

MARX • ENGELS • MARXISM

LENIN

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**MARX · ENGELS**

**MARXISM**

A COLLECTION OF ARTICLES

By

**V. I. LENIN**

**LONDON**

**LAWRENCE & WISHART**

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Most of the articles contained therein were published in English for the first time in this book.

THE PUBLISHERS.

## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

It is by no means the object of the present collection to give the reader all that has been written by Lenin on Marx, Engels and Marxism. The editors have limited themselves to a selection of some (by no means all) of the articles of Lenin on the subject indicated in the title, excluding such articles the publication of which would require references and explanations of an historical nature (such, for instance, as a series of articles of 1905).

Of the articles printed here, *Karl Marx* and *Frederick Engels* are the most interesting.

The article on Marx and Marxism was written by Lenin in the autumn of 1914 in Switzerland for the *Granat Encyclopædia*. Lenin forwarded the article to the publishers under cover of the following letter:

"The Secretary of the Editorial Board  
of the Granat Publication

"Tverskoy Boulevard, 15

"Moscow

"Dear Colleague:

"I have sent you today under registered cover the article for the *Encyclopædia* on Marx and Marxism. It is not for me to judge how far I have succeeded in solving the difficult problem of compressing the exposition within the limits of 75,000 words or thereabout. I will remark that the *Bibliography* had to be strongly cut down (15,000 was the absolute limit) and I had to select what was *essential* from the various tendencies (with, of course, a preponderance of those in favour of Marx). It was hard to decide to leave out many of the *quotations* from Marx. Quotations are, in my opinion, very important for an encyclopædia (especially on the more debatable questions of Marxism, among which may be classed, in the first place, philosophy and the agrarian question). The readers must have near at hand *all* the more important statements of Marx, otherwise the object of the *Encyclopædia* would not be attained; so it seemed to me. I also do not know whether the censorship side of the matter will satisfy you. If not, perhaps it would be possible to come to an agreement on a redraft of some of the passages to pass the censor. I, on my part, could not, without the imperative demands of the editors, bring myself to do censor's *corrections* of a number of the quotations and of the propositions of Marxism.

"I hope you will be good enough to advise me immediately, if even by post-card, of the receipt of the article.

"I would ask you very much to transmit the fees due to me as soon as possible to the following address: M. I. Elizarowa, Herrn Wladimir Ulianow, Distelweg, 11 Bern.

"Please accept, etc.,

"W. ILYIN"

"P. S. Owing to the war, my library has remained behind in Galicia and I was unable to find some of the quotations in their *Russian* translation of the works of Marx. If you consider it necessary, perhaps it would be possible to entrust someone in Moscow with it. By the way, I would be very glad if you could find it possible to send me a proof of the article. Are partial corrections in the proof possible? If it is impossible to send me a proof, I hope you will not refuse to let me have a reprint."

Lenin's article (under the signature of W. Ilyin) was published in Vol. XXVIII of the *Granat Encyclopædia* (seventh edition) under the word "Marx" with a supplement on a separate page of a bibliography of Marx. The article was not, however, printed in full.

In 1918 the Petrograd publishers "Priboi" issued the article on Marx in pamphlet form, with a preface by Lenin, the full text of which is as follows:

"The article on Karl Marx, reprinted here, was written by me in 1913 (as far as I can remember) for the *Granat Encyclopædia*.<sup>1</sup> The article was supplemented with a fairly detailed index of the literature on Marx, mainly foreign. This has been omitted in the present edition. Further, the editors of the *Encyclopædia*, on their part, cut out for considerations of the censorship the end of the article on Marx devoted to an exposition of his revolutionary tactics. I regret it is impossible for me to reproduce this concluding part as the draft was left among my papers somewhere in Cracow or Switzerland. I only remember that at the end of the article I cited among other things the passage from the letter of Marx to Engels of March 16, 1856, in which Marx wrote: 'The whole thing in Germany will depend on the possibility to back the proletarian revolution by some second edition of the Peasant War. Then it will be splendid.' This is what our Mensheviks have not understood since 1905, and they have now gone to the utmost length in betraying socialism, joining the side of the bourgeoisie.

