practice. The Soviet form of organisation is born in the spontaneous development of the struggle. The controversies of that time concerning the significance of Soviets anticipate the great struggle of 1917-20. The alternation of parliamentary and non-parliamentary forms of struggle, of tactics of boycotting parliamentarism and tactics of participating in parliamentarism, of legal and illegal methods of struggle, and likewise their interrelations and connections are all distinguished by an astonishing richness of content. As far as teaching the fundamentals of political science—to masses, leaders, classes and parties—was concerned, one month of this period was equivalent to a whole year of “peaceful,” “constitutional” development. Without the “dress rehearsal” of 1905, the victory of the October Revolution of 1917 would have been impossible.

The years of reaction (1907-10): Tsardom is victorious. All the revolutionary and opposition parties have been defeated. Depression, demoralisation, splits, discord, renegacy, pornography instead of politics. There is an increased drift toward philosophic idealism; mysticism serves as a cloak for counter-revolutionary sentiments. But at the same time, it is precisely the great defeat that gives the revolutionary parties and the revolutionary class a real and very valuable lesson, a lesson in historical dialectics, a lesson in the understanding of the political struggle and in the skill and art of waging it. One gets to know one's friends in times of misfortune. Defeated armies learn well.

Victorious tsardom is compelled to accelerate the destruction of the remnants of the pre-bourgeois, patriarchal mode of life in Russia. Russia's development along bourgeois lines progresses with remarkable speed. Extra-class and above-class illusions, illusions concerning the possibility of avoiding capitalism, are scattered to the winds. The class struggle manifests itself in quite a new and moreover distinct form.

The revolutionary parties must complete their education. They have learned to attack. Now they have to realise that this knowledge must be supplemented by the knowledge of how to retreat properly. They have to realise—and the revolutionary class is taught to realise by its own bitter experience—that victory is impossible

unless they have learned both how to attack and how to retreat properly. Of all the defeated opposition and revolutionary parties the Bolsheviks effected the most orderly retreat, with the least loss to their "army," with its nucleus best preserved, with the least (in respect to profundity and irremediability) splits, with the least demoralisation, and in the best condition to resume the work on the broadest scale and in the most correct and energetic manner. The Bolsheviks achieved this only because they ruthlessly exposed and expelled the revolutionary phrasemongers, who refused to understand that one had to retreat, that one had to know how to retreat, and that one had absolutely to learn how to work legally in the most reactionary parliaments, in the most reactionary trade unions, cooperative societies, mutual insurance and similar organisations.

The years of revival (1910-14): At first the revival was incredibly slow; then, after the Lena events of 1912,\* it became somewhat more rapid. Overcoming unprecedented difficulties, the Bolsheviks pushed aside the Mensheviks, whose role as bourgeois agents in the working class movement was perfectly understood by the whole bourgeoisie after 1905, and who were therefore supported in a thousand ways by the whole bourgeoisie against the Bolsheviks. But the latter would never have succeeded in doing this had they not pursued the correct tactics of combining illegal work with the obligatory utilisation of "legal possibilities." The Bolsheviks won all the labour seats in the arch-reactionary Duma.

The first imperialist World War (1914-17): Legal parliamentarism, with an extremely reactionary "parliament," renders very useful service to the party of the revolutionary proletariat, the Bolsheviks. The Bolshevik deputies are exiled to Siberia. In the emigrant press all shades of social-imperialism, social-chauvinism, social-patriotism, inconsistent and consistent internationalism, pacifism, and the revolutionary repudiation of pacifist illusions find full expression. The learned fools and the old women of the Second International, who had arrogantly and contemptuously turned up their noses at the abundance of "factions" in the Russian Socialist movement and at the sharp struggle they waged among themselves, were unable—when the war deprived them of their

\* The shooting of the striking miners in the Lena goldfields (Siberia) in April 1912, which gave rise to a wave of protest strikes all over Russia and stimulated the revival of the revolutionary movement.—*Ed.*

boasted "legality" in *all* the advanced countries—to organise anything even approximating such a free (illegal) interchange of views and such a free (illegal) working out of correct views as the Russian revolutionaries did in Switzerland and in a number of other countries. It was precisely because of this that both the straightforward social-patriots and the "Kautskians" of all countries proved to be the worst traitors to the proletariat. And one of the principal reasons why Bolshevism was able to attain victory in 1917-20 was that ever since the end of 1914 it had been ruthlessly exposing the baseness, loathsomeness and vileness of social-chauvinism and "Kautskyism" (to which Longuetism in France, the views of the leaders of the Independent Labour Party and the Fabians in England, of Turati in Italy, etc., correspond), while the masses later became more and more convinced by their own experience of the correctness of the Bolshevik views.

The second revolution in Russia (February to October 1917): The incredible decrepitude and obsolescence of tsardom created (with the aid of the blows and burdens of a most agonising war) an incredibly destructive power which was now directed against tsardom. Within a few days Russia was transformed into a democratic bourgeois republic, more free—under war conditions—than any other country in the world. The leaders of the opposition and revolutionary parties began to set up a government, just as is done in the most "strictly parliamentary" republics; and the fact that a man had been a leader of an opposition party in parliament, even in a most reactionary parliament, *assisted* him in his subsequent role in the revolution.

In a few weeks the Mensheviks and "Socialist-Revolutionaries" thoroughly imbibed all the methods and manners, arguments and sophistries of the European heroes of the Second International, of the ministerialists and other opportunist scum. All that we now read about the Scheidemanns and Noskes, about Kautsky and Hilferding, Renner and Austerlitz, Otto Bauer and Fritz Adler, Turati and Longuet, about the Fabians and the leaders of the Independent Labour Party in England—all this seems to us, and is in reality, a dreary repetition, a re-chant of an old familiar refrain. We have seen all this already in the case of the Mensheviks. History played a joke and made the opportunists of a backward country anticipate the opportunists of a number of advanced countries.

Yes, the heroes of the Second International have suffered bankruptcy and have disgraced themselves over the question of the significance and role of the Soviets and the Soviet power; yes, the leaders of the three very important parties which have now left the Second International (namely, the German Independent Social-Democratic Party, the French Longuetists and the British Independent Labour Party) have disgraced and entangled themselves over this question in a very "striking" way; yes, they have all turned out to be slaves to the prejudices of petty-bourgeois democracy (quite in the spirit of the petty bourgeois of 1848 who called themselves "Social-Democrats")—but we have *already* seen *all this* in the case of the Mensheviks. History played a joke: in Russia, in 1905, the Soviets were born; from February to October 1917 they were falsified by the Mensheviks, who went bankrupt because of their inability to understand the role and significance of the Soviets; and now the idea of the Soviet power has arisen *all over the world* and is spreading among the proletariat of all countries with extraordinary rapidity. And the old heroes of the Second International are also going bankrupt *everywhere*, because they, like our Mensheviks, are unable to understand the role and significance of the Soviets. Experience has proved that on some very important questions of the proletarian revolution, *all* countries will inevitably have to go through what Russia has gone through.

Contrary to the views that are now often to be met with in Europe and America, the Bolsheviks began their victorious struggle against the parliamentary (actually) bourgeois republic and against the Mensheviks very cautiously, and the preparations they made for it were by no means simple. We did *not* call for the overthrow of the government at the beginning of the period mentioned, but explained that it was impossible to overthrow it *until* the composition and the sentiments of the Soviets had changed. We did not proclaim a boycott of the bourgeois parliament, the Constituent Assembly, but declared—and since the April (1917) Conference of our Party declared officially in the name of the Party—that a bourgeois republic with a Constituent Assembly is better than a bourgeois republic without a Constituent Assembly, but that a "workers' and peasants'" republic, a Soviet republic, is better than any bourgeois-democratic, parliamentary republic. Without such careful, thorough, circumspect and prolonged preparations we could



not have obtained victory in October 1917, nor have maintained that victory.

#### IV. IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST WHAT ENEMIES WITHIN THE WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT DID BOLSHEVISM GROW, GAIN STRENGTH AND BECOME STEELED?

FIRSTLY and principally, in the struggle against opportunism, which in 1914 definitely grew into social-chauvinism and definitely sided with the bourgeoisie against the proletariat. Naturally, this was the principal enemy of Bolshevism in the working class movement. This enemy remains the principal enemy on an international scale. This enemy has claimed, and still claims, most of the attention of the Bolsheviks. This side of the activities of the Bolsheviks is now also fairly well-known abroad.

Something different, however, must be said of the other enemy of Bolshevism within the working class movement. It is not yet sufficiently known abroad that Bolshevism grew, took shape, and became steeled in long years of struggle against *petty-bourgeois revolutionariness*, which smacks of, or borrows something from, anarchism, and which in all essentials falls short of the conditions and requirements of a sustained proletarian class struggle. For Marxists it is well established theoretically—and the experience of all European revolutions and revolutionary movements has fully confirmed it—that the small proprietor, the small master (a social type that is represented in many European countries on a wide, mass scale), who under capitalism suffers constant oppression and, very often, an incredibly acute and rapid deterioration in his conditions of life, ending in ruin, easily goes to revolutionary extremes, but is incapable of perseverance, organisation, discipline and steadfastness. The petty bourgeois, “driven to frenzy” by the horrors of capitalism, is a social phenomenon which, like anarchism, is characteristic of all capitalist countries. The instability of such revolutionariness, its barrenness, its liability to become swiftly transformed into submission, apathy, fantasy, and even a “frenzied” infatuation with one or another bourgeois “fad”—all this is a matter of common knowledge. But a theoretical, abstract

recognition of these truths does not at all free revolutionary parties from old mistakes, which always crop up at unexpected moments, in a somewhat new form, in hitherto unknown vestments or surroundings, in peculiar—more or less peculiar—circumstances.

Anarchism was often a sort of punishment for the opportunist sins of the working class movement. The two monstrosities were mutually complementary. And the fact that in Russia, notwithstanding that its population is more petty-bourgeois than that of the European countries, anarchism exercised a comparatively insignificant influence during both revolutions (1905 and 1917) and during the preparatory periods of these revolutions, this must undoubtedly be partly placed to the credit of Bolshevism, which has always waged a most ruthless and uncompromising struggle against opportunism. I say "partly," for a still more important role in weakening the influence of anarchism in Russia was played by the fact that it had had the opportunity in the past (in the 'seventies) to develop with exceptional luxuriance and to display its utter fallaciousness and unfitness as a guiding theory for the revolutionary class.

At its inception in 1903, Bolshevism adopted the tradition of ruthless struggle against petty-bourgeois, semi-anarchist (or diletante-anarchist) revolutionariness, the tradition which has always existed in revolutionary Social-Democracy, and which struck particularly deep root in Russia in 1900-03, when the foundations for a mass party of the revolutionary proletariat were being laid. Bolshevism took over and continued the struggle against the party which more than any other expressed the tendencies of petty-bourgeois revolutionariness, namely, the "Socialist-Revolutionary" Party, and waged this struggle on three main points. First, this party, rejecting Marxism, stubbornly refused (or, rather, was unable) to understand the need for a strictly objective estimate of the class forces and their interrelations before undertaking any political action. Secondly, this party considered itself to be particularly "revolutionary," or "Left," on account of its recognition of individual terrorism, assassination—which we Marxists emphatically rejected. Of course, we rejected individual terrorism only on the grounds of expediency, whereas people who were capable of condemning "on principle" the terrorism of the Great French Revolution, or in general, the terrorism employed by a victorious revolutionary party which is besieged by the bourgeoisie of the whole

world, were ridiculed and laughed to scorn even by Plekhanov in 1900-03, when he was a Marxist and a revolutionary. Thirdly, the "Socialist-Revolutionaries" thought it very "Left" to sneer at the comparatively insignificant opportunist sins of German Social-Democracy, while they themselves imitated the extreme opportunists of that party, for example, on the agrarian question, or on the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

History, by the way, has now confirmed on a large, world-wide and historical scale the opinion we have always advocated, *viz.*, that *revolutionary* German Social-Democracy (note that as far back as 1900-03 Plekhanov demanded the expulsion of Bernstein from the party, while the Bolsheviks, always continuing this tradition, in 1913 exposed the utter baseness, vileness and treachery of Legien) *came closest* to being the party which the revolutionary proletariat required to enable it to attain victory. Now, in 1920, after all the ignominious failures and crises of the period of the war and the early post-war years, it can be plainly seen that of all the Western parties German revolutionary Social-Democracy produced the best leaders and recovered, recuperated, and gained new strength more rapidly than the others. This may be seen in the case both of the party of the Spartacists and the Left proletarian wing of the "Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany," which is waging an incessant struggle against the opportunism and spinelessness of the Kautskys, Hilferdings, Ledebours and Crispiens. If we now cast a general glance over a fully completed historical period, namely, from the Paris Commune to the first Socialist Soviet Republic, we shall find that the attitude of Marxism to anarchism in general assumes most definite and incontestable shape. In the final analysis, Marxism proved to be correct, and, although the anarchists rightly pointed to the opportunist character of the views on the state that prevailed within the majority of the Socialist parties, it must be stated, firstly, that this opportunism was based upon the distortion and even deliberate suppression of Marx's views on the state (in my book, *The State and Revolution*, I called attention to the fact that for thirty-six years, from 1875 to 1911, Bebel kept secret a letter by Engels which very vividly, sharply, directly and clearly exposed the opportunism of the stock Social-Democratic conceptions of the state); and, secondly, that the rectification of these opportunist views, the recognition of the Soviet power and of its superiority over

bourgeois parliamentary democracy, had all emerged most rapidly and broadly precisely from the most Marxian trends in the European and American Socialist parties.

On two occasions the struggle that Bolshevism waged against "Left" deviations within its own party assumed particularly large proportions: in 1908, on the question of whether or not to participate in a most reactionary "parliament" and in the legal workers' societies which were restricted by most reactionary laws; and again in 1918 (the Brest-Litovsk Peace), on the question whether one or another "compromise" was admissible.

In 1908 the "Left" Bolsheviks were expelled from our Party for stubbornly refusing to understand the necessity of participating in a most reactionary "parliament." The "Lefts"—among whom there were many splendid revolutionaries who subsequently bore (and still bear) the title of member of the Communist Party with honour—based themselves particularly on the successful experiment of the boycott in 1905. When in August 1905 the tsar announced the convocation of an advisory "parliament," the Bolsheviks—unlike all the opposition parties and the Mensheviks—proclaimed a boycott of it, and it was actually swept away by the revolution of October 1905. At that time the boycott proved correct, not because non-participation in reactionary parliaments is correct in general, but because we correctly estimated the objective situation that was leading to the rapid transformation of the mass strikes into a political strike, then into a revolutionary strike, and then into insurrection. Moreover, the struggle at that time centred around the question whether to leave the convocation of the first representative assembly to the tsar, or to attempt to wrest its convocation from the hands of the old government. When there was, and could be, no certainty that an analogous objective situation existed, and likewise no certainty of a similar trend and rate of development, the boycott ceased to be correct.

The Bolshevik boycott of "parliament" in 1905 enriched the revolutionary proletariat with extremely valuable political experience and showed that when combining legal and illegal, parliamentary and non-parliamentary forms of struggle, it is sometimes useful, and even essential, to be able to reject parliamentary forms. But it is a very great mistake to apply this experience blindly, imitatively and uncritically to *other* conditions and to *other* circumstances. The boycott of the "Duma" by the Bolsheviks in 1906

was a mistake, although small and easily remediable.\* The boycott of the Duma in 1907, 1908 and subsequent years was a serious mistake and one difficult to remedy, because, on the one hand, a very rapid rise of the revolutionary tide and its transformation into an insurrection could not be expected, and, on the other hand, the whole historical situation of the renovated bourgeois monarchy called for the combining of legal and illegal work. Now, looking back on this historical period, which is now quite closed and the connection of which with the subsequent periods has become fully manifest, it becomes very clear that the Bolsheviks *could not have* preserved (let alone strengthened, developed and reinforced) the sound core of the revolutionary party of the proletariat in 1908-14 had they not strenuously fought for the viewpoint that it is *obligatory* to combine legal and illegal forms of struggle, that it is *obligatory* to participate even in the most reactionary parliament and in a number of other institutions that were restricted by reactionary laws (benefit societies, etc.).

In 1918 things did not go to the lengths of a split. The "Left" Communists at that time only formed a separate group or "faction" within our Party, and that not for long. In the same year, 1918, the most prominent representatives of "Left" Communism, for example, Comrades Radek and Bukharin, openly admitted their mistake. It had seemed to them that the Brest-Litovsk Peace was a compromise with the imperialists that was inadmissible on principle and harmful to the party of the revolutionary proletariat. It really was a compromise with the imperialists, but it was a compromise which, under the given circumstances, was *obligatory*.

Today, when I hear our tactics in signing the Brest-Litovsk Treaty assailed by the "Socialist-Revolutionaries," for instance, or when I hear the remark made by Comrade Lansbury in conversation with me—"Our British trade union leaders say that if it was permissible for the Bolsheviks to compromise, it is permissible for them to compromise too," I usually reply by first of all giving a simple and "popular" example:

Imagine that your automobile is held up by armed bandits. You hand them over your money, passport, revolver and automobile.

\* What applies to individuals is applicable—with necessary modifications—to politics and to parties. It is not the man who makes no mistakes who is wise. There are no such men, nor can there be. He is wise who makes not very serious mistakes and who knows how to rectify them easily and quickly.

You are spared the pleasant company of the bandits. That is unquestionably a compromise. "*Do ut des*" ("I give" you money, firearms, automobile, "so that you give" me the opportunity to depart in peace). But it would be difficult to find a sane man who would declare such a compromise to be "inadmissible on principle," or who would proclaim the compromiser an accomplice of the bandits (even though the bandits might use the automobile and the firearms for further robberies). Our compromise with the bandits of German imperialism was a compromise of such a kind.

But when the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries in Russia, the Scheidemannites (and to a large extent the Kautskians) in Germany, Otto Bauer and Friedrich Adler (not to speak of Messrs. Renner and Co.) in Austria, the Renaudels and Longuet and Co. in France, the Fabians, the "Independents" and the "Labourites" in England, in 1914-18 and in 1918-20 entered into *compromises* with the bandits of their own, and sometimes of the "Allied," bourgeoisie *against* the revolutionary proletariat of their own country, all these gentlemen did act then as *accomplices in banditry*.

The conclusion to be drawn is clear: to reject compromises "on principle," to reject the admissibility of compromises in general, no matter of what kind, is childishness which it is difficult even to take seriously. A political leader who desires to be useful to the revolutionary proletariat must know how to single out *concrete* cases of such compromises as are inadmissible, as express opportunism and *treachery*, and direct all the force of his criticism, the edge of his merciless exposure and relentless war, against *those concrete* compromises, and not allow the highly experienced "practical" Socialists and parliamentary Jesuits to dodge and wriggle out of responsibility by resorting to arguments about "compromises in general." It is precisely in this way that Messieurs the "leaders" of the British trade unions, as well as of the Fabian Society and the "Independent" Labour Party, dodge responsibility *for the treachery they have perpetrated*, for the commission of a compromise that *really* expresses the worst kind of opportunism, treachery and betrayal.

There are compromises and compromises. One must be able to analyse the situation and the concrete conditions of each compromise, or of each variety of compromise. One must learn to

distinguish between a man who gave the bandits money and firearms in order to lessen the evil committed by them and to facilitate the task of getting them captured and shot, and a man who gives bandits money and firearms in order to share in the loot. In politics this is not always as easy as in this childish simple example. But anyone who set out to invent a recipe for the workers that would provide ready-made solutions for all cases in life, or who promised that the politics of the revolutionary proletariat would never encounter difficult or intricate situations, would be simply a charlatan.

So as to leave no room for misinterpretation, I shall attempt to outline, although very briefly, a few fundamental rules for analysing concrete compromises.