"N. LENIN"

"Moscow, May 14, 1918"

The Institute now has at its disposal the authentic manuscript of Lenin's article. A comparison of the manuscript with the text printed in the *Encyclopædia* shows that the editors omitted not only the chapter mentioned by Lenin on "The Tactics of the Class Struggle of the Proletariat" but also the chapter on "Socialism," to say nothing of a number of other censor's and editors' cuts and changes.

It is possible that the chapter on socialism was intended for one

<sup>1</sup> Evidently an error—the article was written in 1914.—Ed.

of the following volumes, but the publication of the *Encyclopædia* was interrupted in 1917 and the corresponding volume, letter "S," never appeared.

The present edition gives the full text of Lenin's manuscript without any cuts. Only corrections of obvious slips are made. Words in the manuscript, erased by Lenin, have, as a rule, not been printed, with the exception of one or two cases when the substitution by Lenin of one word for another represents a certain amount of interest for the reader.

The article on Frederick Engels was written in the autumn of 1895 and printed in Nos. 1 and 2 of *Rabotnik (The Worker)* in 1896. The author remained unknown for a long time and it was only recently established that it was written by Lenin.

The unfinished article *Correspondence Between Marx and Engels* was written by Lenin at the end of 1913 or beginning of 1914 and published in *Pravda* (No. 268) on November 20, 1920. The article was not included in the *Collected Works* of Lenin and is almost unknown in broad Party circles. The Institute has not at its disposal the manuscript of this article. The other articles are taken from the *Collected Works*. The text has in all cases been checked with the first printed edition.

THE LENIN INSTITUTE



## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

THE present second edition of the collection is supplemented by a number of articles and separate chapters from the important works of Lenin. Although the collection, as previously, does not contain an exhaustive selection of all that Lenin wrote on Marx, Engels and Marxism, it yet includes all that is fundamental on the subject.

Lenin's articles here collected give a splendid and concise characteristic of the substance of the theory of revolutionary Marxism.

Marxism cannot at present be understood without a study of its Leninist conception. The study of the works of Lenin provides a key to the understanding of materialist dialectics which forms, according to the expression of Lenin, "the living soul of Marxism." Dialectical materialism should be studied through the works of Lenin as well as those of Marx and Engels. The study of the Leninist conception of Marxism is particularly important in view of the fact that Lenin exposes its most subtle modern adulterations. Lenin teaches not merely the recognition of materialist dialectics in words but the real application of dialectical materialism in the complicated conditions of the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolution.

What the Marxian method really demands is the study of the concrete peculiarities of the situation of the struggle of classes, the trend of their development and practical revolutionary activity on this basis.

Lenin, in his elaboration of the programme and tactics of the proletarian party (in the '90's and 1900), started from a profound study of the development of capitalism in Russia as well as of the basic classes of Russian society, and in the first place, of the proletariat and peasantry as the chief driving forces of the Russian Revolution.

In the preface to the second edition of *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, Lenin wrote in July 1907 that "the analysis of the social order and, consequently, of the class structure of Russia," which he gave in this book in the end of the 'nineties, the period of

the eve of the first Russian revolution, was entirely corroborated by the Revolution of 1905-07. The leading role of the proletariat became obvious, and equally it became obvious that its power in the historical movement is immeasurably greater than its proportionate numerical strength in the total mass of the population. "The economic basis of both these facts," Lenin added, "is demonstrated in the work here presented," i.e., in the book on the development of capitalism in Russia. Lenin further notes that the economic basis of the dual position and dual role of the peasantry is set out in the same book. Lenin concisely sums up the conclusions regarding the peasantry as follows:

"On the one hand, the large remains of feudal *barshchina*<sup>1</sup> and various survivals of serfdom, accompanied by the unprecedented impoverishment and ruin of the peasant poor, fully explain the deep sources of the revolutionary peasant movement and the deep hold which revolution has on the peasantry as a mass. On the other hand, the internally contradictory class composition of this mass, its petty-bourgeois nature and the antagonism between the proprietary and proletarian tendencies within it, all this manifests itself both in the progress of the revolution and the character of the various political parties as well as in many ideological political currents. The vacillation of the impoverished petty peasant proprietor between the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie and the revolutionary proletariat is just as inevitable as is the phenomenon in every capitalist society that an insignificant minority of small producers enrich themselves, 'get on in the world' and become bourgeois while the overwhelming majority are either entirely ruined and become wage-workers or paupers—or find themselves permanently on the border line of a proletarian existence." (*Collected Works*, Vol. III, pp. 11-12, Russian edition.)

Lenin elaborated a conception of the nature and peculiarities of the revolution then in progress as well as of its motive forces and its international significance, and worked out the programme, strategy and tactics of the proletarian party on the basis of an all-round study of facts in their general connection, as well as of the interrelation of the classes and their struggle. It is in this way that he applied in a concrete manner and further developed the method of dialectical materialism founded by Marx.

After the outline quoted above of the state of the Russian peasantry, which represents a majority of the population, Lenin draws the following conclusion and gives further an exceedingly valuable indication regarding the very substance of the Marxian method.

"On such an economic basis the Revolution in Russia cannot but be a bourgeois revolution. This proposition of Marxism is quite invincible. It must never be forgotten. It must always be applied to all economic and political questions of the Russian Revolution. But one must be capable of applying it."

<sup>1</sup> Corvée labour rent.—Ed

And Lenin further explains what he means by its proper application:

"A concrete analysis of the situation and interests of the various classes must be made in order to determine the precise significance of this truth in its application to this or that question."

Lenin here indicates the fundamental demand of Marxian materialist dialectics—the demand of a study of the concrete conditions of the class struggle, as well as of the connection between the theoretical positions and the class struggle which is proceeding in every given historical moment. There can be no theory of Marxism unless it is related to the present-day class struggle of the proletariat. And Lenin further points out the distortions of Marxism against which he had much to fight both at the time of the first revolution and later, distortions which in new forms continue to exist even now.

"The reverse . . . method of reasoning" writes Lenin, "frequently met with among the Social-Democrats of the Right wing with Plekhanov at their head, i.e., the inclination to look for a reply to concrete questions in the simple logical development of the general truth about the fundamental character of our revolution is a vulgarisation of Marxism and sheer mockery of dialectical materialism. Regarding such people who, from the general truth of the character of this revolution, deduce, for instance, the leading role of the 'bourgeoisie' in the revolution or the need for the Socialists to support the liberals—Marx would probably have repeated the words of Heine, once quoted by him: 'I have sown dragons and have gathered a harvest of fleas.'"

These ways of doctrinaire reasoning, this break from concrete reality, and from the practice of the proletarian class struggles are always to be met with now among the pro-Menshevik idealists.

In the articles of Lenin in which he gives the characteristics of Marxism, practical work is strikingly emphasised as an inseparable component part of it. In the article *Karl Marx*, Lenin points out that Marxism deals with all questions on an historical basis in the "sense of not only throwing light on the past, but also of boldly foreseeing the future and bold practical activity directed towards its achievement." It is this "bold practical activity" which is the chief distinguishing feature of revolutionary Marxism. Lenin speaks of it in all his works and articles, from his very earliest ones (see fragment from the supplement to *What the "Friends of the People" Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats*, 1894). He notes it in the preface to the *Letters to Kugelmann*, (1907). He speaks of it in the article *Karl Marx* (1914), in the articles *Marxism and Insurrection* and *Advice from an Onlooker* (1917), and in one of his last articles *The Reminiscences of Sukhanov* (1923).

The whole life of Lenin and all his work are a model of this "bold practical activity," a model of the application, concretisation and development of dialectical materialism. This must be studied in its entirety in all the works of Lenin. The essence of the theory of revolutionary Marxism may be mastered by a study of Marx and Engels under the guidance of Lenin. The most essential and fundamental indications in this direction are given in the articles presented in the present collection.

The titles to the articles are those of Lenin. In those cases in which the titles are given by the editors, this is indicated by an asterisk (\*). The text of the collection is given in accordance with the second edition of Lenin's *Collected Works*.<sup>1</sup> Where Lenin refers to the works of Marx and Engels the references indicate, for the convenience of the reader, modern editions.

MARX-ENGELS-LENIN INSTITUTE.

Moscow, August 11, 1931.

<sup>1</sup> Russian edition.—Ed.