The party which concluded a compromise with the German imperialists by signing the Brest-Litovsk Treaty had been working out its internationalism in action ever since the end of 1914. It was not afraid to call for the defeat of the tsarist monarchy and to condemn "defence of the fatherland" in a war between two imperialist robbers. The parliamentary members of this party took the road of exile to Siberia rather than the road leading to Ministerial portfolios in a bourgeois government. The revolution, having overthrown tsardom and established a democratic republic, put this party to a new and tremendous test; this party did not enter into any agreements with "its" imperialists, but worked for their overthrow and did overthrow them. Having taken over political power, this party did not leave a vestige either of landlord or capitalist property. Having published and repudiated the secret treaties of the imperialists, this party proposed peace to *all* nations, and yielded to the violence of the Brest-Litovsk robbers only after the Anglo-French imperialists had frustrated peace, and after the Bolsheviks had done everything humanly possible to hasten the revolution in Germany and other countries. The complete correctness of such a compromise, entered into by such a party under such circumstances, becomes every day clearer and more evident to everyone.

The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries in Russia (like the leaders of the Second International all over the world in 1914-20) began with treachery by directly or indirectly justifying the "defence of the fatherland," that is, the defence of *their own* predatory bourgeoisie. They continue their treachery by entering

into a coalition with the bourgeoisie of *their own* country and fighting together with *their own* bourgeoisie against the revolutionary proletariat of their own country. Their bloc, first with Kerensky and the Cadets,\* and then with Kolchak and Denikin, in Russia, like the block of their confrères abroad with the bourgeoisie of *their* respective countries, was desertion to the side of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat. From beginning to end *their* compromise with the bandits of imperialism lay in the fact that they made themselves *accomplices* in imperialist banditry.

## V. "LEFT-WING" COMMUNISM IN GERMANY: LEADERS —PARTY—CLASS—MASSES

THE German Communists, of whom we must now speak, do not call themselves "Lefts," but, if I am not mistaken, the "opposition on principle." But that they exhibit all the symptoms of the "infantile disorder of Leftism" will be seen from what follows.

A pamphlet written from the standpoint of this opposition and entitled *The Split in the Communist Party of Germany (The Spartacus League)*, published by "the local group in Frankfurt-on-Main," sets forth the substance of the views of this opposition very concisely, clearly, briefly and in bold relief. A few quotations will suffice to acquaint the reader with the substance of their views:

"The Communist Party is the party of the most determined class struggle. . . ."

"... Politically, this transition period [between capitalism and socialism] is the period of the proletarian dictatorship. . . ."

"The question arises: Who should be the vehicle of this dictatorship: *the Communist Party or the proletarian class?* . . . Should we, *on principle*, strive for the dictatorship of the Communist Party, or for the dictatorship of the proletarian class?!!" (All italics in the original.)

Further, the author of the pamphlet accuses the "C.C."\*\* of the Communist Party of Germany of seeking to reach a *coalition* with the *Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany*, of raising "*the question of recognising in principle all political means*" of

\* Abbreviated name of the Constitutional Democratic Party, the party of the Liberal bourgeoisie.—Ed.

\*\* Central Committee.—Ed.



struggle, including parliamentarism, only in order to conceal its real and main striving for a coalition with the Independents. And the pamphlet goes on to say:

"The opposition has chosen another road. It is of the opinion that the question of the rule of the Communist Party and of the dictatorship of the Party is only a question of tactics. At all events, the rule of the Communist Party is the final form of all party rule. *On principle*, we must strive for the dictatorship of the proletarian class. And all the measures of the Party, its organisation, its methods of struggle, its strategy and tactics should be adapted to this end. Accordingly, one must emphatically reject all compromise with other parties, all reversion to parliamentary forms of struggle, which have become historically and politically obsolete, all policy of manoeuvring and compromise. . . . Specifically proletarian methods of revolutionary struggle must be strongly emphasised. In order to embrace the widest proletarian circles and strata which are to take part in the revolutionary struggle under the leadership of the Communist Party, new forms of organisation must be created upon the broadest foundations and within the widest limits. The rallying point for all revolutionary elements is the *Workers' Union*, which is based on factory organisations. It should embrace all the workers who followed the slogan: 'Leave the trade unions!' Here the fighting proletariat is being lined up in the broadest battle ranks. Recognition of the class struggle, the Soviet system and the dictatorship is sufficient for admittance. All further political training of the fighting masses and political orientation in the struggle is the task of the Communist Party, which is outside the Workers' Union. . . .

"Consequently, two Communist Parties are now arrayed one against the other.

"*One is a party of leaders*, which strives to organise the revolutionary struggle and to direct it *from above*, resorting to compromises and parliamentarism in order to create a situation which would enable it to enter a coalition government in whose hands the dictatorship would rest.

"*The other is a mass party*, which expects an upsurge of the revolutionary struggle *from below*, knowing and employing only one method in the struggle, a method which clearly leads to the goal, and rejecting all parliamentary and opportunist methods; this one method is the ruthless *overthrow of the bourgeoisie* for the purpose of establishing the proletarian class dictatorship and for the accomplishment of Socialism. . . .

"... There, the dictatorship of leaders; here, the dictatorship of the masses! That is our slogan."

Such are the most essential positions that characterise the views of the opposition in the German Communist Party.

Any Bolshevik who has consciously participated in or has closely observed the development of Bolshevism since 1903 will at once say after reading these arguments, "What old and familiar rubbish! What 'Left' childishness!"

But let us examine these arguments a little more closely.

The mere presentation of the question, namely, "dictatorship of the party *or* dictatorship of the class, dictatorship (party) of the leaders *or* dictatorship (party) of the masses?" testifies to the most incredible and hopeless confusion of mind. These people are striving to *invent* something quite out of the ordinary, and in their effort to be clever make themselves ridiculous. Everyone knows that the masses are divided into classes; that masses can be contrasted to classes only by contrasting the vast majority in general, without dividing it according to status in the social system of production, to categories occupying a definite status in the social system of production; that usually, and in the majority of cases, at least in modern civilised countries, classes are led by political parties; that political parties, as a general rule, are directed by more or less stable groups composed of the most authoritative, influential and experienced members, who are elected to the most responsible positions and are called leaders. All this is elementary. All this is simple and clear. Why, instead of this, do we need all this rigmarole, this new Volapük? \* On the one hand, these people apparently got confused when they found themselves in a serious situation, when the rapid alternation of the legal and illegal status of the party disturbs the usual, normal and simple relations between leaders, parties and classes. In Germany, as in other European countries, people are too accustomed to legality, to the free and regular election of "leaders" at regular party congresses, to the convenient method of testing the class composition of parties by parliamentary elections, meetings, the press, the sentiments of the trade unions and other organisations, etc. When, instead of this customary procedure, it became necessary, in consequence of the extremely rapid advance of the revolution and the development of the civil war, to change quickly from legality to illegality, to combine the two, and to adopt "inconvenient" and

\* A universal language invented in 1879 by Johan M. Schleyer of Constance, Baden.—Ed.

"undemocratic" methods of singling out, or forming, or preserving "groups of leaders"—these people lost their heads and began to invent unnatural nonsense. Probably some members of the Communist Party of Holland—who have had the misfortune to be born in a small country with the traditions and conditions of a particularly privileged and stable legality, and who had never even witnessed the change from legality to illegality—became confused, lost their heads, and helped to create these absurd inventions.

On the other hand, we observe here just a thoughtless and incoherent use of the now "fashionable" terms "masses" and "leaders." These people have heard and committed to memory a great deal about attacks on "leaders," about their being contrasted to "the masses"; but they were unable to think and make it clear in their own minds what it was all about.

The divergence between "leaders" and "masses" manifested itself very clearly and sharply in all countries at the end of and after the imperialist war. The principal reason for this phenomenon was explained many times by Marx and Engels between the years 1852 and 1892 by the example of England. England's monopoly position caused a semi-petty-bourgeois, opportunist "labour aristocracy" to be singled out from the "masses." The leaders of this labour aristocracy constantly deserted to the bourgeoisie and were directly or indirectly in its pay. Marx earned the honour of incurring the hatred of these scoundrels by openly branding them as traitors. Modern (twentieth century) imperialism created a privileged, monopoly position for a few advanced countries, and this gave rise everywhere in the Second International to a certain type of traitor, opportunist, social-chauvinist leaders, who look after the interests of their own craft, their own stratum of the labour aristocracy. This caused the isolation of the opportunist parties from the "masses," that is, from the broadest strata of the toilers, from their majority, from the lowest-paid workers. The victory of the revolutionary proletariat is impossible unless this evil is combated, unless the opportunist, social-traitor leaders are exposed, discredited and expelled. And that was the policy pursued by the Third International.

To go so far in this connection as to draw a contrast in general between the dictatorship of the masses and the dictatorship of the leaders is ridiculously absurd and stupid. What is particularly funny is that actually, in place of the old leaders, who hold the

common human views on ordinary matters, *new leaders* are put forth (under cover of the slogan: "Down with the leaders!") who talk supernatural stuff and nonsense. Such are Lauffenberg, Wolfheim, Horner, Karl Schröder, Friedrich Wendel and Karl Erler \* in Germany.

The attempts of the last-named to make the question "more profound" and to proclaim that political parties are generally unnecessary and "bourgeois" are such Herculean pillars of absurdity that one can only shrug one's shoulders. In truth, a small mistake can always be turned into a preposterous one, if it is persisted in, if profound reasons are given for it and if it is carried to its "logical conclusion."

What the opposition *has come to* is the repudiation of the party principle and of party discipline. And this is tantamount to completely disarming the proletariat *for the benefit of the bourgeoisie*. It is tantamount to that petty-bourgeois diffuseness, instability, incapacity for sustained effort, unity and organised action, which, if indulged in, must inevitably destroy every proletarian revolutionary movement. From the standpoint of Communism, the repudiation of the party principle means leaping from the eve of the collapse of capitalism (in Germany), not to the lowest or intermediate, but to the highest phase of Communism. We in Russia (in the third year since the overthrow of the bourgeoisie) are taking the first steps in the transition from capitalism to Socialism, or the lowest stage of Communism. Classes have remained, and will remain everywhere *for years after* the conquest of power by the proletariat. Perhaps in England, where there is no peasantry (but where there are small proprietors!), the period will be shorter. The abolition of classes not only means driving out the landlords and capitalists—that we accomplished with comparative ease—it

\* Karl Erler, "The Dissolution of the Party," *Kommunistische Arbeiterzeitung*, Hamburg, February 7, 1920, No. 32: "The working class cannot destroy the bourgeois state without destroying bourgeois democracy, and it cannot destroy bourgeois democracy without destroying parties."

The most muddle-headed of the syndicalists and anarchists of the Latin countries may enjoy "satisfaction" from the fact that serious Germans, who evidently consider themselves Marxists (K. Erler and K. Horner very seriously maintain in their articles in the above-mentioned paper that they are serious Marxists, but talk incredible nonsense in a most ridiculous manner and reveal their lack of understanding of the ABC of Marxism), go to the length of making utterly inept statements. The mere acceptance of Marxism does not save one from mistakes. We Russians know this particularly well, because in our country Marxism was very often the "fashion."

also means *abolishing the small commodity producers*, and they *cannot be driven out*, or crushed; we must live *in harmony* with them; they can (and must) be remoulded and re-educated only by very prolonged, slow, cautious organisational work. They encircle the proletariat on every side with a petty-bourgeois atmosphere, which permeates and corrupts the proletariat and causes constant relapses among the proletariat into petty-bourgeois spinelessness, disunity, individualism, and alternate moods of exaltation and dejection. The strictest centralisation and discipline are required within the political party of the proletariat in order to counteract this, in order that the *organisational* role of the proletariat (and that is its *principal* role) may be exercised correctly, successfully, victoriously. The dictatorship of the proletariat is a persistent struggle—sanguinary and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, educational and administrative—against the forces and traditions of the old society. The force of habit of millions and tens of millions is a most terrible force. Without an iron party tempered in the struggle, without a party enjoying the confidence of all the honest elements in the given class, without a party capable of watching and influencing the mood of the masses, it is impossible to conduct such a struggle successfully. It is a thousand times easier to vanquish the centralised big bourgeoisie than to “vanquish” millions and millions of small proprietors, while they, by their ordinary, everyday, imperceptible, elusive, demoralising activity achieve the *very* results which the bourgeoisie need and which *restore* the bourgeoisie. Whoever weakens ever so little the iron discipline of the party of the proletariat (especially during the time of its dictatorship) actually aids the bourgeoisie against the proletariat.

Side by side with the question of leaders—party—class—masses, one must discuss the question of the “reactionary” trade unions. But first I shall take the liberty of making a few concluding remarks based on the experience of our Party. There *have always been* attacks upon the “dictatorship of leaders” in our Party. The first time I heard such attacks, I recall, was in 1895, when, officially, no party yet existed, but when a central group began to be formed in St. Petersburg which was to undertake the leadership of the district groups. At the Ninth Congress of our Party (April 1920) there was a small opposition which also spoke against the “dictatorship of leaders,” against the “oligarchy” and so on. There

is therefore nothing surprising, nothing new, nothing terrible in the "infantile disorder" of "Left-wing Communism" among the Germans. It is not a dangerous illness and after it the constitution becomes even stronger. On the other hand, in our case the rapid alternation of legal and illegal work, which made it particularly necessary to "conceal," to cloak in particular secrecy precisely the General Staff, precisely the leaders, sometimes gave rise to extremely dangerous phenomena. The worst was in 1912, when an agent-provocateur by the name of Malinovsky got on to the Bolshevik Central Committee. He betrayed scores and scores of the best and most loyal comrades, caused them to be sent to penal servitude and hastened the death of many of them. He did not cause even more harm than he did just because we had established a proper combination of legal and illegal work. As a member of the Central Committee of the Party and a deputy in the Duma, Malinovsky was forced, in order to gain our confidence, to aid us in establishing legal daily papers, which even under tsardom were able to wage a struggle against the opportunism of the Mensheviks and to preach the fundamentals of Bolshevism in a suitably disguised form. While Malinovsky with one hand sent scores and scores of the best Bolsheviks to penal servitude and to death, he was obliged with the other to assist in the education of scores and scores of thousands of new Bolsheviks through the medium of the legal press. It will not harm those German (as well as British, American, French and Italian) comrades who are confronted with the task of learning how to carry on revolutionary work inside the reactionary trade unions to give serious thought to this fact.\*

In many countries, including the most advanced, the bourgeoisie is undoubtedly now sending agents-provocateurs into the Communist Parties, and will continue to do so. One method of combating this peril is by a skilful combination of legal and illegal work.

## VI. SHOULD REVOLUTIONARIES WORK IN REACTIONARY TRADE UNIONS?

THE German "Lefts" consider that as far as they are concerned the reply to this question is an unqualified negative. In their

\* Malinovsky was a prisoner-of-war in Germany. When he returned to Russia under the rule of the Bolsheviks, he was instantly put on trial and shot by our

opinion, declamations and angry ejaculations (such as uttered by K. Horner in a particularly "weighty" and particularly stupid manner) against "reactionary" and "counter-revolutionary" trade unions are sufficient "proof" that it is unnecessary and even impermissible for revolutionaries and Communists to work in yellow, social-chauvinist, compromising, counter-revolutionary trade unions of the Legien type.

But however strongly the German "Lefts" may be convinced of the revolutionariness of such tactics, these tactics are in fact fundamentally wrong, and consist of nothing but empty phrasemongering.

In order to make this clear, I shall begin with our own experience—in conformity with the general plan of the present article, the object of which is to apply to Western Europe whatever is of general application, general validity and generally binding force in the history and the present tactics of Bolshevism.

The correlation, leaders—party—class—masses, as well as the relation of the dictatorship of the proletariat and its party to the trade unions, now present themselves concretely in Russia in the following form: the dictatorship is exercised by the proletariat, organised in the Soviets; the proletariat is led by the Communist Party (Bolsheviks), which, according to the data of the last Party Congress (April 1920) has a membership of 611,000. The membership fluctuated considerably both before and after the October Revolution, and was formerly considerably less, even in 1918 and 1919. We are afraid of an excessive growth of the Party, as careerists and charlatans, who deserve only to be shot, inevitably strive to attach themselves to the ruling party. The last time we opened wide the doors of the Party—for workers and peasants only—was during the days (the winter of 1919) when Yudenich was within a few versts \* of Petrograd, and Denikin was in Orel (about 350 versts from Moscow), that is, when the Soviet Republic was in desperate, mortal danger, and when adventurers, careerists, charlatans, workers. The Mensheviks attacked us most bitterly for our mistake in allowing an agent-provocateur to become a member of the Central Committee of our Party. But when, under Kerensky, we demanded the arrest and trial of Rodzyanko, the speaker of the Duma, because he had known even before the war that Malinovsky was an agent-provocateur and *had not informed* the Trudoviks [peasant deputies.—*Ed.*] and the workers in the Duma of this fact, neither the Mensheviks nor the Socialist-Revolutionaries in Kerensky's cabinet supported our demand, and Rodzyanko remained at large and went off unhindered to join Denikin.

\* A verst is two-thirds of a mile.—*Ed.*

tans and unreliable persons generally could not possibly count on making a profitable career (and had more reason to expect the gallows and torture) by joining the Communists. The Party, which holds annual congresses (the last on the basis of one delegate for each 1,000 members), is directed by a Central Committee of nineteen elected at the congress, while the current work in Moscow has to be carried on by still smaller bodies, *viz.*, the so-called "Orgburo" (Organisation Bureau) and "Politburo" (Political Bureau), which are elected at plenary meetings of the Central Committee, five members of the Central Committee to each bureau. This, then, looks like a real "oligarchy." Not a single important political or organisational question is decided by any state institution in our republic without the guiding instructions of the Central Committee of the Party.

In its work the Party relies directly on the *trade unions*, which, at present, according to the data of the last congress (April 1920), have over 4,000,000 members, and which are formally *non-party*. Actually, all the directing bodies of the vast majority of the unions, and primarily, of course, of the all-Russian general trade union centre or bureau (the All-Russian Central Trade Union Council) consist of Communists and carry out all the instructions of the Party. Thus, on the whole, we have a formally non-Communist, flexible and relatively wide and very powerful proletarian apparatus, by means of which the Party is closely linked up with the *class* and with the *masses*, and by means of which, under the leadership of the Party, the *dictatorship of the class* is effected. Without close contact with the trade unions, without their hearty support and self-sacrificing work, not only in economic *but also in military* affairs, it would, of course, have been impossible for us to govern the country and to maintain the dictatorship for two months, let alone two years. Of course, in practice this close contact calls for very complicated and diversified work in the form of propaganda, agitation, timely and frequent conferences, not only with leading, but with influential trade union workers generally; it calls for a determined struggle against the Mensheviks, who still have a certain, though very small, number of adherents, whom they teach all possible counter-revolutionary tricks, from the ideological defence of (*bourgeois*) democracy and the preaching of the "independence" of the trade unions (independent of the proletarian power!) to the sabotaging of proletarian discipline, etc., etc.



We consider that contact with the "masses" through trade unions is not enough. Our practical experience during the course of the revolution has given rise to *non-party workers' and peasants' conferences*, and we strive by every means to support, develop and extend these institutions in order to be able to watch the sentiments of the masses, to come closer to them, to respond to their requirements, to promote the best among them to state posts, etc. In a recent decree on the transformation of the People's Commissariat of State Control into the "Workers' and Peasants' Inspection," non-party conferences of this kind are granted the right to elect members to the State Control to undertake various investigations, etc.

Then, of course, all the work of the Party is carried on through the Soviets, which embrace the toiling masses irrespective of occupation. The *uyezd*\* congresses of Soviets are *democratic* institutions the like of which even the best of the democratic republics of the bourgeois world has never known; and through these congresses (whose proceedings the Party endeavours to follow with the closest attention), as well as by constantly appointing class-conscious workers to all sorts of posts in the rural districts, the role of the proletariat as leader of the peasantry is exercised, the dictatorship of the urban proletariat is realised, and a systematic struggle against the rich, bourgeois, exploiting and profiteering peasantry is waged.

Such is the general mechanism of the proletarian state power viewed "from above," from the standpoint of the practical realisation of the dictatorship. It is to be hoped that the reader will understand why to a Russian Bolshevik, who is acquainted with this mechanism and who for twenty-five years has watched it growing out of small, illegal, underground circles, all talk about "from above" or "from below," about the dictatorship of leaders or the dictatorship of the masses, etc., cannot but appear to be ridiculous and childish nonsense, something like discussing whether the left leg or the right arm is more useful to a man.

And we cannot but regard as equally ridiculous and childish nonsense the ponderous, very learned, and frightfully revolutionary disquisitions of the German Lefts to the effect that Communists cannot and should not work in reactionary trade unions, that it is permissible to refuse to do such work, that it is necessary to

\* County.—Ed.

leave the trade unions and to create an absolutely brand-new, immaculate "Workers' Union" invented by very nice (and for the most part, probably, very youthful) Communists, etc., etc.

Capitalism inevitably bequeaths to Socialism, on the one hand, old trade and craft distinctions among the workers, distinctions evolved in the course of centuries, and, on the other, trade unions which only very slowly, in the course of years and years, can and will develop into broader, industrial unions with less of the craft union about them (embracing whole industries, and not only crafts, trades and occupations), and later proceed, through these industrial unions, to the abolition of the division of labour among people, to the education, schooling and training of people with *an all-round development and an all-round training*, people *able to do everything*. Communism is marching and must march towards this goal, and *will reach it*, but only after very many years. To attempt in practice today to anticipate this future result of a fully developed, fully stabilised and formed, fully expanded and mature Communism would be like trying to teach higher mathematics to a four year old child.

We can (and must) begin to build Socialism not with imaginary human material, not with human material invented by us, but with the human material bequeathed to us by capitalism. That is very "difficult," it goes without saying, but no other approach to this task is serious enough to warrant discussion.

The trade unions were a tremendous progressive step for the working class at the beginning of the development of capitalism, inasmuch as they represented a transition from the disunity and helplessness of the workers to the *rudiments* of class organisation. When the *highest* form of proletarian class organisation began to arise, *viz.*, the *revolutionary party of the proletariat* (which will not deserve the name until it learns to bind the leaders with the class and the masses into one single indissoluble whole), the trade unions inevitably began to reveal *certain* reactionary features, a certain craft narrowness, a certain tendency to be non-political, a certain inertness, etc. But the development of the proletariat did not, and could not, proceed anywhere in the world otherwise than through the trade unions, through their interaction with the party of the working class. The conquest of political power by the proletariat is a gigantic forward step for the proletariat as a class, and the Party must more than ever, and not merely in the old

way but in a new way, educate and guide the trade unions, at the same time not forgetting that they are and will long remain an indispensable "school of Communism" and a preparatory school for training the proletarians to exercise their dictatorship, an indispensable organisation of the workers for the gradual transfer of the management of the whole economic life of the country to the working *class* (and not to the separate trades), and later to all the toilers.

A *certain* amount of "reactionariness" in trade unions, in the sense mentioned, is *inevitable* under the dictatorship of the proletariat. He who does not understand this utterly fails to understand the fundamental conditions of the *transition* from capitalism to Socialism. To fear *this* "reactionariness," to try to *avoid* it, to skip it, would be the greatest folly, for it would mean fearing that function of the proletarian vanguard which consists in training, educating, enlightening and drawing into the new life the most backward strata and masses of the working class and the peasantry. On the other hand, to postpone the achievement of the dictatorship of the proletariat until a time when not a single worker with a narrow craft outlook, not a single worker with craft and craft-union prejudices is left, would be a still greater mistake. The art of politics (and the Communist's correct understanding of his tasks) lies in correctly gauging the conditions and the moment when the vanguard of the proletariat can successfully seize power, when it is able, during and after the seizure of power, to obtain adequate support from adequately broad strata of the working class and of the non-proletarian toiling masses, and when it is able thereafter to maintain, consolidate and extend its rule by educating, training and attracting ever broader masses of the toilers.

Further: in countries which are more advanced than Russia, a certain amount of reactionariness in the trade unions has been manifested, and was undoubtedly bound to be manifested, to a much stronger degree than in our country. Our Mensheviks found (and in a very few trade unions to some extent still find) support in the trade unions precisely because of the narrow craft spirit, craft selfishness and opportunism. The Mensheviks of the West have acquired a much firmer "footing" in the trade unions; there the *craft-union, narrow-minded, selfish, unfeeling, covetous, petty-bourgeois "labour aristocracy," imperialistically-minded, and bribed and corrupted by imperialism*, represents a much stronger stratum

than in our country. That is incontestable. The struggle against the Gomperses, against Messrs. Jouhaux, Henderson, Merrheim, Legien and Co. in Western Europe is much more difficult than the struggle against our Mensheviks, who represent an *absolutely homogeneous* social and political type. This struggle must be waged ruthlessly and must be waged absolutely to the very end, just as we waged it, until all the incorrigible leaders of opportunism and social-chauvinism have been completely discredited and driven out of the trade unions. It is impossible to capture political power (and the attempt to capture it should not be made) until this struggle has reached a *certain* stage. This "certain stage" *will be different* in different countries and in different circumstances; it can be correctly gauged only by thoughtful, experienced and well-informed political leaders of the proletariat in each separate country. (In Russia, a measure of the success of this struggle was, incidentally, the elections to the Constituent Assembly in November 1917, a few days after the proletarian revolution of October 25, 1917. In these elections the Mensheviks were utterly defeated; they obtained 700,000 votes—1,400,000 if the vote of Transcaucasia be added—as against 9,000,000 votes obtained by the Bolsheviks. (See my article, "The Elections to the Constituent Assembly and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," in the *Communist International* No. 7-8 [*Selected Works*, Vol. VI, p. 463].)

But we wage the struggle against the "labour aristocracy" in the name of the masses of the workers and in order to attract them to our side; we wage the struggle against the opportunist and social-chauvinist leaders in order to attract the working class to our side. To forget this most elementary and self-evident truth would be stupid. But it is just this stupidity the German "Left" Communists are guilty of when, *because* of the reactionary and counter-revolutionary character of the *heads* of the trade unions, they jump to the conclusion that...we must leave the trade unions!! that we must refuse to work in them!! that we must create new and *artificial* forms of labour organisation!! This is such an unpardonable blunder as to be equivalent to the greatest service the Communists could render the bourgeoisie. For our Mensheviks, like all the opportunist, social-chauvinist, Kautskian trade union leaders, are nothing but "agents of the bourgeoisie in the labour movement" (as we have always said the Mensheviks were), or "labour lieutenants of the capitalist class," to use the

splendid and absolutely true expression of the followers of Daniel DeLeon in America. To refuse to work in the reactionary trade unions means leaving the insufficiently developed or backward masses of the workers under the influence of the reactionary leaders, the agents of the bourgeoisie, the labour aristocrats, or the workers who have "become completely bourgeois" (cf. Engels' letter to Marx in 1852 on the British workers) [*Selected Correspondence of Marx and Engels*, p. 60].

It is just this absurd "theory" that the Communists must not belong to reactionary trade unions that most clearly shows how frivolous is the attitude of the "Left" Communists towards the question of influencing "the masses," and how they abuse their vociferations about "the masses." If you want to help "the masses" and to win the sympathy, confidence and support of "the masses," you must not fear difficulties, you must not fear the pin-pricks, chicanery, insults and persecution of the "leaders" (who, being opportunists and social-chauvinist, are in most cases directly or indirectly connected with the bourgeoisie and the police), but must imperatively *work wherever the masses are to be found*. You must be capable of every sacrifice, of overcoming the greatest obstacles in order to carry on agitation and propaganda systematically, perseveringly, persistently and patiently precisely in those institutions, societies and associations—even the most reactionary—in which proletarian or semi-proletarian masses are to be found. And the trade unions and workers' co-operatives (the latter at least sometimes) are precisely the organisations where the masses are to be found. According to figures quoted in the Swedish paper *Folkets Dagblad Politiken* on March 10, 1920, the membership of the trade unions in Great Britain increased from 5,500,000 at the end of 1917 to 6,600,000 at the end of 1918, an increase of 19 per cent. At the end of 1919 the membership was estimated at 7,500,000. I have not at hand the corresponding figures for France and Germany, but incontestable and generally known facts testify to a rapid growth of trade union membership in these countries as well.

These facts very clearly indicate what is confirmed by thousands of other symptoms, namely, that class-consciousness and the desire for organisation are growing precisely among the proletarian masses, among the "rank and file," among the backward elements. Millions of workers in Great Britain, France and Germany are *for the first time* passing from a complete lack of organisation

to the elementary, lowest, most simple, and (for those still thoroughly imbued with bourgeois-democratic prejudices) most easily accessible form of organisation, namely, the trade unions; yet the revolutionary, but foolish, "Left" Communists stand by, shouting "the masses, the masses!"—and *refuse to work in the trade unions!!* refuse on the pretext that they are "reactionary"!! and invent a brand-new immaculate little "Workers' Union," which is guiltless of bourgeois-democratic prejudices and innocent of craft or narrow-craft-union sins, and which they claim will be (will be!) a wide organisation, and the only (only!) condition of membership of which will be "the recognition of the Soviet system and the dictatorship"!! (See passage quoted above.)

Greater foolishness and greater damage to the revolution than that caused by the "Left" revolutionaries cannot be imagined! Why, if we in Russia today, after two and half years of unprecedented victories over the bourgeoisie of Russia and the Entente, were to make "the recognition of the dictatorship" a condition of trade union membership, we should be committing a folly, we should be damaging our influence over the masses and should be helping the Mensheviks. For the whole task of the Communists is to be able to *convince* the backward elements, to work *among* them, and not to *fence themselves off* from them by artificial and childish "Left" slogans.

There can be no doubt that people like Gompers, Henderson, Jouhaux and Legien are very grateful to "Left" revolutionaries who, like the German opposition "on principle" (heaven preserve us from such "principles"! ) or like some of the revolutionaries in the American Industrial Workers of the World, advocate leaving the reactionary trade unions and refusing to work in them. There can be no doubt that those gentlemen, the "leaders" of opportunism, will resort to every trick of bourgeois diplomacy, to the aid of bourgeois governments, the priests, the police and the courts, to prevent Communists joining the trade unions, to force them out by every means, to make their work in the trade unions as unpleasant as possible, to insult, bait and persecute them. We must be able to withstand all this, to agree to any sacrifice, and even—if need be—to resort to all sorts of stratagems, artifices, illegal methods, to evasions and subterfuges, only so as to get into the trade unions, to remain in them, and to carry on Communist work within them at all costs. Under tsardom we had no "legal

possibilities" whatever until 1905; but when Zubatov, a secret police agent, organised Black Hundred \* workers' assemblies and workmen's societies for the purpose of trapping revolutionaries and combating them, we sent members of our Party to these assemblies and into these societies (I personally remember one of them, Comrade Babushkin, a prominent St. Petersburg workingman, who was shot by the tsar's generals in 1906). They established contacts with the masses, managed to carry on their agitation, and succeeded in wresting workers from the influence of Zubatov's agents.\*\* Of course, in Western Europe, where legalistic, constitutionalist, bourgeois-democratic prejudices are very deeply ingrained, it is more difficult to carry on such work. But it can and should be carried on, and carried on systematically.

The Executive Committee of the Third International must, in my opinion, positively condemn, and call upon the next congress of the Communist International to condemn, both the policy of refusing to join reactionary trade unions in general (explaining in detail why such refusal is unwise, and what extreme harm it does to the cause of the proletarian revolution) and, in particular, the line of conduct of several members of the Dutch Communist Party, who—whether directly or indirectly, openly or covertly, wholly or partly does not matter—supported this erroneous policy. The Third International must break with the tactics of the Second International; it must not evade nor gloss over sore points, but must put them bluntly. The whole truth has been put squarely to the "Independents" (the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany); the whole truth must likewise be put squarely to the "Left" Communists.

## VII. SHOULD WE PARTICIPATE IN BOURGEOIS PARLIAMENTS?

THE German "Left" Communists, with the greatest contempt—and with the greatest frivolity—reply to this question in the negative. Their arguments? In the passage quoted above we read:

\* Reactionary and Monarchist organisations.—*Ed.*

\*\* The Gomperses, Hendersons, Jouhaux and Legiens are nothing but Zubatovs, differing from our Zubatov only in their European dress, in their outer polish, in their civilised, refined, democratically sleek manner of conducting their despicable policy.

"...One must emphatically reject...all reversion to parliamentary forms of struggle, which have become historically and politically obsolete...."

This is said with absurd pretentiousness, and is obviously incorrect. "Reversion" to parliamentarism! Perhaps there is already a Soviet republic in Germany? It does not look like it! How, then, is it possible to speak of "reversion"? Is it not an empty phrase?

Parliamentarism has become "historically obsolete." That is true as regards propaganda. But everyone knows that this is still a long way from overcoming it *practically*. Capitalism could have been declared, and quite rightly, to be "historically obsolete" many decades ago, but that does not at all remove the need for a very long and very persistent struggle *on the soil* of capitalism. Parliamentarism is "historically obsolete" from the standpoint of *world history*, that is to say, the *epoch* of bourgeois parliamentarism has come to an end and the *epoch* of the proletarian dictatorship has *begun*. That is incontestable. But when dealing with world *history* one counts in decades. Ten or twenty years sooner or later makes no difference when measured by the scale of world history; from the standpoint of world history it is a trifle that cannot be calculated even approximately. But that is precisely why it is a howling theoretical blunder to measure questions of practical politics with the scale of world history.

Is parliamentarism "politically obsolete"? That is quite another matter. If it were true, the position of the "Lefts" would be a strong one. But it has to be proved by a most searching analysis, and the "Lefts" do not even know how to set about it. In the "Theses on Parliamentarism," which were published in the *Bulletin of the Provisional Bureau in Amsterdam of the Communist International*, No. 1, February 1920, and which obviously express Dutch-Left or Left-Dutch strivings, the analysis, as we shall see, is also a very bad one.

In the first place, contrary to the opinion of such prominent political leaders as Rosa Luxembourg and Karl Liebknecht, the German "Lefts," as we know, considered parliamentarism to be "politically obsolete" even in January 1919. We know that the "Lefts" were mistaken. This fact alone at one stroke utterly destroys the proposition that parliamentarism is "politically obsolete." The obligation falls upon the "Lefts" of proving why their error, indisputable at that time, has now ceased to be an error. They do not,



and cannot, produce even the shadow of proof. The attitude a political party adopts towards its own mistakes is one of the most important and surest criteria of the seriousness of the party and of how it *in practice* fulfils its obligations towards its *class* and the toiling *masses*. Frankly admitting a mistake, disclosing the reasons for it, analysing the conditions which led to it, and carefully discussing the means of correcting it—this is the sign of a serious party; this is the way it performs its duties, this is the way it educates and trains the *class*, and then the *masses*. By failing to fulfil this duty, by failing to give the utmost attention, care and consideration to the study of their obvious mistake, the “Lefts” in Germany (and in Holland) have proved that they are not a *party of the class*, but a circle, not a *party of the masses*, but a group of intellectuals and of a few workers who imitate the worst features of intellectualism.

Secondly, in the same pamphlet of the Frankfurt group of “Lefts” that we have already cited in detail, we read:

“... The millions of workers who still follow the Policy of the Centre [the Catholic ‘Centre’ Party] are counter-revolutionary. The rural proletarians provide legions of counter-revolutionary troops.” (Page 3 of the above-mentioned pamphlet.)

Everything goes to show that this statement is too sweeping and exaggerated. But the basic fact set forth here is incontrovertible, and its acknowledgment by the “Lefts” very clearly testifies to their mistake. How can one say that “parliamentarism is politically obsolete,” when “millions” and “legions” of *proletarians* are not only still in favour of parliamentarism in general, but are downright “counter-revolutionary”? Clearly, parliamentarism in Germany is *not yet* politically obsolete. Clearly, the “Lefts” in Germany have mistaken *their desire*, their ideological-political attitude, for actual fact. That is the most dangerous mistake revolutionaries can make. In Russia—where the extremely fierce and savage yoke of tsardom for a very long time and in very varied forms produced revolutionaries of diverse shades, revolutionaries who displayed astonishing devotion, enthusiasm, heroism and strength of will—we observed this mistake of the revolutionaries very closely, we studied it very attentively and are very well acquainted with it, and we can therefore notice it very clearly in others. Parliamentarism, of course, is “politically obsolete” for the Communists in Germany;

but—and that is the whole point—we must not regard what is obsolete *for us* as being obsolete *for the class*, as being obsolete *for the masses*. Here again we find that the “Lefts” do not know how to reason, do not know how to conduct themselves as the party of the *class*, as the party of the *masses*. You must not sink to the level of the masses, to the level of the backward strata of the class. That is incontestable. You must tell them the bitter truth. You must call their bourgeois-democratic and parliamentary prejudices—prejudices. But at the same time you must *soberly* observe the *actual* state of class consciousness and preparedness of the whole class (not only of its Communist vanguard), of all the toiling *masses* (not only of its advanced elements).

Even if not “millions” and “legions” but only a fairly large *minority* of industrial workers follow the Catholic priests—and rural workers the landlords and kulaks (*Grossbauern*)—it *undoubtedly* follows that parliamentarism in Germany is *not yet* politically obsolete, that participation in parliamentary elections and in the struggle on the platform of parliament is *obligatory* for the party of the revolutionary proletariat *precisely* for the purpose of educating the backward strata of *its own class*, precisely for the purpose of awakening and enlightening the undeveloped, downtrodden, ignorant peasant *masses*. As long as you are unable to disperse the bourgeois parliament and every other type of reactionary institution, you *must* work inside them, *precisely* because there you will still find workers who are stupefied by the priests and by the dreariness of rural life; otherwise you risk becoming mere babblers.

Thirdly, the “Left” Communists have a great deal to say in praise of us Bolsheviks. One sometimes feels like telling them to praise us less and try to understand the tactics of the Bolsheviks more; to make themselves more familiar with them! We took part in the elections to the Russian bourgeois parliament, the Constituent Assembly, in September-November 1917. Were our tactics correct or not? If not, then it should be clearly stated and proved, for this is essential in working out correct tactics for international Communism. If they were correct, certain conclusions must be drawn. Of course, no parallel can be drawn between conditions in Russia and conditions in Western Europe. But as regards the special question of the meaning of the concept “parliamentarism has become politically obsolete,” our experience must absolutely be taken into account, for unless definite experience is taken into

account such concepts are very easily transformed into empty phrases. Did not we, the Russian Bolsheviks, have more right in September-November 1917 than any Western Communists to consider that parliamentarism was politically obsolete in Russia? Of course we did, for the point is not whether bourgeois parliaments have existed for a long or a short time, but to what extent the broad mass of the toilers are *prepared* (ideologically, politically and practically) to accept the Soviet system and to disperse the bourgeois-democratic parliament (or to allow it to be dispersed). That owing to a number of special conditions the urban working class and the soldiers and peasants of Russia were in September-November 1917 exceptionally well prepared for the acceptance of the Soviet system and for the dispersal of the most democratic of bourgeois parliaments is an absolutely incontestable and fully established historical fact. Nevertheless, the Bolsheviks did *not* boycott the Constituent Assembly, but took part in the elections both before and *after* the proletariat conquered political power. That these elections yielded exceedingly valuable (and for the proletariat, highly useful) political results I have proved, I confidently hope, in the above-mentioned article, which analyses in detail the figures of the elections to the Constituent Assembly in Russia.