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V. I. LENIN

MARX-ENGELS-MARXISM



## 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 first entered 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 the philosophy of Epicurus. 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—which in 1832 deprived Ludwig Feuerbach of his chair and in 1836 again refused to allow him to teach, while in 1841 it forbade the young professor, Bruno Bauer, to give lectures at Bonn—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 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."<sup>1</sup> 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*] (first

<sup>1</sup> F. Engels: *Ludwig Feuerbach*.—Ed.

appeared on January 1, 1842). Marx and Bruno Bauer were invited as chief contributors, and in October 1842, Marx became 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 decided on its complete suppression as from January 1, 1843. So Marx had to resign his post as editor before that date, 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 (see *Bibliography*<sup>1</sup>), 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 for the Interior in one of the most reactionary epochs, 1850-58. In the autumn of 1843, Marx went to Paris in order to publish a radical magazine abroad, together with Arnold Ruge (1802-80; a Left Hegelian; in prison, 1825-30; a political exile after 1848; a Bismarckian after 1866-70). Only one issue of this magazine, entitled *Deutsch-Französische-Jahrbücher* [*German-French Annuals*] appeared. It was discontinued owing to the difficulties of distributing the magazine in Germany in a secret way, also due to disagreements with Ruge. In his articles published in that magazine, Marx already appears as a revolutionary, advocating "merciless criticism of everything in existence," particularly "criticism with weapons," and appealing to the masses and to the proletariat.

In September 1844, Frederick Engels came to Paris for a few days and henceforth became Marx's closest friend. 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 settled thoroughly with that doctrine in his *Poverty*

<sup>1</sup> Lenin refers to the *Bibliography of Marxism* which he appended to this article. This bibliography is omitted from this edition. It will be found in the *Complete Works*, Vol. XVIII, and in the Little Lenin Library, *The Teachings of Karl Marx*.—Ed.

of *Philosophy*, 1847). While vigorously fighting the various doctrines of petty-bourgeois socialism, they worked out the theory and tactics of revolutionary *proletarian socialism*, or communism (Marxism). See Marx's works of this period—1844-48—in the *Bibliography*. In 1845, at the insistence of the Prussian government, Marx was banished from Paris as a dangerous revolutionary. 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—a consistent materialism extending also to the realm of social life; it proclaims dialectics as the most comprehensive and profound doctrine of evolution; 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 Revolution, 1848, 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 1848-49, as it has subsequently been corroborated by all the proletarian and democratic movements of all the countries of the world. Victorious counter-revolution in Germany 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-proleta-

rian socialism in general forced Marx to carry on a continuous and merciless fight, sometimes to repel the most savage and monstrous personal attacks (*Herr Vogt*). Keeping aloof from the emigrant circles, Marx developed his materialist doctrine in a number of historical works (see *Bibliography*), 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* (1895) 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. In 1864 (September 28), the International Workingmen's Association—the famous First International—was founded in London. Marx was the soul of this organisation, the author of its first Address and of a host of its resolutions, declarations, manifestoes. Uniting the labour movement of the various countries; striving to direct into the channel of joint activities the various forms of the non-proletarian, pre-Marxian socialism (Mazzini, Proudhon, Bakunin, liberal trade unionism in England, Lassalle's vacillations to the Right 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 in the various countries. After the fall of the Paris Commune (1871)—which Marx analysed with so much penetration, pertinence and brilliance, with such *effectiveness*, such revolutionary spirit (in *The Civil War in France*, 1871)—and after the International had been split by Bakunists, 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 a period of an infinitely larger growth of the labour movement in all the countries of the world, precisely the period 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.

#### 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 for us to 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 1844-45, when his views were definitely formed, Marx was a materialist, and namely 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 been a struggle not only against the existing political institutions, and along with it against... religion and theology, but also... against every form of metaphysics" (in the sense of "intoxicated speculation" as distinguished from "sober philosophy"). (*Die Heilige Familie* in the *Literarischer Nachlass*.)