The conclusion which follows from this is absolutely incontrovertible: it has been proved that participation in a bourgeois-democratic parliament even a few weeks before the victory of a Soviet republic, and even *after* such a victory, not only does not harm the revolutionary proletariat, but actually helps it to *prove* to the backward masses why such parliaments deserve to be dispersed; it *helps* their successful dispersal, and *helps* bourgeois parliamentarism to become "politically obsolete." To refuse to take this experience into account and at the same time to claim affiliation to the Communist *International*, which must work out its tactics *internationally* (not narrow or one-sided national tactics, but international tactics), is to commit the gravest blunder and actually to retreat from real internationalism while paying lip service to it.

Now let us examine the "Dutch-Left" arguments in favour of non-participation in parliaments. The following is the text of the most important of the above-mentioned "Dutch" theses, Thesis No. 4:

"When the capitalist system of production has broken down and society is in a state of revolution, parliamentary activity gradually loses

its significance compared with the action of the masses themselves. When, under these conditions, parliament becomes a centre and an organ of counter-revolution, while on the other hand the working class is creating the instruments of its power in the form of Soviets, it may even become necessary to abstain from all participation in parliamentary activity."

The first sentence is obviously wrong, since the action of the masses—a big strike, for instance—is more important than parliamentary activity at *all* times, and not only during a revolution or in a revolutionary situation. This obviously untenable and historically and politically incorrect argument only very clearly shows that the authors absolutely ignore both the general European experience (the French experience before the Revolution of 1848, and 1870; the German experience of 1878 to 1890, etc.) and the Russian experience (see above) as to the importance of *combining* the legal struggle with an illegal struggle. This question is of immense importance in general, and it is of immense importance in particular because in *all* civilised and advanced countries the time is rapidly approaching when such a combination will become—and in part has already become—more and more obligatory for the party of the revolutionary proletariat owing to the fact that civil war between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is maturing and approaching, owing to the fierce persecution of the Communists by republican governments and bourgeois governments generally, which are prepared to resort to any violation of legality (how much is the American example \* alone worth?), etc. The Dutch, and the "Lefts" in general, have utterly failed to understand this very important question.

As for the second sentence, in the first place it is wrong historically. We Bolsheviks participated in the most counter-revolutionary parliaments, and experience has shown that such participation was not only useful but essential for the party of the revolutionary proletariat precisely after the first bourgeois revolution in Russia (1905), for the purpose of preparing the way for the second bourgeois revolution (February 1917), and then for the Socialist revolution (October 1917). In the second place, this sentence is amazingly illogical. If parliament becomes an organ and a "centre" (in

\* The raids upon Communist organisations and their persecution conducted on a national scale early in 1920 under the direction of Attorney-General Palmer of the Wilson administration, usually referred to as the Palmer raids.—Ed.

reality it never has been and never can be a "centre," but that by the way) of counter-revolution, while the workers are creating the instruments of their power in the form of Soviets, it logically follows that the workers must prepare—ideologically, politically and technically—for the struggle of the Soviets against parliament, for the dispersal of parliament by the Soviets. But it does not follow that this dispersal is hindered, or is not facilitated, by the presence of a Soviet opposition *within* the counter-revolutionary parliament. During the course of our victorious struggle against Denikin and Kolchak we have never found the existence of a Soviet, proletarian opposition in their midst to be immaterial to our victories. We know perfectly well that we were not hindered but assisted in dispersing the Constituent Assembly on January 5, 1918, by the fact that within the counter-revolutionary Constituent Assembly which was about to be dispersed there was a consistent, Bolshevik, as well as an inconsistent, Left Socialist-Revolutionary, Soviet opposition. The authors of the theses have become utterly confused and have forgotten the experience of many, if not all, revolutions, which shows how particularly useful during a revolution is the combination of mass action outside the reactionary parliament with an opposition sympathetic to (or, better still, directly supporting) the revolution inside this parliament. The Dutch, and the "Lefts" in general, argue like doctrinaire revolutionaries who have never taken part in a real revolution, or who have never deeply pondered over the history of revolutions, or who have naïvely mistaken the subjective "rejection" of a certain reactionary institution for its actual destruction by the union of a number of objective factors.

The surest way of discrediting and damaging a new political (and not only political) idea is to reduce it to absurdity on the pretext of defending it. For every truth, if "overdone" (as Dietzgen senior put it), if exaggerated, if carried beyond the limits of its actual applicability, can be reduced to absurdity, and, under the conditions mentioned, is even bound to become an absurdity. This is just the kind of back-handed service the Dutch and German "Lefts" are rendering the new truth about the superiority of the Soviet form of government over bourgeois-democratic parliaments. Of course, anyone who would say in the old way, and in general, that refusal to participate in bourgeois parliaments can under no circumstances be permissible, would be wrong. I cannot attempt to formulate here the conditions under which a boycott is useful,

for the object of this essay is far more modest, namely, to study Russian experience in connection with certain topical questions of international Communist tactics. Russian experience has given us one successful and correct (1905) and one incorrect (1906) example of the application of the boycott by the Bolsheviks. Analysing the first case, we see that we succeeded in *preventing the convocation* of a reactionary parliament by a reactionary government in a situation in which extra-parliamentary, revolutionary mass action (strikes in particular) was growing with exceptional rapidity, when not a single stratum of the proletariat and of the peasantry could support the reactionary government in any way, when the revolutionary proletariat was acquiring influence over the broad, backward masses by means of the strike struggle and the agrarian movement. It is quite obvious that *this* experience is not applicable to present-day European conditions. It is also quite obvious, on the strength of the foregoing arguments, that even a conditional defence of the refusal of the Dutch and other "Lefts" to participate in parliaments is fundamentally wrong and harmful to the cause of the revolutionary proletariat.

In Western Europe and America parliament has become an object of particular hatred to the advanced revolutionary members of the working class. That is incontestable. It is quite comprehensible, for it is difficult to imagine anything more vile, abominable and treacherous than the behaviour of the vast majority of the Socialist and Social-Democratic parliamentary deputies during and after the war. But it would be not only unreasonable but actually criminal to yield to this mood when deciding *how* this generally recognised evil should be fought. In many countries of Western Europe the revolutionary mood, we might say, is at present a "novelty," or a "rarity," which had been too long waited for vainly and impatiently; and perhaps that is why the mood is so easily succumbed to. Of course, without a revolutionary mood among the masses, and without conditions favouring the growth of this mood, revolutionary tactics would never be converted into action; but we in Russia have been convinced by long, painful and bloody experience of the truth that revolutionary tactics cannot be built up on revolutionary moods alone. Tactics must be based on a sober and strictly objective estimation of *all* the class forces in a given state (and in neighbouring states, and in all states the world over) as well as of the experience of revolutionary movements. Expressing one's "revo-

lutionariness" solely by hurling abuse at parliamentary opportunism, solely by repudiating participation in parliaments, is very easy; but just because it is too easy, it is not the solution for a difficult, a very difficult, problem. It is much more difficult to create a really revolutionary parliamentary fraction in a European parliament than it was in Russia. Of course. But this is only a particular expression of the general truth that it was easy for Russia in the specific, historically very unique situation of 1917 to *start* a Socialist revolution, but that it will be more difficult for Russia than for the European countries to *continue* it and consummate it. I had occasion to point this out even in the beginning of 1918, and our experience of the past two years has entirely confirmed the correctness of this view. Certain specific conditions, *viz.*, (1) the possibility of linking up the Soviet revolution with the ending (as a consequence of this revolution) of the imperialist war, which had exhausted the workers and peasants to an incredible degree; (2) the possibility of taking advantage for a certain time of the mortal conflict between two world-powerful groups of imperialist robbers, who were unable to unite against their Soviet enemy; (3) the possibility of enduring a comparatively lengthy civil war, partly owing to the enormous size of the country and to the poor means of communication; (4) the existence of such a profound bourgeois-democratic revolutionary movement among the peasantry that the party of the proletariat was able to adopt the revolutionary demands of the peasant party (the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, the majority of the members of which were definitely hostile to Bolshevism) and to realise them at once, thanks to the conquest of political power by the proletariat—these specific conditions do not exist in Western Europe at present; and a repetition of such or similar conditions will not come about easily. That is why, apart from a number of other causes, it will be more difficult to *start* a Socialist revolution in Western Europe than it was for us. To attempt to "circumvent" this difficulty by "skipping" the difficult job of utilising reactionary parliaments for revolutionary purposes is absolutely childish. You want to create a new society, yet you fear the difficulties involved in forming a good parliamentary fraction, consisting of convinced, devoted, heroic Communists, in a reactionary parliament! Is that not childish? If Karl Liebknecht in Germany and Z. Höglund in Sweden were able, even without mass support from below, to set examples of the truly revolutionary

utilisation of reactionary parliaments, why, then, should a rapidly growing revolutionary, mass party, in the midst of the post-war disillusionment and exasperation of the masses, be unable to *forge* a Communist fraction in the worst of parliaments?! It is just because the backward masses of the workers and, to a still greater degree, of the small peasants are in Western Europe much more imbued with bourgeois-democratic and parliamentary prejudices than they were in Russia that it is *only* from within such institutions as bourgeois parliaments that Communists can (and must) wage a long and persistent struggle, undaunted by difficulties, to expose, dissipate and overcome these prejudices.

The German "Lefts" complain about the bad "leaders" in their party, give way to despair, and go to the absurd length of "repudiating" "leaders." But when conditions are such that it is often necessary to hide "leaders" underground, the *development* of good, reliable, experienced and authoritative "leaders" is a very difficult task, and these difficulties *cannot* be successfully overcome without combining legal and illegal work, and *without testing the "leaders," among other ways, in the parliamentary arena as well.* Criticism—the keenest, most ruthless and uncompromising criticism—must be directed, not against parliamentarism or parliamentary activities, but against those leaders who are unable—and still more against those who are *unwilling*—to utilise parliamentary elections and the parliamentary tribune in a revolutionary, Communist manner. Only such criticism—combined, of course, with the expulsion of worthless leaders and their replacement by capable ones—will constitute useful and fruitful revolutionary work that will simultaneously train the "leaders" to be worthy of the working class and of the toiling masses, and train the masses to be able properly to understand the political situation and the often very complicated and intricate tasks that spring from that situation.\*

\* I have had very little opportunity to familiarise myself with "Left-wing" Communism in Italy. Comrade Bordiga and his faction of "Communist-Boycottists" (*Comunisti astensionisti*), are certainly wrong in advocating non-participation in parliament. But on one point, it seems to me, Comrade Bordiga is right—as far as can be judged from two issues of his paper, *Il Soviet* (Nos. 3 and 4, January 18 and February 1, 1920), from four issues of Comrade Serrati's excellent periodical, *Comunismo* (Nos. 1-4, October 1-November 30, 1919), and from isolated numbers of Italian bourgeois papers which I have come across. Comrade Bordiga and his faction are right in attacking Turati and his followers, who remain in a party which has recognised the Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat, but who at the same time continue their former pernicious and opportunist policy as members



## VIII. NO COMPROMISES?

IN the quotation from the Frankfurt pamphlet we saw how emphatically the "Lefts" advance this slogan. It is sad to see people who doubtless consider themselves to be Marxists, and who want to be Marxists, forgetting the fundamental truths of Marxism. This is what Engels—who, like Marx, was one of those rarest of authors whose every sentence in every one of their great works, is of remarkably profound content—wrote in 1874 in opposition to the manifesto of the thirty-three Communard-Blanquists:

"We are Communists [wrote the Communard-Blanquists in their manifesto] because we want to attain our goal without stopping at intermediate stations, without any compromises, which only postpone the day of victory and prolong the period of slavery.

"The German Communists are Communists because through all the intermediate stations and all compromises, created not by them, but by the course of historical development, they clearly perceive and constantly pursue the final aim, *viz.*, the abolition of classes and the creation of a society in which there will be no private ownership of land or of the means of production. The thirty-three Blanquists are Communists because they imagine that merely because *they* want to skip the intermediate stations and compromises, that settles the matter, and if 'it begins' in the next few days—as has been definitely settled—and they once come to the helm, 'Communism will be introduced' the day after tomorrow. If that is not immediately possible, they are not Communists.

"What childish innocence it is to present impatience as a theoretically convincing argument!" (Fr. Engels, "Programme of the Communists-Blanquists, from the German Social-Democratic newspaper *Volkstaat*, 1874, No. 73, given in the Russian translation of *Articles, 1871-1875*, Petrograd, 1919, pp. 52-53.)

In the same article Engels expresses his profound esteem for Vaillant, and speaks of the "undeniable merit" of the latter (who

of parliament. Of course, in tolerating this, Comrade Serrati and the whole Italian Socialist Party are committing a mistake which threatens to do as much harm and give rise to the same dangers as it did in Hungary, where the Hungarian Turatis sabotaged both the Party and the Soviet government from within. Such a mistaken, inconsistent, or spineless attitude towards the opportunist parliamentarians gives rise to "Left-wing" Communism on the one hand and to a certain extent justifies its existence on the other. Comrade Serrati is obviously wrong when he accuses Deputy Turati of being "inconsistent" (*Communismo*, No. 3), for it is really the Italian Socialist Party itself that is inconsistent, since it tolerates such opportunist parliamentarians as Turati and Co.

like Guesde was one of the most prominent leaders of international Socialism up to August 1914, when they both turned traitor to Socialism). But Engels does not allow an obvious mistake to pass without a detailed analysis. Of course, to very young and inexperienced revolutionaries, as well as to petty-bourgeois revolutionaries of even a very respectable age and very experienced, it seems exceedingly "dangerous," incomprehensible and incorrect to "allow compromises." And many sophists (being super-experienced or excessively "experienced" politicians) reason exactly in the same way as the British leaders of opportunism mentioned by Comrade Lansbury: "If it is permissible for the Bolsheviks to make such and such a compromise, then why should we not be allowed to make any compromise?" But proletarians schooled in numerous strikes (to take only this manifestation of the class struggle) usually understand quite well the very profound (philosophical, historical, political and psychological) truth expounded by Engels. Every proletarian has been through strikes and has experienced "compromises" with the hated oppressors and exploiters, when the workers had to go back to work either without having achieved anything or consenting to a partial satisfaction of their demands. Every proletarian—owing to the conditions of the mass struggle and the sharp intensification of class antagonisms in which he lives—notices the difference between a compromise enforced by objective conditions (such as lack of strike funds, no outside support, extreme hunger and exhaustion), a compromise which in no way diminishes the revolutionary devotion and readiness for further struggle on the part of the workers who have agreed to such a compromise, and a compromise by traitors who try to ascribe to outside causes their own selfishness (strikebreakers also effect "compromises"!); cowardice, desire to toady to the capitalists and readiness to yield to intimidation, sometimes to persuasion, sometimes to sops, and sometimes to flattery on the part of the capitalists. (Such cases of traitors' compromises by trade union leaders are particularly plentiful in the history of the British labour movement; but in one form or another nearly all workers in all countries have witnessed the same sort of thing.)

Of course, individual cases of exceptional difficulty and intricacy occur when it is possible to determine the real character of this or that "compromise" only with the greatest difficulty; just as there are cases of homicide where it is very difficult to decide whether

the homicide was fully justified and even essential (as, for example, legitimate self-defence), or due to unpardonable negligence, or even to a cunningly executed plan. Of course, in politics, in which extremely complicated—national and international—relations between classes and parties have sometimes to be dealt with, very many cases will arise that will be much more difficult than a legitimate “compromise” during a strike, or the treacherous “compromise” of a strikebreaker, or of a treacherous leader, etc. It would be absurd to concoct a recipe or general rule (“No Compromise!”) to serve all cases. One must have the brains to analyse the situation in each separate case. Incidentally, the significance of a party organisation and of party leaders worthy of the name lies precisely in the fact that they help by means of the prolonged, persistent, varied and all-round efforts of all thinking representatives of the given class,\* in the acquisition of the necessary knowledge, the necessary experience and—apart from knowledge and experience—the necessary political instinct for the speedy and correct solution of intricate political problems.

Naïve and utterly inexperienced people imagine that it is sufficient to admit the permissibility of compromises *in general* in order to obliterate the dividing line between opportunism, against which we wage and must wage an irreconcilable struggle, and revolutionary Marxism, or Communism. But if such people do not yet know that *all* dividing lines in nature and in society are mutable and to a certain extent conventional—they cannot be assisted otherwise than by a long process of training, education, enlightenment, and by political and every-day experience. It is important to single out from the practical questions of the politics of each separate or specific historical moment those which reveal the principal type of impermissible, treacherous compromises embodying the opportunism that is fatal to the revolutionary class, and to exert all efforts to explain them and combat them. During the imperialist war of 1914-18 between two groups of equally predatory and rapacious countries, the principal, fundamental type of opportunism was

\* In every class, even in the most enlightened countries, even in the case of the most advanced class, placed by the circumstances of the moment in a state of exceptional elevation of all spiritual forces, there always are—and as long as classes exist, as long as classless society has not fully entrenched and consolidated itself, and has not developed on its own foundation, there inevitably *will be*—representatives of the class who do *not* think and are incapable of thinking. Were this not so, capitalism would not be the oppressor of the masses it is.

social-chauvinism, that is, the support of "defence of the fatherland," which, in *such* a war, was really equivalent to defence of the predatory interests of "one's own" bourgeoisie. After the war, the defence of the robber "League of Nations," the defence of direct or indirect alliances with the bourgeoisie of one's own country against the revolutionary proletariat and the "Soviet" movement, and the defence of bourgeois democracy and bourgeois parliamentarism against the "Soviet power" became the principal manifestations of those impermissible and treacherous compromises, the sum total of which constituted the opportunism that is fatal to the revolutionary proletariat and its cause.

"...To reject most emphatically all compromises with other parties...all policy of manoeuvring and compromise," write the German "Lefts" in the Frankfurt pamphlet.

It is a wonder that, holding such views, these "Lefts" do not emphatically condemn Bolshevism! For, the German "Lefts" must know that the whole history of Bolshevism, both before and after the October Revolution, is *full* of instances of manoeuvring, temporising and compromising with other parties, bourgeois parties included!

To carry on a war for the overthrow of the international bourgeoisie, a war which is a hundred times more difficult, prolonged and complicated than the most stubborn of ordinary wars between states, and to refuse beforehand to manoeuvre, to utilise the conflict of interests (even though temporary) among one's enemies, to refuse to temporise and compromise with possible (even though transitory, unstable, vacillating and conditional) allies—is not this ridiculous in the extreme? Is it not as though, when making a difficult ascent of an unexplored and hitherto inaccessible mountain, we were to refuse beforehand ever to move in zigzags, ever to retrace our steps, ever to abandon the course once selected to try others? And yet people who are so ignorant and inexperienced (if youth were the explanation, it would not be so bad; young people are ordained by God himself to talk such nonsense for a period) could meet with the support—whether direct or indirect, open or covert, whole or partial, does not matter—of certain members of the Dutch Communist Party!!

After the first Socialist revolution of the proletariat, after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie in one country, the proletariat of that country *for a long time* remains *weaker* than the bourgeoisie,

simply because of the latter's extensive international connections, and also because of the spontaneous and continuous restoration and regeneration of capitalism and the bourgeoisie by the small commodity-producers of the country which has overthrown the bourgeoisie. The more powerful enemy can be conquered only by exerting the utmost effort, and by *necessarily*, thoroughly, carefully, attentively and skilfully taking advantage of every, even the smallest, "rift" among the enemies, of every antagonism of interest among the bourgeoisie of the various countries and among the various groups or types of bourgeoisie within the various countries, by taking advantage of every, even the smallest, opportunity of gaining a mass ally, even though this ally be temporary, vacillating, unstable, unreliable and conditional. Those who do not understand this do not understand even a particle of Marxism, or of scientific, modern Socialism *in general*. Those who have not proved by *deeds* over a fairly considerable period of time, and in fairly varied political situations, their ability to apply this truth in practice have not yet learned to assist the revolutionary class in its struggle for the emancipation of toiling humanity from the exploiters. And this applies equally to the period before and to the period after the conquest of political power by the proletariat.

Our theory is not a dogma but a *guide to action*, said Marx and Engels; and the great mistake, the great crime such "patented" Marxists as Karl Kautsky, Otto Bauer, etc., commit is that they have not understood this, have been unable to apply it at the most important moments of the proletarian revolution. "Political activity is not the pavement of the Nevsky Prospect" (the clean, broad, smooth pavement of the perfectly straight principal street of St. Petersburg)—N. G. Chernyshevsky, the great Russian Socialist of the pre-Marxian period, used to say. Since Chernyshevsky's time Russian revolutionaries have paid very dearly for ignoring or forgetting this truth. We must strive at all costs to prevent the "Left" Communists and the West European and American revolutionaries who are devoted to the working class paying as *dearly* for the assimilation of this truth as the backward Russians did.

Before the downfall of tsardom the Russian revolutionary Social-Democrats repeatedly utilised the services of the bourgeois liberals, that is, they concluded numerous practical compromises with them; and in 1901-02, even prior to the appearance of Bolshevism, the old editorial board of *Iskra* (consisting of Plekhanov, Axelrod,

Zasulich, Martov, Potresov and myself) concluded—not for long it is true—a formal political alliance with Struve, the political leader of bourgeois liberalism, while it was able at the same time to carry on incessantly a most merciless ideological and political struggle against bourgeois liberalism and against the slightest manifestation of its influence in the working class movement. The Bolsheviks have always adhered to this policy. Ever since 1905 they have systematically insisted on an alliance between the working class and the peasantry against the liberal bourgeoisie and tsardom, never, however, refusing to support the bourgeoisie against tsardom (for instance, during the second stage of elections, or during second ballots) and never ceasing their relentless ideological and political struggle against the bourgeois-revolutionary peasant party, the “Socialist-Revolutionaries,” exposing them as petty-bourgeois democrats who falsely masqueraded as Socialists. During the Duma elections in 1907, the Bolsheviks for a brief period entered into a formal political bloc with the “Socialist-Revolutionaries.” Between 1903 and 1912 there were periods of several years in which we were formally united with the Mensheviks in one Social-Democratic Party; but we *never* ceased our ideological and political struggle against them on the grounds that they were opportunists and vehicles of bourgeois influence among the proletariat. During the war we effected certain compromises with the “Kautskians,” with the Left Mensheviks (Martov), and with a section of the “Socialist-Revolutionaries” (Chernov and Natanson); we were together with them at Zimmerwald and Kienthal and issued joint manifestoes; but we never ceased and never relaxed our ideological-political struggle against the “Kautskians,” Martov and Chernov (Natanson died in 1919 a “Revolutionary Communist” Narodnik \* who was very close to and almost in agreement with us). At the very outbreak of the October Revolution we entered into an informal but very important (and very successful) political bloc with the petty-bourgeois peasantry by adopting the *Socialist-Revolutionary* agrarian programme *in its entirety*, without a single alteration—that is, we effected an unquestionable compromise in order to prove to the peasants that we did not want to “steam-roller” them, but to reach agreement with them. At the same time we proposed (and soon after effected) a formal political bloc, including participation in the government, with the “Left-Socialist-

\* Populist.—Ed.

Revolutionaries," who dissolved this bloc after the conclusion of the Brest-Litovsk Peace and then, in July 1918, went to the length of armed rebellion, and subsequently of armed warfare, against us.

It is therefore understandable why the attacks of the German "Lefts" on the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany for entertaining the idea of a bloc with the "Independents" (the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany, the Kautskians) seem to us to be utterly frivolous and a clear proof that the "Lefts" are in the *wrong*. We in Russia also had Right Mensheviks (who participated in the Kerensky Government), corresponding to the German Scheidemanns, and Left Mensheviks (Martov) who were in opposition to the Right Mensheviks and who corresponded to the German Kautskians. A gradual shift of the masses of the workers from the Mensheviks to the Bolsheviks was to be clearly observed in 1917: at the First All-Russian Congress of Soviets held in June 1917 we had only 13 per cent of the votes; the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks had the majority. At the Second Congress of Soviets (October 25, 1917), we had 51 per cent of the votes. Why did not an absolutely *identical* trend of the workers from Right to Left in Germany immediately strengthen the Communists, but first strengthened the intermediate "Independent" Party, although this party never had independent political ideas or an independent policy, but only wavered between the Scheidemanns and the Communists?

Obviously, one of the reasons was the *mistaken* tactics of the German Communists, who must fearlessly and honestly admit this mistake and learn to rectify it. The mistake lay in their repudiation of the necessity of participating in the reactionary bourgeois parliaments and in the reactionary trade unions; the mistake lay in numerous manifestations of that "Left" infantile disorder which has now come to the surface and will therefore be cured more thoroughly, more quickly and with greater benefit to the organism.

The German "Independent Social-Democratic Party" is obviously not homogeneous: alongside the old opportunist leaders (Kautsky, Hilferding and, to a considerable extent, apparently, Crispien, Ledebour and others)—who have shown that they are unable to understand the significance of the Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat, that they are unable to lead the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat—there has arisen in this party a Left,

proletarian wing which is growing with remarkable rapidity. Hundreds of thousands of members of this party (which has about three-quarters of a million members, I think), are proletarians who are leaving Scheidemann and are rapidly going over to Communism. This proletarian wing has already proposed—at the Leipzig (1919) Congress of the Independents—immediate and unconditional affiliation to the Third International. To fear a “compromise” with this wing of the party is positively ridiculous. On the contrary, it is *the duty* of the Communists to seek *and to find* a suitable form of compromise with them, such a compromise as, on the one hand, would facilitate and accelerate the necessary complete fusion with this wing and, on the other, would in no way hamper the Communists in their ideological-political struggle against the opportunist Right wing of the “Independents.” It will probably not be easy to devise a suitable form of compromise—but only a charlatan could promise the German workers and German Communists an “easy” road to victory.

Capitalism would not be capitalism if the “pure” proletariat were not surrounded by a large number of exceedingly mixed transitional types, from the proletarian to the semi-proletarian (who earns half of his livelihood by the sale of his labour power), from the semi-proletarian to the small peasant (and petty artisan, handicraft worker and small proprietor in general), from the small peasant to the middle peasant, and so on, and if the proletariat itself were not divided into more or less developed strata, if it were not divided according to territorial origin, trade, sometimes according to religion, and so on. And all this makes it necessary, absolutely necessary, for the vanguard of the proletariat, its class-conscious section, the Communist Party, to resort to manoeuvres, arrangements and compromises with the various groups of proletarians, with the various parties of the workers and small proprietors. The whole point lies in *knowing how* to apply these tactics in such a way as to *raise*, and not lower, the *general* level of proletarian class consciousness, revolutionary spirit, and ability to fight and to conquer. Incidentally, it should be noted that the victory of the Bolsheviks over the Mensheviks demanded the application of tactics of manoeuvres, arrangements and compromises not only before *but also after* the October Revolution of 1917, but such manoeuvres and compromises, of course, as would facilitate, accelerate, consolidate and strengthen the Bolsheviks at



the expense of the Mensheviks. The petty-bourgeois democrats (including the Mensheviks) inevitably vacillate between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, between bourgeois democracy and the Soviet system, between reformism and revolutionariness, between love for the workers and fear of the proletarian dictatorship, etc. The proper tactics for the Communists to adopt is to *utilise* these vacillations and not to ignore them; and utilising them calls for concessions to those elements which are turning towards the proletariat, whenever and to the extent that they turn towards the proletariat, in addition to demanding a fight against those who turn towards the bourgeoisie. The result of the application of correct tactics in our country is that Menshevism has disintegrated and is disintegrating more and more, that the stubbornly opportunist leaders are becoming isolated, and that the best of the workers and the best elements among the petty-bourgeois democrats are being brought into our camp. This is a long process, and the hasty "decision"—"No compromise, no manoeuvres!"—can only hinder the work of strengthening the influence of the revolutionary proletariat and enlarging its forces.

Finally, one of the undoubted mistakes of the "Lefts" in Germany is their stubborn insistence on non-recognition of the Versailles Peace. The more "weightily" and "ponderously," the more "emphatically" and dogmatically this viewpoint is formulated (by K. Horner, for instance), the less sensible does it appear. It is not enough to repudiate the preposterous absurdities of the "National Bolsheviks" (Lauffenberg and others), who have gone to the length of advocating a bloc with the German bourgeoisie for a war against the Entente, under the present conditions of the international proletarian revolution. One must understand that the tactics of not conceding that it would be essential for a Soviet Germany (if a German Soviet republic were to arise soon) to recognise the Versailles Peace for a time and to submit to it are fundamentally wrong. It does not follow from this that the "Independents"—at a time when the Scheidemanns were in the government, when the Soviet government in Hungary had not yet been overthrown, and when the possibility of a Soviet revolution in Vienna supporting Soviet Hungary was not yet precluded—were right in putting forward, *under those circumstances*, the demand that the Versailles Peace be signed. At that time the "Independents" tacked and manoeuvred very clumsily, for they more or less ac-

cepted responsibility for the Scheidemann traitors and more or less sank from the advocacy of a merciless (and most cold-blooded) class war against the Scheidemanns to the advocacy of a "classless" or "above-class" standpoint.

But the position is now obviously such that the German Communists should not tie their hands and promise positively and without fail to repudiate the Versailles Peace in the event of the victory of Communism. That would be foolish. They must say: The Scheidemanns and the Kautskians have perpetrated a number of treacheries which hindered (and partly directly prevented) an alliance with Soviet Russia and Soviet Hungary. We Communists will do all we can to *facilitate* and *pave the way* for such an alliance; at the same time we are not absolutely obliged to repudiate the Versailles Peace, and certainly not immediately. The possibility of repudiating it successfully will depend not only on the German but also on the international successes of the Soviet movement. The Scheidemanns and Kautskians hampered this movement; we shall further it. That is the crux of the matter; that is where the fundamental difference lies. And if our class enemies, the exploiters, their lackeys, the Scheidemanns and Kautskians, have missed a number of opportunities of strengthening both the German and the international Soviet movement, of strengthening both the German and the international Soviet revolution, they are to blame. The Soviet revolution in Germany will strengthen the international Soviet movement, which is the strongest bulwark (and the only reliable, invincible and omnipotent bulwark) against the Versailles Peace and against international imperialism in general. To give prime place absolutely, unconditionally and immediately to liberation from the Versailles Peace, to give it *precedence over the question* of liberating other countries which are oppressed by imperialism from the yoke of imperialism, is petty-bourgeois nationalism (worthy of Kautsky, Hilferding, Otto Bauer and Co.) and not revolutionary internationalism. The overthrow of the bourgeoisie in any of the large European countries, including Germany, would be such a gain to the international revolution that for its sake one can, and if necessary must, tolerate a *more prolonged existence of the Versailles Peace*. If Russia, by herself, could endure the Brest-Litovsk Peace for several months to the advantage of the revolution, there is nothing impossible in a Soviet Germany, allied with Soviet Russia, enduring the existence

of the Versailles Peace for an even longer period to the advantage of the revolution.

The imperialists of France, England, etc., are trying to provoke the German Communists and to lay a trap for them: "Say that you will not sign the Versailles Peace!" And the "Left" Communists childishly fall into the trap laid for them, instead of skilfully manoeuvring against the crafty and, *at the present moment* stronger, enemy, and instead of telling him: "Now we would sign the Versailles Peace." To tie one's hands beforehand, openly to tell the enemy, who is at present better armed than we are, whether we shall fight him, and when, is stupidity and not revolutionariness. To accept battle at a time when it is obviously advantageous to the enemy and not to us is a crime; and absolutely worthless are those political leaders of the revolutionary class who are unable "to tack, manoeuvre and compromise" in order to avoid an obviously disadvantageous battle.

## IX. "LEFT-WING" COMMUNISM IN GREAT BRITAIN

THERE is no Communist Party in Great Britain yet, but there is a fresh, broad, powerful and rapidly growing Communist movement among the workers which justifies the brightest hopes. There are several political parties and organisations (the British Socialist Party, the Socialist Labour Party, the South Wales Socialist Society, the Workers' Socialist Federation) which desire to form a Communist Party and are already negotiating among themselves to this end. *The Workers' Dreadnought*, the weekly organ of the last of the organisations mentioned, in its issue of February 21, 1920, Vol. VI, No. 48, contains an article by the editor, Comrade Sylvia Pankhurst, entitled "Towards a Communist Party." In this article she outlines the progress of the negotiations between the four organisations mentioned for the formation of a united Communist Party, on the basis of affiliation to the Third International, the recognition of the Soviet system instead of parliamentarism, and the dictatorship of the proletariat. It appears that one of the greatest obstacles to the immediate formation of a united Communist Party is the disagreement over the question of parliamentary action and over the question whether the new Communist Party

should affiliate to the old, trade unionist, opportunist and social-chauvinist Labour Party which consists mostly of trade unions. The Workers' Socialist Federation and the Socialist Labour Party \* are opposed to taking part in parliamentary elections and in parliament, and they are opposed to affiliation to the Labour Party; and in this they disagree with all, or with the majority, of the members of the British Socialist Party, which they regard as the "Right wing of the Communist Parties" in Great Britain. (Page 5, Sylvia Pankhurst's article.)

Thus, the main division is the same as in Germany, notwithstanding the enormous difference in the form in which the disagreements manifest themselves (in Germany the form is more analogous to the "Russian" than it is in Great Britain) and in a number of other things. Let us examine the arguments of the "Lefts."

On the question of parliamentary action, Comrade Sylvia Pankhurst refers to an article in the same issue of her paper by Comrade W. Gallacher, who writes in the name of the Scottish Workers' Council in Glasgow.

"The above council," he says, "is definitely anti-parliamentarian, and has behind it the Left wing of the various political bodies.

"We represent the revolutionary movement in Scotland, striving continually to build up a revolutionary organisation within the industries, and a Communist Party, based on social committees, throughout the country. For a considerable time we have been sparring with the official parliamentarians. We have not considered it necessary to declare open warfare on them, *and they are afraid* to open attacks on us.

"But this state of affairs cannot long continue. We are winning all along the line.

"The rank and file of the I.L.P. in Scotland is becoming more and more disgusted with the thought of Parliament, and soviets [the Russian word transliterated into English is used] or workers' councils are being supported by almost every branch.

"This is very serious, of course, for the gentlemen who look to politics for a profession, and they are using any and every means to persuade their members to come back into the parliamentary fold.

"Revolutionary comrades *must not* [all italics by the author] give any support to this gang. Our fight here is going to be a difficult one. One of the worst features of it will be the treachery of those whose per-

\* I believe this party is opposed to affiliation to the Labour Party but is not altogether opposed to parliamentary action.

sonal ambition is a more impelling force than their regard for the revolution.

"Any support given to parliamentarism is simply assisting to put power into the hands of our British Scheidemanns and Noskes. Henderson, Clynes and Co. are hopelessly reactionary. The official I.L.P. is more and more coming under the control of middle-class Liberals, who... have found their spiritual home in the camp of Messrs. MacDonald, Snowden and Co. The official I.L.P. is bitterly hostile to the Third International, the rank and file is for it. Any support to the parliamentary opportunists is simply playing into the hands of the former.

"The B.S.P. doesn't count at all here.... What is wanted here is a sound, revolutionary, industrial organisation and Communist Party working along clear, well-defined, scientific lines. If our comrades can assist us in building these, we will take their help gladly; if they cannot, for God's sake let them keep out altogether, lest they betray the revolution by lending their support to the reactionaries, who are so eagerly clamouring for parliamentary honours (?) [the query is the author's] and who are anxious to prove they *can rule* as effectively as the boss class politicians themselves."

In my opinion this letter excellently expresses the temper and point of view of the young Communists, or of rank-and-file workers who are only just coming to Communism. This temper is very gratifying and valuable; we must learn to prize it and to support it, for without it, it would be hopeless to expect the victory of the proletarian revolution in Great Britain, or in any other country for that matter. People who can give expression to this temper of the masses, who can rouse such a temper (which is very often dormant, unrealised and unroused) among the masses, must be prized and every assistance must be given them. At the same time we must openly and frankly tell them that temper *alone* is not enough to lead the masses in the great revolutionary struggle, and that some mistakes that very loyal adherents of the cause of the revolution are about to commit, or are committing, may damage the cause of the revolution. Comrade Gallacher's letter undoubtedly betrays the germs of *all* the mistakes that are being committed by the German "Left" Communists and that were committed by the "Left" Bolsheviks in 1908 and 1918.

The writer of the letter is imbued with a noble, proletarian hatred for the bourgeois "class politicians" (a hatred understood and appreciated not only by the proletarian but by all who toil,

by all "small folk," to use a German expression). This hatred of a representative of the oppressed and exploited masses is verily the "beginning of all wisdom," the basis of every Socialist and Communist movement and of its success. But the writer apparently does not appreciate the fact that politics is a science and an art that does not drop from the skies, that it is not obtained gratis, and that if the proletariat wants to conquer the bourgeoisie it must train *its own*, proletarian "class politicians," and such as will be no worse than the bourgeois politicians.

The writer of the letter fully understands that only workers' Soviets, and not parliament, can be the instrument whereby the aims of the proletariat will be achieved. And, of course, those who have failed to understand this up to now are hopeless reactionaries, even if they are most highly educated people, most experienced politicians, most sincere Socialists, most erudite Marxists, and most honest citizens and fathers of families. But the writer of the letter does not ask, and it does not even occur to him to ask whether it is possible to bring about the victory of the Soviets over parliament without getting "pro-Soviet" politicians *into* parliament, without disrupting parliamentarism from *within*, without working within parliament for the success of the Soviets in their forthcoming task of dispersing parliament. And yet the writer of the letter expresses the absolutely correct idea that the Communist Party in Great Britain must act on *scientific* principles. Science demands, first, that the experience of other countries should be taken into account, especially if these other, also capitalist, countries are undergoing, or have recently undergone, a very similar experience; secondly, it demands that account should be taken of *all* the forces, groups, parties, classes and masses operating in the given country, and that policy should not be determined by mere desires and views, and by the degree of class consciousness and readiness for battle of only one group or party.

It is true that the Hendersons, the Clynes, the MacDonalds and Snowdens are hopelessly reactionary. It is equally true that they want to get the power into their own hands (although they prefer a coalition with the bourgeoisie), that they want "to govern" according to the old bourgeois rules, and that when they do get into power they will infallibly behave like the Scheidemanns and Noskes. All that is true. But it by no means follows that to support them is treachery to the revolution, but rather that the work-

ing class revolutionaries should, in the interests of the revolution, give these gentlemen a certain amount of parliamentary support. To make this idea clear I shall take two contemporary British political documents: (1) the speech delivered by the Prime Minister, Lloyd George, on March 18, 1920 (reported in the *Manchester Guardian* of March 19, 1920) and (2) the arguments of a "Left" Communist Comrade, Sylvia Pankhurst, in the article mentioned above.

Arguing against Asquith (who was especially invited to this meeting but declined to attend) and against those Liberals who do not want a coalition with the Conservatives but closer relations with the Labour Party (Comrade Gallacher, in his letter, also points to the fact that Liberals are joining the Independent Labour Party), Lloyd George said that a coalition, and a *close* coalition at that, between the Liberals and Conservatives was essential, otherwise there would be a victory for the Labour Party, which Lloyd George "prefers to call" a Socialist Party and which is striving for the "collective ownership" of the means of production. "In France this is called Communism," the leader of the British bourgeoisie said, putting it popularly for his auditors (Liberal members of Parliament who probably had not known it before), "in Germany it is called Socialism, and in Russia it is called Bolshevism." This is opposed to Liberal principles, explained Lloyd George, because Liberalism stands in principle for private property. "Civilisation is in danger," declared the speaker, and, therefore, the Liberals and the Conservatives must unite...