"To Hegel," wrote Marx, in the preface to the second edition of the first volume of *Capital*, "the life process of the human brain, i.e., the process of thinking, which, under the name of 'the Idea,' he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiourgos 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."<sup>1</sup>

In full conformity with Marx's materialist philosophy, and expounding it, Engels wrote in *Anti-Dühring*<sup>2</sup> (which Marx read in manuscript):

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

"Hegel was an idealist, that is to say, the ideas within his mind were to him not the more or less abstract images" (in the original: *Abbilder* [images, copies]; sometimes Engels speaks of "imprints"); "of real things and processes, but the converse; things and their development were to him only the images in reality of the 'ideas' existing somewhere or other already before the world existed."<sup>4</sup>

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

"The great basic question of all philosophy, especially of modern philosophy, is that concerning the relation of thinking and being . . . spirit to nature . . . which is primary, spirit or nature. . . . The answers which the philosophers gave to this question split them into two great camps. Those who asserted the primacy of spirit to nature and, therefore, in the last instance, assumed world creation in some form or other . . . comprised the camp of idealism. The others, who regarded nature as primary, belong to the various schools of materialism."<sup>5</sup>

Any other use (in a philosophic sense) of the terms idealism and

<sup>1</sup> *Capital*, Vol. I, p. xxx, Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling's translation, Swan Sonnenschein and Co., London, 1908.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> The abridged title of Engels' celebrated work: *Herrn Eugen Dührings Umwälzung der Wissenschaft* (*Mr. Eugen Dühring's Revolutionisation of Science*), published first as a series of articles in the Berlin *Vorwärts* during 1877-78 and issued in book form in 1878.—Ed.

<sup>3</sup> *Anti-Dühring*, Stuttgart, 1909, p. 31.—Ed.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50.—Ed.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.—Ed.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.—Ed.

<sup>7</sup> *Ludwig Feuerbach*, Berlin, 1927, p. 27 et sup.—Ed.

materialism leads only to confusion. Marx decidedly rejected not only idealism, always connected in one way or another with religion, but also the views of Hume and Kant, which are especially widespread in our day, along with agnosticism, criticism, positivism in their various forms; he considered such philosophy as a "reactionary" concession to idealism, at best as a "shamefaced surreptitious acceptance of materialism while denying it before the world."<sup>1</sup> 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, couched "in a more materialistic spirit" than usual, as well as his recognition that "as long as we actually observe and think, we cannot possibly get away from materialism," reproaches him for once more leaving a new "loophole" for agnosticism and Humism. It is especially important that we should note Marx's opinion concerning the relation between freedom and necessity: "Freedom is the realisation of necessity. 'Necessity is blind only in so far as it is not understood'" (Engels, *Anti-Dühring*). This means the recognition of the objective reign of law in nature and of the dialectical transformation of necessity into freedom (at the same time, an acknowledgement 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 mechanistic," and took no account of 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 (metaphysical, in the sense of being anti-dialectical), and did not apply the standpoint of evolution consistently and all-sidedly; (3) it regarded "human beings" abstractly, and not as a "synthesis" of "all social relationships" (definite, concretely-historical)—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."

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.—Ed.



## DIALECTICS

Marx and Engels regarded Hegelian dialectics, the theory of evolution, which is 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 regarded as one-sided, poor in content, as distorting and mutilating the actual course of development in nature and society (which often proceeded by leaps, catastrophes, revolutions).

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

Again, Engels writes:

"The great basic thought that the world is not to be comprehended as a complex of ready-made *things*, but as a complex of *processes*, in which the things apparently stable (no less than their mind-images in our heads, the concepts) go through an uninterrupted change of coming into and passing out of being, in which, in spite of all seeming accidents and of all temporary retrogressions, a progressive development asserts itself in the end—this great fundamental thought has, especially since the time of Hegel, so thoroughly permeated ordinary consciousness that in this generality it is scarcely ever contradicted. But to acknowledge it in words and to apply it in reality to each particular domain of investigation are two different things."<sup>3</sup>

"For" dialectical philosophy "nothing is final, absolute, sacred. It reveals the transitory character of everything and in everything; nothing can endure before it except the uninterrupted process of becoming and of passing away, of endless ascendancy from the lower to the higher. And dialectical philosophy itself is nothing more than the mere reflection of this process in the thinking brain."<sup>4</sup>

Thus dialectics, according to Marx, is "the science of the general laws of motion—both of the external world and of human thought."<sup>5</sup>

This revolutionary side of Hegel's philosophy was adopted and developed by Marx. Dialectical materialism "no longer needs any philosophy standing above the other sciences."<sup>6</sup>

Of former philosophies there remain "the science of thought and its laws—formal logic and dialectics."<sup>7</sup> Dialectics, as the term is

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

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.—Ed.

<sup>3</sup> *Ludwig Feuerbach*, p. 52.—Ed.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.—Ed.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.—Ed.