"...If you go to the agricultural areas," said Lloyd George, "I agree that you have the old party divisions as strong as ever; they are far removed from the danger. It does not walk their lanes. But when they see it, they will be as strong as some of these industrial constituencies now are. Four-fifths of this country is industrial and commercial; hardly one-fifth is agricultural. It is one of the things I have constantly in my mind when I think of the dangers of the future here. In France the population is agricultural, and you have a solid body of opinion which does not move very rapidly, and which is not very easily excited by revolutionary movements. That is not the case here. This country is more top-heavy than any country in the world, and if it begins to rock, the crash here, for that reason, will be greater than in any land."

From this the reader will see that Mr. Lloyd George is not only a very clever man, but that he has also learned a great deal from the Marxists. It would not be a sin for us to learn something from Lloyd George.

It is interesting to note the following episode which occurred in the course of the discussion that followed Lloyd George's speech:

*Mr. Wallace, M.P.:* I should like to ask what the Prime Minister considers the effect might be in the industrial constituencies upon the industrial workers, so many of whom are Liberals at the present time and from whom we get so much support. Would not a possible result be to cause an immediate overwhelming accession of strength to the Labour Party from men who are at present our cordial supporters?

*The Prime Minister:* I take a totally different view. The fact that Liberals are fighting among themselves undoubtedly drives a considerable number of Liberals in despair to the Labour Party, where you get a considerable body of Liberals, very able men, whose business it is to discredit the government. The result is undoubtedly to bring a good accession of public sentiment to the Labour Party. It does not go to the Liberals who are outside, it goes to the Labour Party, the by-elections show that.

I would like to say in passing that this argument shows especially how muddled even the cleverest members of the bourgeoisie have become and how they cannot help committing irreparable stupidities. That in fact will cause the downfall of the bourgeoisie. But our people may commit stupidities (provided, of course, that they are not too serious and are rectified in time) and yet in the long run come out the victors.

The second political document is the following argument advanced by a "Left" Communist, Comrade Sylvia Pankhurst:

"... Comrade Inkpin (the General Secretary of the British Socialist Party) refers to the Labour Party 'as the main body of the working class movement.' Another comrade of the British Socialist Party, at the conference of the Third International just held, put the British Socialist Party view more strongly. He said: 'We regard the Labour Party as the organised working class.'

"But we do not take this view of the Labour Party. The Labour Party is very large numerically, though its membership is to a great extent quiescent and apathetic, consisting of many workers who have



joined the trade unions because their workmates are trade unionists, and to share the friendly benefits.

"But we recognize that the great size of the Labour Party is also due to the fact that it is the creation of a school of thought beyond which the majority of the British working class has not yet emerged, though great changes are at work in the mind of the people which will presently alter this state of affairs....

"The British Labour Party, like the social-patriotic organisations of other countries, will, in the natural development of society, inevitably come into power. It is for the Communists to build up the forces which will overthrow the social-patriots, and in this country we must not delay or falter in that work.

"We must not dissipate our energy in adding to the strength of the Labour Party; its rise to power is inevitable. We must concentrate on making a Communist movement that will vanquish it.

"The Labour Party will soon be forming a government; the revolutionary opposition must make ready to attack it."

Thus the Liberal bourgeoisie is abandoning the historical "two-party" (exploiters') system which has been hallowed by age-long experience and which has been extremely advantageous to the exploiters, and considers it necessary to unite their forces to fight the Labour Party. A number of the Liberals are deserting to the Labour Party like rats from a sinking ship. The "Left" Communists believe that the rise of the Labour Party to power is inevitable and they admit that at present it has the support of the majority of the workers. From this they draw the strange conclusion which Comrade Sylvia Pankhurst formulates as follows:

"The Communist Party must not enter into compromises.... The Communist Party must keep its doctrine pure, and its independence of reformism inviolate; its mission is to lead the way, without stopping or turning, by the direct road to the Communist revolution."

On the contrary, the fact that the majority of the workers in Great Britain still follow the lead of the British Kerenskys or Scheidemanns and that they have not yet had the experience of a government composed of these people, which experience was required in Russia and Germany to secure the mass passage of the workers to Communism, undoubtedly shows that the British Communists *should* participate in parliamentary action, that they should from *within* Parliament help the masses of the workers to see

the results of a Henderson and Snowden government in practice, that they should help the Hendersons and Snowdens to defeat Lloyd George and Churchill combined. To act otherwise would mean placing difficulties in the way of the revolution; for revolution is impossible without a change in the views of the majority of the working class, and this change is brought about by the political experience of the masses, and never by propaganda alone. "To march forward without compromise and without turning from the path"—if this is said by an obviously impotent minority of the workers who know (or at all events should know) that, if Henderson and Snowden gain the victory over Lloyd George and Churchill, the majority will very soon become disappointed in their leaders and will begin to support Communism (or at all events will adopt an attitude of neutrality, and for the most part of benevolent neutrality, towards the Communists), then this slogan is obviously mistaken. It is just as if 10,000 soldiers were to fling themselves into battle against 50,000 enemy soldiers, when it would have been wiser to "stop," to "turn," or even to effect a "compromise" so as to await the arrival of the 100,000 reinforcements which were on their way but which could not go into action immediately. That is intellectual childishness and not the serious tactics of a revolutionary class.

The fundamental law of revolution, which has been confirmed by all revolutions, and particularly by all three Russian revolutions in the twentieth century, is as follows: it is not enough for revolution that the exploited and oppressed masses should understand the impossibility of living in the old way and demand changes; what is required for revolution is that the exploiters should not be able to live and rule in the old way. Only when the "*lower classes*" *do not want* the old way and when the "*upper classes*" *cannot carry on in the old way* can revolution win. This truth may be expressed in other words: revolution is impossible without a nationwide crisis (affecting both the exploited and the exploiters). It follows that revolution requires, firstly, that a majority of the workers (or at least a majority of the class-conscious, thinking and politically active workers) should fully understand that revolution is necessary and be ready to sacrifice their lives for it; secondly, that the ruling classes should be passing through a governmental crisis which would draw even the most backward masses into politics (a symptom of every real revolution is a rapid

tenfold and even hundredfold increase in the number of representatives of the toiling and oppressed masses—who have hitherto been apathetic—capable of waging the political struggle), weaken the government and make it possible for the revolutionaries to overthrow it rapidly.

In Great Britain, as can incidentally be seen from Lloyd George's speech, both conditions for a successful proletarian revolution are clearly ripening. And the mistakes the "Left" Communists are committing are particularly dangerous at the present time precisely because certain revolutionaries are not displaying a sufficiently thoughtful, attentive, intelligent and shrewd attitude toward either of these conditions. If we are the party of the revolutionary *class*, and not a revolutionary group, if we want the *masses* to follow us (and unless we do, we stand the *risk* of remaining mere windbags), we must, firstly, help Henderson or Snowden to beat Lloyd George and Churchill (or, rather, to compel the former to beat the latter, because the former *are afraid of victory!*); secondly, we must help the majority of the working class to convince themselves by their own experience that we are right, that is, that the Hendersons and Snowdens are utterly worthless, that they are petty bourgeois and treacherous and that their bankruptcy is inevitable; thirdly, we must bring nearer the moment when, *on the basis* of the disappointment of the majority of the workers in the Hendersons, it will be possible with serious chances of success to overthrow the government of the Hendersons at once; because if the very clever and imposing big-bourgeois, not petty-bourgeois, Lloyd George is betraying utter consternation and is more and more weakening himself (and the bourgeoisie as a whole) by his "friction" with Churchill one day and his "friction" with Asquith the next, how much greater will be the consternation of a Henderson government!

I will put it more concretely. In my opinion, the British Communists should unite their four (all very weak and some, very, very weak) parties and groups to form a single Communist Party on the basis of the principles of the Third International and of *obligatory* participation in Parliament. The Communist Party should propose a "compromise" to the Hendersons and Snowdens, an election agreement: let us fight Lloyd George and the Conservatives hand in hand, divide the parliamentary seats in proportion to the number of votes cast for the Labour Party and for

the Communist Party (not at the elections, but in a special vote), and let us retain *complete liberty* to carry on agitation, propaganda and political activity. Without the latter condition, of course, no such bloc can be concluded, for it would be treachery; the British Communists must insist on and secure complete liberty to expose the Hendersons and the Snowdens in the same way as (for fifteen years, 1903-17) the Russian Bolsheviks insisted on and secured it in relation to the Russian Hendersons and Snowdens, *i.e.*, the Mensheviks.

If the Hendersons and the Snowdens consent to a bloc on these terms, we shall be the gainers, because the number of parliamentary seats is of no importance to us; we are not chasing after seats, we can yield on this point (the Hendersons and particularly their new friends—or new masters—the Liberals who have joined the Independent Labour Party are most anxious to get seats). We shall be the gainers, because we shall carry *our* agitation among the *masses* at a time when Lloyd George *himself* has “incensed” them, and we shall not only help the Labour Party to establish its government more quickly, but also help the masses to understand more quickly the Communist propaganda that we shall carry on against the Hendersons without curtailment and without evasions.

If the Hendersons and the Snowdens reject a bloc with us on these terms we shall gain still more, for we shall have at once shown the *masses* (note that even in the purely Menshevik and utterly opportunist Independent Labour Party the *rank and file* is in favour of Soviets) that the Hendersons prefer *their* close relations to the capitalists to the unity of all the workers. We shall immediately gain in the eyes of the *masses* who, particularly after the brilliant, highly correct and highly useful (for Communism) explanations given by Lloyd George, will sympathise with the idea of uniting all the workers against the Lloyd George-Conservative alliance. We shall gain immediately because we shall have demonstrated to the masses that the Hendersons and the Snowdens are afraid to *beat* Lloyd George, are afraid to take power alone, and are *secretly* striving to get the support of Lloyd George, who is *openly* stretching out a hand to the Conservatives against the Labour Party. It should be noted that in Russia, after the Revolution of February 27, 1917, the propaganda of the Bolsheviks against the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries (*i.e.*, the Russian Hendersons and Snowdens) benefitted precisely because of a

circumstance of this kind. We said to the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries: take over the entire power without the bourgeoisie, because you have the majority in the Soviets (at the First All-Russian Congress of Soviets held in June 1917, the Bolsheviks had only 13 per cent of the votes). But the Russian Hendersons and Snowdens feared to take power without the bourgeoisie, and when the bourgeoisie delayed the elections to the Constituent Assembly, knowing perfectly well that the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries would have the majority in it \* (they had formed a close political bloc and both really represented *nothing but* the petty-bourgeois democracy), the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries were unable energetically and consistently to oppose these delays.

If the Hendersons and the Snowdens reject a bloc with the Communists, the Communists will gain immediately by winning the sympathy of the masses and discrediting the Hendersons and Snowdens, and if as a result we do lose a few parliamentary seats, it is a matter of no importance to us. We would put up our candidates in a very few but absolutely safe constituencies, namely, where our candidate would not let in the Liberal instead of the Labour candidate. We would take part in the election campaign, distribute leaflets advocating Communism, and in *all* constituencies where we have no candidates we would urge the electors to *vote for the Labour candidate and against the bourgeois candidate*. Comrades Sylvia Pankhurst and Gallacher are mistaken in thinking that this is a betrayal of Communism, or a renunciation of the struggle against the social-traitors. On the contrary, the Communist revolution undoubtedly stands to gain by it.

The British Communists very often find it hard at present to approach the masses and even to get them to listen to them. If I come out as a Communist and call upon the workers to vote for Henderson against Lloyd George, they will certainly give me a hearing. And I will be able to explain in a popular manner not only why Soviets are better than Parliament and why the dictatorship of the proletariat is better than the dictatorship of Churchill

\* The elections to the Constituent Assembly in Russia in November 1917 resulted in the following (based on returns embracing over 36,000,000 votes): the Bolsheviks obtained 25 per cent of the votes cast; the various parties of the landlords and capitalists obtained 13 per cent, and the petty-bourgeois democratic parties, *i.e.*, the Socialist-Revolutionaries, Mensheviks and a number of small kindred groups, obtained 62 per cent.

(disguised by the signboard of bourgeois "democracy"), but also that I wanted with my vote to support Henderson in the same way as the rope supports a hanged man—that the impending establishment of a Henderson government will prove that I am right, will bring the masses over to my side, and will accelerate the political death of the Hendersons and the Snowdens just as was the case with their confrères in Russia and Germany.

And if the objection is raised that these tactics are too "subtle," or too complicated, that the masses will not understand them, that they will split up and scatter our forces, will prevent us concentrating them on the Soviet revolution, etc., I will reply to the "Lefts" who raise this objection: don't ascribe your dogmatism to the masses! The masses in Russia are probably no better educated than the masses in England; if anything they are less so. Yet the masses understood the Bolsheviks; and the fact that *on the eve* of the Soviet revolution, in September 1917, the Bolsheviks put up their candidates for a bourgeois parliament (the Constituent Assembly) and *on the morrow* of the Soviet revolution, in November 1917, took part in the election to this Constituent Assembly, which they dispersed on January 5, 1918, did not hamper the Bolsheviks, but on the contrary, helped them.

I cannot deal here with the second point of disagreement among the British Communists, *viz.*, the question of affiliating to the Labour Party. I have too little material at my disposal on this question, which is a particularly complex one in view of the extremely unique character of the British Labour Party, the very structure of which is so unlike the ordinary political party on the Continent. It is beyond doubt, however, first, that on this question, too, those who think of deducing the tactics of the revolutionary proletariat from principles like: "The Communist Party must keep its doctrine pure and its independence of reformism inviolate; its mission is to lead the way, without stopping or turning, by the direct road to the Communist revolution"—will fall into error. For such principles are merely a repetition of the mistakes committed by the French Communard-Blanquists, who, in 1874, "repudiated" all compromises and all intermediate stations. Secondly, it is beyond doubt that in this question too, as always, the task is to learn to apply the general and basic principles of Communism to the *peculiar* relations between classes and parties, to the *peculiar features* of the objective development towards

Communism which are characteristic of each country and which must be studied, discovered, divined.

But this must be discussed not in connection with British Communism alone, but in connection with the general conclusions concerning the development of Communism in all capitalist countries. We shall now proceed to deal with this theme.

## X. SOME CONCLUSIONS

THE Russian bourgeois revolution of 1905 revealed a very peculiar turn of affairs in world history: in one of the most backward capitalist countries the strike movement attained a breadth and power without precedent anywhere in the world. In the *first month of 1905 alone* the number of strikers was over ten times the *annual* average for the previous ten years (1895-1904); and from January to October 1905 strikes grew continuously and reached enormous dimensions. Under the influence of a number of entirely unique historical conditions, backward Russia was the first to show the world not only a spasmodic growth of the independent activity of the oppressed masses at a time of revolution (this has happened in all great revolutions), but also a significance of the proletariat infinitely exceeding the numerical ratio of the latter to the total population, a combination of the economic strike and the political strike, the transformation of the latter into armed insurrection, and the birth of a new form of mass struggle and mass organisation of the classes oppressed by capitalism, *viz.*, the Soviets.

The revolutions of February and October 1917 led to the all-round development of the Soviets on a national scale, and to their victory in the proletarian, Socialist revolution. And in less than two years there became revealed the international character of the Soviets, the spread of this form of struggle and form of organisation to the world working class movement, and the historical mission of the Soviets as the grave-digger, heir and successor of bourgeois parliamentarism, and of bourgeois democracy in general.

More than that, the history of the working class movement now shows that in all countries it is about to experience (and has already begun to experience) a struggle between Communism,

which is growing, gaining strength and marching towards victory, and, first and foremost, its *own* (in each country) "Menshevism," *i.e.*, opportunism and social-chauvinism, and, secondly—as a sort of supplement—"Left-wing" Communism. The former struggle has developed in all countries, apparently without a single exception, as a struggle between the Second International (already virtually dead) and the Third International. The latter struggle can be observed in Germany, Great Britain, Italy, America (at least a certain *section* of the Industrial Workers of the World and the anarcho-syndicalist trends defend the errors of "Left-wing" Communism, while, side by side, we have an almost universal, almost unanimous acceptance of the Soviet system) and France (the attitude of a section of the former syndicalists towards political parties and parliamentarism, again side by side with the acceptance of the Soviet system), in other words, the struggle is undoubtedly being waged not only on a national but even on a world-wide scale.

But while the working class movement is everywhere passing through what is practically the same kind of preparatory school for victory over the bourgeoisie, it is in each country achieving this development in *its own way*. The big, advanced capitalist countries are marching along this road *much more rapidly* than did Bolshevism, which history granted fifteen years to prepare itself, as an organised political trend, for victory. The Third International has already scored a decisive victory in the short space of one year; it has defeated the Second, yellow, social-chauvinist International, which only a few months ago was incomparably stronger than the Third International and seemed to be stable and strong and enjoyed the all-round support—direct and indirect, material (Cabinet posts, passports, the press) and ideological—of the world bourgeoisie.

The whole point now is that the Communists of every country should quite consciously take into account both the main fundamental tasks of the struggle against opportunism and "Left" doctrinairism and the *specific features* which this struggle assumes and inevitably must assume in each separate country in conformity with the peculiar features of its economics, politics, culture, national composition (Ireland, etc.), its colonies, religious divisions, etc. Everywhere we observe that dissatisfaction with the Second International is spreading and growing, both because of its oppor-



tunism and because of its inability, or incapacity, to create a really centralised, a really leading centre that would be capable of directing the international tactics of the revolutionary proletariat in its struggle for a world Soviet republic. We must clearly realise that such a leading centre cannot under any circumstances be built up on stereotyped, mechanically equalised and identical tactical rules of struggle. As long as national and state differences exist among peoples and countries—and these differences will continue to exist for a very long time even after the dictatorship of the proletariat has been established on a world scale—the unity of international tactics of the Communist working class movement of all countries demands, not the elimination of variety, not the abolition of national differences (that is a foolish dream at the present moment), but such an application of the *fundamental* principles of Communism (Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat) as will *correctly modify* these principles in *certain particulars*, correctly adapt and apply them to national and national-state differences. The main task of the historical period through which all the advanced countries (and not only the advanced countries) are now passing is to investigate, study, seek, divine, grasp that which is peculiarly national, specifically national in the *concrete manner* in which each country *approaches* the fulfilment of the *single* international task, the victory over opportunism and “Left” doctrinairism within the working class movement, the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, and the establishment of a Soviet republic and a proletarian dictatorship. The main thing—not everything by a very long way, of course, but the main thing—has already been achieved in that the vanguard of the working class has been won over, in that it has ranged itself on the side of the Soviet power against parliamentarism, on the side of the dictatorship of the proletariat against bourgeois democracy. Now all efforts, all attention, must be concentrated on the *next* step—which seems, and from a certain standpoint really is, less fundamental, but which, on the other hand, is actually much closer to the practical carrying out of the task—namely, on seeking the forms of *transition* or *approach* to the proletarian revolution.

The proletarian vanguard has been ideologically won over. That is the main thing. Without it not even the first step towards victory can be made. But it is still a fairly long way from victory. Victory cannot be won with the vanguard alone. To throw the

vanguard alone into the decisive battle, before the whole class, before the broad masses have taken up a position either of direct support of the vanguard, or at least of benevolent neutrality towards it and one in which they cannot possibly support the enemy, would be not merely folly but a crime. And in order that actually the whole class, that actually the broad masses of toilers and those oppressed by capital may take up such a position, propaganda and agitation alone are not enough. For this the masses must have their own political experience. Such is the fundamental law of all great revolutions, now confirmed with astonishing force and vividness not only in Russia but also in Germany. Not only the uncultured, often illiterate masses of Russia, but the highly cultured, entirely literate masses of Germany had to realise through their own painful experience the absolute impotence and spinelessness, the absolute helplessness and servility to the bourgeoisie, the utter vileness of the government of the knights of the Second International, the absolute inevitability of a dictatorship of the extreme reactionaries (Kornilov in Russia, Kapp and Co. in Germany) as the only alternative to a dictatorship of the proletariat, in order to turn them resolutely toward Communism.

The immediate task that confronts the class-conscious vanguard of the international labour movement, *i.e.*, the Communist Parties, groups and trends, is to be able to *lead* the broad masses (now, for the most part, slumbering, apathetic, hidebound, inert and dormant) to their new position, or, rather, to be able to lead *not only* their own party, but also these masses in their approach, their transition to the new position. While the first historical task (*viz.*, that of winning over the class-conscious vanguard of the proletariat to the side of the Soviet power and the dictatorship of the working class) could not be accomplished without a complete ideological and political victory over opportunism and social-chauvinism, the second task, which now becomes the immediate task, and which consists in being able to lead *the masses* to the new position that will ensure the victory of the vanguard in the revolution, this immediate task cannot be accomplished without the liquidation of "Left" doctrinairism, without completely overcoming and getting rid of its mistakes.

As long as the question was (and in so far as it still is) one of winning over the vanguard of the proletariat to Communism, so long, and to that extent, propaganda took first place; even propa-

ganda circles, with all the imperfections that circles suffer from, are useful under these conditions and produce fruitful results. But when it is a question of the practical activities of the masses, of the disposition, if one may so express it, of vast armies, of the alignment of *all* the class forces of the given society *for the final and decisive battle*, then propaganda habits alone, the mere repetition of the truths of "pure" Communism, are of no avail. In these circumstances one must not count up to a thousand, as the propagandist who belongs to a small group that has not yet led masses really does; in these circumstances one must count in millions and tens of millions. In these circumstances we must not only ask ourselves whether we have convinced the vanguard of the revolutionary class, but also whether the historically effective forces of *all* classes—positively of all the classes of the given society without exception—are aligned in such a way that the decisive battle has fully matured; in such a way that (1) all the class forces hostile to us have become sufficiently entangled, sufficiently at loggerheads with each other, have sufficiently weakened themselves in a struggle which is beyond their strength; that (2) all the vacillating, wavering, unstable, intermediate elements—the petty bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeois democrats, as distinct from the bourgeoisie—have sufficiently exposed themselves in the eyes of the people, and have sufficiently disgraced themselves through their practical bankruptcy; and that (3) among the proletariat a mass sentiment in favour of supporting the most determined, supremely bold, revolutionary action against the bourgeoisie has arisen and begun vigorously to grow. Then revolution is indeed ripe; then, indeed, if we have correctly gauged all the conditions indicated, briefly outlined above, and if we have chosen the moment rightly, our victory is assured.

The divergences between the Churchills and the Lloyd Georges—with insignificant national differences these political types exist in *all* countries—on the one hand, and between the Hendersons and the Lloyd Georges on the other, are quite unimportant and petty from the standpoint of pure, *i.e.*, abstract Communism, *i.e.*, Communism that has not yet matured to the stage of practical, mass, political action. But from the standpoint of this practical mass action, these differences are very, very important. The whole point, the whole task of the Communist, who wants to be not merely a class-conscious, convinced and intellectually consistent

propagandist but a practical leader of the *masses* in the revolution, is to take these differences into account, to determine the moment when the inevitable conflicts between these "friends," which will weaken all *the "friends" taken together* and render them impotent, will have completely matured. The strictest loyalty to the ideas of Communism must be combined with the ability to make all the necessary practical compromises, to manoeuvre, to make agreements, zigzags, retreats and so on, so as to accelerate the coming to power and subsequent loss of political power of the Hendersons (the heroes of the Second International, if we are not to mention the names of individuals; the representatives of petty-bourgeois democracy who call themselves Socialists); to accelerate their inevitable bankruptcy in practice, which will enlighten the masses in the spirit of our ideas, in the direction of Communism; to accelerate the inevitable friction, quarrels, conflicts and complete disintegration among the Hendersons, the Lloyd Georges and Churchills (Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries, Constitutional-Democrats, Monarchists; Scheidemanns, the bourgeoisie, the Kappists, etc.); and to select the proper moment when the disintegration among these "pillars of the sacred right of private property" is at its height, in order, by a determined attack of the proletariat, to defeat them all and capture political power.

History generally, and the history of revolutions in particular, is always richer in content, more varied, more many-sided, more lively and "subtle" than even the best parties and the most class-conscious vanguards of the most advanced classes imagine. This is understandable, because even the best vanguards express the class consciousness, will, passion and imagination of tens of thousands, whereas the revolution is made, at the moment of its climax and the exertion of all human capacities, by the class consciousness, will, passion and imagination of tens of millions, spurred on by a most acute struggle of classes. From this follow two very important practical conclusions: first, that in order to fulfil its task the revolutionary class must be able to master *all* forms or sides of social activity without exception (completing, after the capture of political power, sometimes at great risk and very great danger, what it did not complete before the capture of power); second, that the revolutionary class must be ready to pass from one form to another in the quickest and most unexpected manner.

Everyone will agree that an army which does not train itself

to wield all arms, all the means and methods of warfare that the enemy possesses, or may possess, behaves in an unwise or even in criminal manner. But this applies to politics even more than it does to war. In politics it is harder to forecast what methods of warfare will be applicable and useful to us under certain future conditions. Unless we master all means of warfare, we may suffer grave and even decisive defeat if changes in the position of the other classes that do not depend on us bring to the forefront forms of activity in which we are particularly weak. If, however, we master all means of warfare, we shall certainly be victorious, because we represent the interests of the really advanced and really revolutionary class, even if circumstances do not permit us to use weapons that are most dangerous to the enemy, weapons that are most swift in dealing mortal blows. Inexperienced revolutionaries often think that legal methods of struggle are opportunist because in this field the bourgeoisie has most frequently (especially in "peaceful," non-revolutionary times) deceived and fooled the workers, and that illegal methods of struggle are revolutionary. But that is not true. What is true is that those parties and leaders are opportunists and traitors to the working class who are unable or unwilling (don't say you cannot, say you won't!) to adopt illegal methods of struggle in conditions such as those which prevailed, for example, during the imperialist war of 1914-18, when the bourgeoisie of the freest democratic countries deceived the workers in the most insolent and brutal manner, forbidding the truth to be told about the predatory character of the war. But revolutionaries who are unable to combine illegal forms of struggle with *every* form of legal struggle are poor revolutionaries indeed. It is not difficult to be a revolutionary when the revolution has already flared up and is raging, when everybody is joining the revolution just from infatuation, because it is the fashion, and sometimes even from careerist motives. After its victory, the proletariat has to make most strenuous efforts, to suffer the pains of martyrdom, one might say, to "liberate" itself from such pseudo-revolutionaries. It is far more difficult—and far more useful—to be a revolutionary when the conditions for direct, open, really mass and really revolutionary struggle *do not yet exist*, to defend the interests of the revolution (by propaganda, agitation and organisation) in non-revolutionary bodies and even in downright reactionary bodies, in non-revolutionary circumstances, among the masses who are in-

capable of immediately appreciating the need for revolutionary methods of action. The main task of contemporary Communism in Western Europe and America is to learn to seek, to find, to correctly determine the specific path or the particular turn of events that will *bring* the masses *right up against* the real, last, decisive, and great revolutionary struggle.

Take England, for example. We cannot tell, and no one can tell beforehand, how soon the real proletarian revolution will flare up there, and *what* immediate cause will most serve to rouse it, kindle it, and impel very wide masses who are at present dormant into the struggle. Hence it is our duty to carry on our preparatory work in such a way as to be "well shod on all four feet" (as the late Plekhanov, when he was a Marxist and revolutionary, was fond of saying). It is possible that the "breach" will be forced, "the ice broken" by a parliamentary crisis, or by a crisis arising out of the colonial and imperialist contradictions that are becoming hopelessly entangled and increasingly painful and acute, or perhaps by some third cause, etc. We are not discussing the kind of struggle that will *determine* the fate of the proletarian revolution in England (not a single Communist has any doubt on that score; as far as we are concerned this question is settled, and settled definitely); what we are discussing is the *immediate cause* that will rouse the at present dormant proletarian masses and bring them right up against the revolution. Let us not forget that in the French bourgeois republic, for example, in a situation which from both the international and national aspect was a hundred times less revolutionary than the present, one of the many thousands of dishonest tricks the reactionary military caste play (the Dreyfus case) \* was enough to serve as the "unexpected" and "petty" immediate cause that brought the people to the verge of civil war!

The Communists in Great Britain should constantly, unremittingly and undeviatingly utilise parliamentary elections and all the vicissitudes of the Irish, colonial and world imperialist policy of the British government, and all other spheres and sides of public life, and work in all of them in a new way, in a Communist way, in the spirit of the Third, and not of the Second, International. I have neither the time nor the space here to describe the methods

\* The arrest and imprisonment of Captain Dreyfus in 1894, a French officer of Jewish origin, on charges trumped-up by a reactionary and anti-Semitic military clique.—*Ed.*

of "Russian" "Bolshevik" participation in parliamentary elections and in the parliamentary struggle; but I can assure the foreign Communists that it was totally unlike the usual West European parliamentary campaign. From this the conclusion is often drawn: "Well, that was in Russia; in our country parliamentarism is different." This conclusion is wrong. The very reason the Communists, the adherents of the Third International in all countries, exist at all is to *change*, all along the line, in all spheres of life, the old Socialist, craft-unionist, syndicalist, parliamentary work into *new* work, Communist work. In Russia, too, we had a great deal of opportunist and purely bourgeois commercialism and capitalist swindling during election times. The Communists in Western Europe and America must learn to create a new, unusual, non-opportunist, non-careerist parliamentarism; the Communist Parties must issue their slogans; real proletarians, with the help of the unorganised and downtrodden poor, should scatter and distribute leaflets, canvass workers' houses and the cottages of the rural proletarians and peasants in the remote villages (fortunately there are not nearly so many remote villages in Europe as there are in Russia, and in England there are very few); they should go into the most common taverns, penetrate into the unions, societies and casual meetings where the common people gather, and talk to the people, not in scientific (and not in very parliamentary) language, they should not at all strive to "get seats" in parliament, but should everywhere strive to rouse the minds of the masses and to draw them into the struggle, to catch the bourgeois on their own statements, to utilise the apparatus they have set up, the elections they have appointed, the appeals to the country they have made, and to tell the people what Bolshevism is in a way that has never been possible (under bourgeois rule) outside of election times (not counting, of course, times of big strikes, when, in Russia, a *similar* apparatus for widespread popular agitation worked even more intensively). It is very difficult to do this in Western Europe and America, very, very difficult; but it can and must be done, because the tasks of Communism cannot be fulfilled without effort; and every effort must be made to fulfil *practical* tasks, ever more varied, ever more closely connected with all branches of social life, *winning* branch after branch and sphere after sphere *from the bourgeoisie*.

In Great Britain, too, the work of propaganda, agitation and

organisation among the armed forces and among the oppressed and unfranchised nationalities in "one's own" state (Ireland, the colonies) must be organised in a new way (not in a Socialist, but a Communist way, not in a reformist, but a revolutionary way). Because in the epoch of imperialism generally, and especially now, after the war, which tormented the people and quickly opened their eyes to the truth (*viz.*, that tens of millions of people were killed and maimed only for the purpose of deciding whether the British or the German pirates should plunder the largest number of countries), all these spheres of social life are being crammed full of inflammable material and are creating numerous causes of conflict, crises and the accentuation of the class struggle. We do not and cannot know which spark—of the innumerable sparks that are flying around in all countries as a result of the economic and political world crisis—will kindle the conflagration, in the sense of specially rousing the masses, and we must, therefore, with the aid of our new, Communist principles, set to work to "stir up" all and sundry, even the oldest, mustiest and seemingly hopeless spheres, for otherwise we shall not be able to cope with our tasks, we shall not be all-round, we shall not master all arms and we shall not be prepared either for victory over the bourgeoisie (which arranged all sides of social life—and has now disarranged them in its bourgeois way) or for the impending Communist reorganisation of the whole of social life after the victory.

After the proletarian revolution in Russia and its victories on an international scale, which the bourgeoisie and the philistines did not expect, the whole world has changed, and everywhere the bourgeoisie has also changed. It is terrified by "Bolshevism," incensed with it almost to the point of frenzy, and precisely for that reason it is, on the other hand, accelerating the progress of events and, on the other, concentrating attention on the suppression of Bolshevism by force, and thereby weakening its position in a number of other fields. The Communists in all advanced countries should make allowances for both these circumstances in their tactics.

When the Russian Cadets and Kerensky raised a furious hue-and-cry against the Bolsheviks—especially after April 1917, and more particularly in June and July 1917—they "overdid" it. Millions of copies of bourgeois papers, shrieking in every key against



the Bolsheviks, helped to induce the masses to appraise Bolshevism, and, apart from the newspapers, all public life was thoroughly permeated with discussions about Bolshevism just because of the "zeal" of the bourgeoisie. The millionaires of all countries are now behaving on an international scale in a way that deserves our heartiest thanks. They are hunting Bolshevism with the same zeal as did Kerensky and Co.; they are, moreover, "overdoing" it and *helping* us just as Kerensky did. When the French bourgeoisie makes Bolshevism the central issue at the elections, and abuses the comparatively moderate or vacillating Socialists for being Bolsheviks; when the American bourgeoisie, having completely lost its head, seizes thousands and thousands of people on suspicion of Bolshevism, creates an atmosphere of panic and broadcasts stories of Bolshevik plots; when the British bourgeoisie—the most "solid" in the world—despite all its wisdom and experience, commits acts of incredible stupidity, founds richly endowed "anti-Bolshevik societies," creates a special literature on Bolshevism, and hires an extra number of scientists, agitators and priests to combat it—we must bow and thank the capitalist gentlemen. They are working for us. They are helping us to get the masses interested in the nature and significance of Bolshevism. And they cannot act otherwise; for they have *already* failed to stifle Bolshevism by "silence."

But at the same time, the bourgeoisie practically sees only one side of Bolshevism, *viz.*, insurrection, violence, terror; it therefore strives to prepare itself for resistance and opposition particularly in *this* field. It is possible that in certain instances, in certain countries, and for more or less brief periods, it will succeed in this. We must reckon with such a possibility, and there will be absolutely nothing terrible for us if it does succeed. Communism "springs" from positively all sides of public life; its shoots are to be seen literally everywhere. The "contagion" (to use the favourite metaphor of the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois police, the one most "pleasant" to them) has very thoroughly permeated the organism and has completely impregnated it. If one of the channels is "stopped up" with special care, the "contagion" will find another, sometimes a very unexpected one. Life will assert itself. Let the bourgeoisie rave, work itself into a frenzy, go to extremes, commit follies, take vengeance on the Bolsheviks in advance and endeavour to kill off (in India, Hungary, Germany, etc.) hun-

dreds, thousands, and hundreds of thousands more of yesterday's and tomorrow's Bolsheviks. In acting thus, the bourgeoisie is acting as all classes doomed by history have acted. Communists should know that the future in any case belongs to them; therefore, we can (and must) combine the most intense passion in the great revolutionary struggle with the coolest and most sober estimation of the frenzied ravings of the bourgeoisie. The Russian Revolution was cruelly defeated in 1905; the Russian Bolsheviks were defeated in July 1917; over 15,000 German Communists were slaughtered \* as a result of the skilful provocation and cunning manoeuvres of Scheidemann and Noske in conjunction with the bourgeoisie and monarchist generals; White terror is raging in Finland and Hungary. But in all cases and in all countries Communism is becoming steeled and is growing; its roots are so deep that persecution does not weaken it, does not debilitate it, but strengthens it. Only one thing is lacking to enable us to march forward more confidently and firmly to victory, namely, the universal and thoroughly thought-out appreciation by all Communists in all countries of the necessity of displaying the utmost *flexibility* in their tactics. Communism, which is developing magnificently in the advanced countries particularly, now lacks this appreciation and the ability to apply it in practice.

What happened to leaders of the Second International, such highly erudite Marxists devoted to Socialism as Kautsky, Otto Bauer and others, could (and should) serve as a useful lesson. They fully appreciated the need for flexible tactics; they learned and taught Marxian dialectics (and much of what they have done in this respect will forever remain a valuable contribution to Socialist literature); but *in the application* of these dialectics they committed such a mistake, or proved in practice to be so *undialectical*, so incapable of taking into account the rapid change of forms and the rapid acquiring of new content by the old forms, that their fate is not much more enviable than that of Hyndman, Guesde and Plekhanov. The main reason for their bankruptcy was that they were "enchanted" by one definite form of growth of the working class movement and of Socialism, they forgot all about the one-sidedness of this form, they were afraid of seeing the sharp break which objective conditions made inevitable, and continued to repeat simple, routine, and at a first glance, incontestable

\* The attack organised by the Social-Democratic government in 1919.—Ed.

truths, such as: "three is more than two." But politics is more like algebra than arithmetic; it is more like higher mathematics than lower mathematics. In reality, all the old forms of the Socialist movement have acquired a new content, and, consequently, a new sign, the "minus" sign, has appeared in front of all the figures; but our wiseacres stubbornly continued (and still continue) to persuade themselves and others that "minus three" is more than "minus two"!

We must try to prevent Communists making the same mistake, only the other way round; or, rather, we must see to it that the *same mistake*, only the other way round, made by the "Left" Communists is corrected as soon as possible and is overcome as quickly and as painlessly as possible. It is not only Right doctrinairism that is a mistake; Left doctrinairism is also a mistake. Of course, the mistake of Left doctrinairism in Communism is at present a thousand times less dangerous and less significant than the mistake of Right doctrinairism (*i.e.*, social-chauvinism and Kautskyism); but, after all, that is only due to the fact that Left Communism is a very young trend, that it is only just coming into being. It is only for this reason that, under certain conditions, the disease can be easily cured; and we must set to work to cure it with the utmost energy.

The old forms have burst asunder, for it has turned out that their new content—an anti-proletarian and reactionary content—had attained inordinate development. We now have what from the standpoint of the development of international Communism is such a lasting, strong and powerful content of work (for the Soviet power, for the dictatorship of the proletariat) that it can *and must* manifest itself in every form, both new and old, it can and must regenerate, conquer and subjugate all forms, not only the new, but also the old—not for the purpose of reconciling itself with the old, but for the purpose of converting all and every form, new and old, into a weapon for the complete, final, decisive and irrevocable victory of Communism.

The Communists must exert every effort to direct the working class movement and social development in general along the straightest and quickest path to the universal victory of the Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat. That is an incontestable truth. But it is enough to take one little step further—a step that might seem to be in the same direction—and truth is

transformed into error! We have only to say, as the German and British "Left" Communists say, that we recognise only one road, only the straight road, that we do not agree with tacking, manoeuvring, compromising—and it will be a mistake which may cause, and in part has already caused, and is causing, very serious harm to Communism. Right doctrinairism persisted in recognising only the old forms, and became totally bankrupt, for it did not perceive the new content. Left doctrinairism persists in the unconditional repudiation of certain old forms and fails to see that the new content is forcing its way through all and sundry forms, that it is our duty as Communists to master all forms, to learn how with the maximum rapidity to supplement one form with another, to substitute one for another, and to adapt our tactics to every such change not called forth by our class, or by our efforts.

World revolution has received such a powerful impetus and acceleration from the horrors, atrocities and abominations of the world imperialist war and from the hopelessness of the situation created thereby, this revolution is spreading in breadth and depth with such magnificent rapidity, with such a splendid variety of changing forms, with such an instructive, practical refutation of all doctrinairism, that there is every ground for hoping for a rapid and complete recovery of the international Communist movement from the infantile disorder of "Left-wing" Communism.