<sup>6</sup> *Anti-Dühring*, p. 11.—Ed.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*—Ed.

understood by Marx in conformity with Hegel, includes what is now called the theory of cognition, 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 ignorance to knowledge.

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. But 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 spasmodic, catastrophic, revolutionary development; "breaks 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 newer and newer 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 bring "the science of society . . . into harmony with the materialist foundation, and of reconstructing it thereupon."<sup>1</sup>

If materialism in general explains consciousness as the outcome of existence, and not conversely, then materialism as applied to the social life of mankind must explain *social* consciousness as the outcome of *social* existence.

"Technology," writes Marx in the first volume of *Capital*, "discloses man's mode of dealing with nature, the process of production

<sup>1</sup> *Ludwig Feuerbach*, p. 36.—Ed.

by which he sustains his life, and thereby also lays bare the mode of formation of his social relations, and of the mental conceptions that flow from them.”<sup>1</sup> 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 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 powers of production. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society—the real foundation, on which a legal and political superstructure arises and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence 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 had been at work before. From forms of development of the forces of production these relations turn into their fetters. Then comes the period of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformation the distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic—in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself, so can we not judge of such a period of transformation by its own consciousness; on the contrary, this consciousness must rather be explained from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social forces of production and the relations of production. . . . In broad outlines we can designate the Asiatic, the ancient, the feudal, and the modern bourgeois methods of production as so many progressive epochs in the economic formation of society. . . .” (Compare Marx’s brief formulation in a letter to Engels, dated July 7, 1866: “our theory that the organisation is determined by the means of production.”)

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, without grasping the objective conformity to law in the development of the

<sup>1</sup> *Capital*, Vol. I. p. 367, Swan Sonnenschein and Co., London.—Ed.

system of social relationships, and without discerning the roots of these social relationships in the degree of development of material production. In the second place, the earlier historical theories did not cover precisely 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 arbitrariness 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 social economic structures. People make their own history; but what determines their motives, namely, 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 of production of material 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 nations 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 hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles"—wrote Marx in the *Communist Manifesto*<sup>1</sup> (except the history of the primitive community—Engels added.). "Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes. . . . The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones. Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other—bourgeoisie and proletariat."

Since the time of the great French Revolution, the class struggle as the real 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 period of the complete victory of the bourgeoisie, of representative institutions, of extended (if not universal) suffrage, of a cheap daily press reaching 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 condition of development of every class.

"Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of modern industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product. The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to

<sup>1</sup> Moscow, 1933, p. 15-16.—Ed.

save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class. They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history. If by chance they are revolutionary, they are so only in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat; they thus defend not their present, but their future interests; they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat."<sup>1</sup>

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 determine 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 determined 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 commodities.

#### 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 by millions upon millions of such exchanges that all and sundry use-values, in themselves very different and not comparable with one another, are equated to one another. Now, what is common

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 26.—Ed.

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 and millions of exchange transactions 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 necessary for the production of the given commodity, of the given use-value.

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

As one of the earlier economists said, value is a 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 but definite measures of congealed labour time.”<sup>2</sup>

Having made a detailed analysis of the twofold character of the labour incorporated in commodities, Marx goes on to analyse the *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

<sup>1</sup> *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 45, Swan Sonnenschein and Co., London.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> *Critique of Political Economy*.—Ed.

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 and hides the social character of individual labour, the social tie between the various producers whom the market brings together. 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.

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

### *Surplus Value*

At a certain stage in the development of commodity production, money becomes transformed into capital. The formula of commodity circulation was C-M-C (commodity—money—commodity), *i.e.*, the sale of one commodity for the purpose of buying another. But the general formula of capital, on the contrary, is M-C-M (money—commodity—money), *i.e.*, purchase for the purpose of selling (at a profit). The designation “surplus value” is given by Marx to the 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 only 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 what we are concerned with here is not the individual but the

<sup>1</sup> *Capital*, Vol. I, 148, Swan Sonnenschein and Co. London.—Ed.



mass, average, social phenomenon. In order that he may be able to receive surplus value "Moneybags must . . . find . . . in the market a commodity whose use-value possesses the peculiar property of being a source of value"<sup>1</sup>—a commodity, 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 or surplus value for which the capitalist does not pay him. In capital, therefore, from the viewpoint of the process of production, we have to distinguish between two parts: first, constant capital, expended on the means of production (machinery, tools, raw materials, etc.), the value of which is being (all at once or part by part) transferred, without any change, to the finished product, and secondly, variable capital, expended on 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 per cent.