*April 27, 1920.*

## APPENDIX

BEFORE the publishers of our country—which has been plundered by the world imperialists in revenge for the proletarian revolution, and which is still being plundered and blockaded by them regardless of all the promises they made to their workers—had succeeded in getting out my pamphlet, additional material arrived from abroad. Without claiming to present in my pamphlet anything more than the cursory notes of a publicist, I shall touch briefly upon a few points.

### I. THE SPLIT AMONG THE GERMAN COMMUNISTS

The split among the Communists in Germany has become an accomplished fact. The "Lefts," or the "opposition on principle," have formed a separate Communist Labour Party as distinct from the Communist Party. Apparently, a split is also imminent in Italy—I say apparently as I have only two additional issues (Nos. 7 and 8) of the Left newspaper, *Il Soviet*, in which the possibility and inevitability of a split is openly discussed, and mention is also made of a congress of the "Abstentionist" faction (or boycottists, *i.e.*, opponents of participation in parliament), which faction is still a part of the Italian Socialist Party.

There is reason to apprehend that the split with the "Lefts," the anti-parliamentarians (in part also anti-politicals, who are opposed to a political party and to work in the trade unions), will become an international phenomenon, like the split with the "Centrists" (or Kautskians, Longuetists, "Independents," etc.). Be it so. At all events a split is preferable to confusion which impedes the ideological, theoretical and revolutionary growth and maturing of the Party and prevents harmonious, really organised practical work that really paves the way for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Let the "Lefts" put themselves to a practical test on a national and international scale; let them try to prepare for (and then to achieve) the dictatorship of the proletariat without a strictly cen-

tralised party with an iron discipline, without the ability to master every sphere, every branch, every variety of political and cultural work. Practical experience will soon make them wiser.

But every effort must be made to prevent the split with the "Lefts" from impeding (or to see that it impedes as little as possible) the necessary amalgamation into a single party—which is inevitable in the near future—of all those in the working class movement who sincerely and conscientiously stand for the Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat. It was the exceptional fortune of the Bolsheviks in Russia to have fifteen years in which to wage a systematic and decisive struggle both against the Mensheviks (that is, the opportunists and "Centrists") and against the "Lefts," long before the direct mass struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat began. In Europe and America the same work will now have to be done by "forced marches." Certain individuals, especially among the unsuccessful claimants to leadership, may (if they lack proletarian discipline and are not "honest with themselves") persist in their mistakes for a long time, but when the time is ripe the masses of the workers will easily and quickly unite themselves and unite all sincere Communists to form a single party capable of establishing the Soviet system and the dictatorship of the proletariat.\*

## II. THE COMMUNISTS AND THE INDEPENDENTS IN GERMANY

I have expressed the opinion in this pamphlet that a compromise between the Communists and the Left wing of the Inde-

\* With regard to the question of the future amalgamation of the "Left" Communists, the anti-parliamentarians, with the Communists in general, I would make the following additional remarks. As far as I have been able to familiarise myself with the newspapers of the "Left" Communists and of those of the Communists in general in Germany, I find that the former are superior to the latter in that they are better agitators among the masses. I have repeatedly observed something similar to this in the history of the Bolshevik Party, though on a smaller scale and in individual local organisations, not on a national scale. For instance, in 1907-08 the "Left" Bolsheviks on certain occasions and in certain places carried on more successful agitation among the masses than we did. This may be partly due to the fact that at a revolutionary moment, or at a time when revolutionary recollections are still fresh, it is easier to approach the masses with tactics of "mere" negation. This, however, is hardly an argument for the correctness of such tactics. At all events there is not the least doubt that a Communist *party* which wishes to be the real vanguard of the revolutionary *class*, the proletariat, and which, in addition, wishes to learn to lead the broad *masses*—not only the proletariat, but also the *non-*

pendents was necessary and useful to Communism, but that it would not be easy to effect it. The newspapers which I have subsequently received have confirmed this opinion on both points. In No. 32 of *The Red Flag*, the organ of the C.C. of the Communist Party of Germany (*Die Rote Fahne*, Zentralorgan der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands—Spartakusbund—of March 26, 1920), there appeared a "statement" of this Central Committee on the Kapp-Lüttwitz military "putsch" (conspiracy, adventure) and on the "Socialist government." This statement is quite correct both as to its basic premise and as to its practical conclusions. The basic premise is that at the present moment there is no "objective basis" for the dictatorship of the proletariat because "the majority of the urban workers" support the Independents. The conclusion is—a promise to be a "loyal opposition" (*i.e.*, renunciation of preparations for a "violent overthrow") to a "Socialist government if it excludes bourgeois-capitalist parties."

Undoubtedly, these tactics are in the main correct. But although it is not worth while dwelling on trifling inexactitudes of formulation, we cannot refrain from saying that a government of social-traitors cannot be described (in an official statement of the Communist Party) as a "Socialist" government; that one cannot speak of the exclusion of "bourgeois-capitalist parties," when the parties both of Scheidemann and of Messrs. Kautsky and Crispian are petty-bourgeois-democratic parties; that it is impermissible to write such things as are contained in paragraph 4 of the statement, which declares:

"...For the further winning of the proletarian masses for Communism, a state of things where political freedom could be enjoyed without restraint, and where bourgeois democracy could not manifest itself as a dictatorship of capital is of the greatest importance from the standpoint of the development of the proletarian dictatorship."

Such a state of things is impossible. Petty-bourgeois leaders, the German Hendersons (Scheidemanns) and Snowdens (Crispiens), do not and cannot go beyond the bounds of bourgeois democracy, which, in its turn, cannot but be the dictatorship of capital. There was no need at all to write such things, which are wrong in prin-

proletarian masses of toilers and exploited—is obliged to know how to organise and how to carry on propaganda and agitation in a manner most comprehensible, clear and vivid both to the urban, factory population and to the rural population.

ciple and harmful politically, for the attainment of the practical results for which the Central Committee of the Communist Party has been quite rightly striving. It would have been sufficient to say (if one wished to observe parliamentary amenities) that as long as the majority of the urban workers follow the Independents, we Communists must do nothing to prevent these workers overcoming their last philistine-democratic (and, consequently, "bourgeois-capitalist") illusions by going through the experience of having "their own" government. That is sufficient ground for a compromise, which is really necessary, and which should consist in renouncing for a certain period all attempts at the violent overthrow of a government which enjoys the confidence of a majority of the urban workers. But in everyday mass agitation, in which one is not bound by official parliamentary amenities, one might, of course, add: Let rascals like the Scheidemanns, and philistines like the Kautsky-Crispiens reveal by their deeds how they have been fooled themselves and how they are fooling the workers; their "clean" government will itself do the "cleanest" job of all in "cleansing" the Augean stables of Socialism, Social-Democracy and other forms of social-treachery.

The real nature of the present leaders of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany (of whom it is wrongly said that they have already lost all influence, whereas, in reality, they are even more dangerous to the proletariat than the Hungarian Social-Democrats who styled themselves Communists and promised to "support" the dictatorship of the proletariat) was revealed once again during the German Kornilov period—*i.e.*, the Kapp-Lüttwitz "putsch." \* A small but striking illustration is afforded by two brief articles—one by Karl Kautsky entitled "Decisive Hours" (*Entscheidende Stunden*) in *Freiheit* (the organ of the Independents) of March 30, 1920, and the other by Arthur Crispian entitled "On the Political Situation" (in this same newspaper, issue of April 14, 1920). These gentlemen are absolutely incapable of thinking and reasoning like revolutionaries. They are snivelling philistine democrats, who become a thousand times more dangerous to the proletariat when they claim to be adherents of

\* Incidentally, this has been dealt with in an exceptionally clear, concise, exact and Marxist way in the excellent organ of the Austrian Communist Party of March 28 and 30, 1920 (*Die Rote Fahne*, Vienna, 1920, Nos. 266 and 267; L. L.: *Ein neuer Abschnitt der deutschen Revolution* [A New Stage of the German Revolution]).



the Soviet power and of the dictatorship of the proletariat, because, in fact, whenever a difficult and dangerous situation arises they are sure to commit treachery... while "sincerely" believing that they are helping the proletariat! Did not the Hungarian Social-Democrats, having become converted to Communism, also want to "help" the proletariat when, owing to cowardice and spinelessness, they considered the situation of the Soviet power in Hungary hopeless and went snivelling to the agents of the Entente capitalists and the Entente hangmen?

### III. TURATI AND CO. IN ITALY

The issues of *Il Soviet*, the Italian newspaper referred to above, fully confirm what I have said in the pamphlet about the error committed by the Italian Socialist Party in tolerating such members and even such a group of parliamentarians in its ranks. It is still further confirmed by such an outside observer as the Rome correspondent of the English bourgeois-liberal newspaper, *The Manchester Guardian*, whose interview with Turati is published in that paper on March 12, 1920. This correspondent writes:

"Signor Turati's opinion is that the revolutionary peril is not such as to cause undue anxiety in Italy. The Maximalists are playing with the fire of Soviet theories only to keep the masses roused and in a state of excitement. These theories are, however, merely legendary notions, unripe programmes unfit for practical use. They can only serve to keep the working classes in a state of expectation. The very men who use them as a lure to dazzle proletarian eyes find themselves compelled to fight a daily battle for the extortion of some often trifling economic improvements, so as to put off the day when the working classes will shed their illusions and faith in their favourite myths. Hence a long string of strikes of all dimensions, called on any pretext, up to the very latest ones in the mail and railway services—strikes which make the already hard conditions of the country still worse. The country is irritated owing to the difficulties connected with its Adriatic problem, it is weighed down by its foreign debt and by the excessive issue of paper currency, and yet it is still far from realising the necessity of adopting that discipline of work which alone can restore order and prosperity."

It is clear as daylight that this English correspondent has blurted out the truth, which is in all probability being concealed and

glossed over by Turati himself and by his bourgeois defenders, accomplices and inspirers in Italy. This truth is that the ideas and political activities of Messrs. Turati, Treves, Modigliani, Dugoni and Co. are really and precisely such as are described by the English correspondent. It is nothing but social-treachery. This advocacy of order and discipline among the workers, who are wage slaves toiling to enrich the capitalist, is precious! And how familiar to us Russians all these Menshevik speeches are! What a valuable admission it is that the masses are *for* the Soviet power! How stupid and vulgarly bourgeois is the failure to understand the revolutionary role of spontaneously spreading strikes! Yes, indeed, the English correspondent of the bourgeois-liberal newspaper has rendered back-handed service to Messrs. Turati and Co., and has well confirmed the correctness of the demand of Comrade Bordiga and his friends of *Il Soviet*, who are insisting that the Italian Socialist Party, if it really wants to be *for* the Third International, should drum Messrs. Turati and Co. out of its ranks and should become a Communist Party both in name and in fact.

#### IV. INCORRECT CONCLUSIONS FROM CORRECT PREMISES

But Comrade Bordiga and his "Left" friends draw from their correct criticism of Messrs. Turati and Co. the wrong conclusion that participation in parliament is harmful in general. The Italian "Lefts" cannot advance even a shadow of serious argument in support of this view. They simply do not know (or try to forget) the international examples of really revolutionary and Communist utilisation of bourgeois parliaments which has been of unquestionable value in preparing for the proletarian revolution. They simply cannot conceive of a "new" method of utilising parliament, but keep shouting and endlessly repeating themselves about the "old," non-Bolshevik method.

This is precisely where their fundamental mistake lies. Not only in the parliamentary field, but in *all* fields of activity Communism *must introduce* (and without long, persistent and stubborn effort it *will be unable* to introduce) something new in principle that will represent a radical break with the traditions of the Second International (while retaining and developing what was good in the latter).

Let us take, say, journalistic work. Newspapers, pamphlets and

manifestoes perform a necessary work of propaganda, agitation and organisation. Not a single mass movement can dispense with a journalistic apparatus in any at all civilised country. No outcries against "leaders," no solemn vows to preserve the purity of the masses from the influence of leaders will obviate the necessity of utilising people who come from a bourgeois intellectual environment for this work, or will get rid of the bourgeois-democratic, "private property" atmosphere and environment in which this work is performed under capitalism. Even two and a half years after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, after the conquest of political power by the proletariat, we still have this atmosphere around us, this mass (peasant, artisan) environment of bourgeois-democratic property relations.

Parliamentarism is one form of activity, journalism is another. The content of both can be Communist, and it should be Communist if those engaged in either sphere are real Communists, are real members of a proletarian mass party. Yet, in neither sphere—nor *in any other sphere of activity* under capitalism and during the period of transition from capitalism to Socialism—is it possible to avoid those difficulties which the proletariat must overcome, those special problems which the proletariat must solve in order to utilise for its own purposes the services of those who have come from the ranks of the bourgeoisie, in order to gain the victory over bourgeois intellectual prejudices and influences, in order to weaken the resistance of (and, ultimately, completely to transform) the petty-bourgeois environment.

Did we not, before the war of 1914-18, witness in all countries an extraordinary abundance of instances of extreme "Left" anarchists, syndicalists and others fulminating against parliamentarism, deriding parliamentary Socialists who had become vulgarised in the bourgeois spirit, castigating their careerism, and so on and so forth, and yet themselves making the same kind of bourgeois career *through* journalism and *through* work in the syndicates (trade unions)? Are not the examples of Messrs. Jouhaux and Merrheim, to limit oneself to France, typical?

The childishness of those who "repudiate" participation in parliament consists precisely in the fact that they think it possible to "*solve*" the difficult problem of combating bourgeois-democratic influences *within* the working class movement by such a "simple," "easy," supposedly revolutionary method, when in reality they are

only running away from their own shadow, closing their eyes to difficulties and trying to brush them aside with mere words. Shameless careerism, bourgeois utilisation of parliamentary posts, glaring reformist perversion of parliamentary activity, vulgar, petty-bourgeois routine are all unquestionably common and prevalent features that are engendered by capitalism everywhere, not only outside but also inside the working class movement. But this capitalism and the bourgeois environment it creates (which disappears very slowly even after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, for the peasantry is constantly regenerating the bourgeoisie) give rise to what is also essentially bourgeois careerism, national chauvinism, petty-bourgeois vulgarity, etc.—only varying insignificantly in form—in positively every sphere of activity and life.

You think, my dear boycottists and anti-parliamentarians, that you are “terribly revolutionary,” but in reality *you are frightened* by the comparatively small difficulties of the struggle against bourgeois influences within the working class movement, whereas your victory—*i.e.*, the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the conquest of political power by the proletariat—will create *these very same* difficulties on a still larger, and infinitely larger scale. Like children, you are frightened by a small difficulty which confronts you today, not understanding that tomorrow and the day after you will anyhow have to learn, and go on learning, to overcome the same difficulties, only on an immeasurably greater scale.

Under the Soviet power, your proletarian party and ours will be invaded by a still larger number of bourgeois intellectuals. They will worm their way into the Soviets, the courts, and the administration, for Communism cannot be built up otherwise than with the aid of the human material created by capitalism, and the bourgeois intellectuals cannot be expelled and destroyed, but must be vanquished, remoulded, assimilated and re-educated, just as one must—in a protracted struggle waged on the basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat—re-educate the proletarians themselves, who do not abandon their petty-bourgeois prejudices at one stroke, by a miracle, at the behest of the Virgin Mary, at the behest of a slogan, resolution or decree, but only in the course of a long and difficult mass struggle against mass petty-bourgeois influences. Under the Soviet power these same problems, which the anti-parliamentarians are now so proudly, so haughtily, so lightly and so childishly brushing aside with a wave of the hand—*these very*

*same* problems are arising anew *within* the Soviets, within the Soviet administration, among the Soviet "attorneys" (in Russia we have abolished, and have rightly abolished, the bourgeois legal Bar, but it is being revived in the guise of "Soviet" "attorneys"). Among the Soviet engineers, the Soviet school teachers and the privileged, *i.e.*, the most highly skilled and best situated *workers* in the Soviet factories, we observe a constant revival of absolutely *all* the bad traits peculiar to bourgeois parliamentarism, and we shall gradually conquer this evil only by constant, tireless, prolonged and persistent struggle, proletarian organisation and discipline.

Of course, it is very "difficult" under the rule of the bourgeoisie to overcome bourgeois habits in our own, *i.e.*, the workers' party; it is "difficult" to expel from the party the ordinary parliamentary leaders who have been hopelessly corrupted by bourgeois prejudices; it is "difficult" to subject to proletarian discipline the absolutely essential (even if very limited) number of bourgeois intellectuals; it is "difficult" to form in a bourgeois parliament a Communist fraction fully worthy of the working class; it is "difficult" to ensure that the Communist parliamentarians do not play the bourgeois parliamentary game of skittles, but concern themselves with the very urgent work of propaganda, agitation and organisation of the masses. All this is "difficult," there is no doubt about it; it was difficult in Russia, and it is incomparably more difficult in Western Europe and America, where the bourgeoisie is far stronger, where bourgeois-democratic traditions are stronger, and so on.

Yet all these "difficulties" are mere child's play compared with precisely *the same sort* of problems which in any event the proletariat will inevitably have to solve in order to achieve victory during the proletarian revolution, and after the seizure of power by the proletariat. Compared with *these* truly gigantic problems of re-educating, under the proletarian dictatorship, millions of peasants and small proprietors, hundreds of thousands of office employees, officials and bourgeois intellectuals, of subordinating them all to the proletarian state and to the proletarian leadership, of vanquishing their bourgeois habits and traditions—compared with these gigantic problems it is childishly easy to establish, under the rule of the bourgeoisie and in a bourgeois parliament, a really Communist fraction of a real proletarian party.

If our "Left" and anti-parliamentarian comrades do not learn to overcome even such a small difficulty now, we may safely assert that either they will prove incapable of achieving the dictatorship of the proletariat, will be unable to subordinate and remould the bourgeois intellectuals and bourgeois institutions on a wide scale, or they will have to *complete their education in a hurry*, and in consequence of such haste they will do a great deal of harm to the cause of the proletariat, they will commit more errors than usual, will manifest more than the average weakness and inefficiency, and so on and so forth.

As long as the bourgeoisie has not been overthrown, and as long as small-scale economy and small-commodity production have not entirely disappeared, the bourgeois atmosphere, proprietary habits and petty-bourgeois traditions will spoil proletarian work both outside and inside the working class movement, not only in one field of activity, parliamentary, but inevitably in every field of public activity, in all cultural and political spheres without exception. And the attempt to brush aside, to fence oneself off from *one* of the "unpleasant" problems or difficulties in one sphere of activity is a profound mistake, which will later most certainly have to be paid for dearly. We must study and learn how to master every sphere of work and activity without exception, to overcome all difficulties and all bourgeois habits, customs and traditions everywhere. Any other way of presenting the question is just trifling, just childishness.

May 12, 1920.

v.

In the Russian edition of this pamphlet I slightly misrepresented the conduct of the Communist Party of Holland as a whole in the realm of international revolutionary politics. I therefore take this opportunity to publish the following letter from our Dutch comrades on this point, and, further, to correct the expression "Dutch Tribunists," which I used in the Russian text, and to substitute for it "some members of the Communist Party of Holland." \*

N. LENIN

\* These corrections have been made in the text.—Ed.

COMRADE WYNKOOP'S LETTER

Moscow, June 30, 1920.

Dear Comrade Lenin,

Thanks to your kindness, we, the members of the Dutch Delegation to the Second Congress of the Communist International, had the opportunity to peruse your book, "*Left-Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder*", before the translations into the western European languages were published. In this book you emphasise several times your disapproval of the role some of the members of the Communist Party of Holland have played in international politics.

We must protest against your making the Communist Party responsible for their conduct. It is utterly incorrect. Moreover, it is unjust, as these members of the Communist Party of Holland have taken little or no part in the current work of our Party; they are also striving, directly or indirectly, to introduce in the Communist Party opposition slogans against which the Communist Party of Holland and every one of its organs have been carrying on and are carrying on to this very day, a most energetic struggle.

Fraternally yours,  
(For the Dutch Delegation) D. J. WYNKOOP