The historical prerequisites to the genesis of capital are: first, accumulation of a considerable sum of money in the hands of individuals under conditions of a comparatively high development of commodity production in general, and 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 the land or from 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.

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 145.—Ed.

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 governmental interference, in order to lengthen the working day (from the fourteenth century to the seventeenth) and to shorten it (factory legislation of the nineteenth century). Since the appearance of *Capital*, the history of the working class movement in all lands provides a wealth of new facts amplifying the 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<sup>1</sup> 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. Marx pointed out the mistake made in 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

<sup>1</sup> Home industry.—Ed.

other, gives birth to the so-called "reserve army of labour," causes a "relative over-abundance" of workers or "capitalist over-population." This assumes the most diversified forms, and gives capital the possibility of expanding production at an exceptionally rapid rate. This possibility, in conjunction with credit facilities and with the accumulation of capital in the means of production, furnishes among other things, the key to the understanding of the *crises* of over-production that occur periodically in capitalist countries—first about every ten years, on an average, but subsequently at more lengthy and less definite intervals. 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 colonial system and national debts, 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 remarkable words:

"The expropriation of the immediate producers was accomplished with merciless vandalism, and under the stimulus of passions the most infamous, the most sordid, the pettiest, the most meanly odious. Self-earned private property, that is based, so to say, on the fusing together of the isolated, independent labouring-individual with the conditions of his labour, is supplanted by capitalistic private property, which rests on exploitation of the nominally free labour of others, i.e., on wages-labour. . . . That which is now to be expropriated is now no longer the labourer working for himself, but the capitalist exploiting many labourers. This expropriation is accomplished by the action of the immanent laws of capitalistic production itself, by the centralisation of capital. One capitalist always kills many. Hand in hand with this centralisation, or this expropriation of many capitalists by few, develop, on an ever extending scale, the co-operative form of the labour-process, the conscious technical application of science, the methodical cultivation of the soil, the transformation of the instruments of labour into instruments of labour only usable in common, the economising of all means of production by their use as the means of production of combined, socialised labour, the entanglement of all peoples in the net of the world-market, and with this, the international character of the capitalistic regime. Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolise all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working class, a class always increasing in number, and disciplined, united, organised by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with, and under it. Centralisation of the means of production and socialisation of labour at last reach a point where they become

incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated."<sup>1</sup>

Marx's analysis, in the second volume of *Capital*, of the reproduction of social capital, taken as a whole is of the greatest importance and quite new. Here, too, Marx deals, not with an individual phenomenon, but with a mass phenomenon; not with a fractional part of the economy of society, but with this economy as a whole. In correcting the above-mentioned mistake of the classical economists, Marx divides the whole of social production into two great sections: production of means of production, and production of articles of consumption. Giving examples in figures, 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 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 less than the average rate of profit; capital with a "low organic composition" yields a more than the 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*

<sup>1</sup> *Capital*, Vol. I, pp. 788-89, Swan Sonnenschein and Co., London.—Ed.

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. However, the adjustment of value (which is social) to prices (which are individual) does not proceed in a simple and direct way, but in an exceedingly complicated manner. Naturally, therefore, in a society made up of separate producers of commodities, connected solely through the market, conformity to law can only manifest itself as an average, general, mass conformity to law, with individual and mutually compensating deviations to one side or 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*. Owing to the fact that the land area is limited, and that in capitalist countries it is all occupied by individual 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, not under average conditions of bringing goods to the market, 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 successive tran-

sition from better to worse lands. On the contrary, there may be inverse transitions, land may pass from one category into the other, owing to advances in agricultural technique, the growth of towns, and so on, and the notorious "law of diminishing fertility of the soil," charging nature with the insufficiencies, limitations, and contradictions of capitalism, is a profound error. 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 nationalisation of the land, by the ownership of the land passing over to the state. 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" closely upon another monopoly that is particularly important and "tender" in our day—the monopoly of the means of 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. 86-7.) For the history of ground-rent it is also important to note Marx's analysis which shows how labour rent (when the peasant creates a surplus product by labouring on the lord's land) is transformed into rent 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 money rent (which is the money equi-

valent of rent in kind, the *obrok*<sup>1</sup> of old Russia, 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. Some subtle ideas expressed by Marx on the *evolution of capitalism in agriculture* (this is of especial importance in its bearing on backward countries, such as Russia) should be noted in connection with this analysis of the "genesis of capitalist ground-rent."

"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-employed possessors of the land thus give rise among themselves to a nursery for capitalist tenants, whose development is conditioned upon the general development of capitalist production outside of the rural district."<sup>2</sup>

"The expropriation and eviction of a part of the agricultural population not only set free for industrial capital, the labourers, their means of subsistence, and material for labour; it also created the home market."<sup>3</sup>

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

"Part of the agricultural population is therefore constantly on the point of passing over into an urban or manufacturing proletariat. . . . (Manufacture is used here in the sense of all non-agricultural industries.) This source of relative surplus-population is thus constantly flowing. . . . The agricultural labourer is therefore reduced to the minimum of wages, and always stands with one foot already in the swamp of pauperism."<sup>4</sup>

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

"the exploitation" of the peasants "differs only in form from the exploitation of the industrial proletariat. The exploiter is the same: capital. The individual

<sup>1</sup> Quit-rent.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> *Capital*, Vol. III, p. 928, Chicago, 1909.—Ed.

<sup>3</sup> *Capital*, Vol. I, pp. 771-2, Swan Sonnenschein and Co., London.—Ed.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 657-8.—Ed.

capitalists exploit the individual peasants through mortgages and usury; the capitalist class exploits the peasant class through state taxes." (*Class Struggles in France*).<sup>1</sup> The peasant's plot of land is merely an expedient whereby the capitalist is enabled to extract profit, interest, and rent from the land, while leaving the peasant proprietor to realise 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 farmer—all under the pretence of being a private proprietor."<sup>2</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 mode of production"?<sup>3</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 grain and other agricultural products) "is also a result of the poverty of the producers and by no means of the productivity of their labour."<sup>4</sup>

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 capitals, cattle raising on a large scale, and a progressive application of science. Usury and a system of taxation must impoverish it everywhere. The expenditure of capital in the price of the land withdraws this capital from cultivation. An infinite dissipation of means of production and an isolation of the producers themselves go with it." (Co-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 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."<sup>5</sup>

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 labourers over larger areas breaks their power of resistance while concentration increases that of the town operatives. In modern agriculture, as in the urban industries, the increased productiveness and quantity of the labour set in motion are bought at the cost of laying waste and consuming by disease labour-power itself. Moreover, all progress in capitalistic

<sup>1</sup> New York, 1924, pp. 164-5.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> *Class Struggles in France*, p. 163, New York, 1924.—Ed.

<sup>3</sup> *Capital*, Vol. III, p. 937.—Ed.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 937.—Ed.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 938-9.—Ed.

agriculture is a progress in the art, not only of robbing the labourer, but of robbing the soil. . . . Capitalist production, therefore, develops technology, and the combining together of various processes into a social whole, only by sapping the original sources of all wealth—the soil and the labourer.”<sup>1</sup>

### SOCIALISM

From the foregoing it is evident that Marx deduces the inevitability of the transformation of capitalist society into socialist society wholly and exclusively from the economic law of the movement of contemporary society. The chief material foundation of the inevitability of the coming of socialism is the socialisation of labour, advancing in its myriad forms ever more rapidly, and manifesting itself with special conspicuousness, throughout the half century that has elapsed since the death of Marx—in the growth of large-scale production, of capitalist cartels, syndicates, and trusts, as well as in the gigantic increase in the dimensions and the power of finance capital. The intellectual and moral driving force of this transformation, its physical executor, is the proletariat, 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 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 improved labour—such will be the direct consequences of this transformation. Capitalism finally breaks the connection 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, of the redistribution of population (putting an end at one and the same time to rural seclusion, isolation from the world, barbarism, and to the unnatural concentration of enormous masses of population in huge cities). A new type of family, changes in the position of women and in the upbringing of the younger generation, are being prepared by

<sup>1</sup> *Capital*, Vol. I, pp. 514-5, Swan Sonnenschein and Co., London.—Ed.

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,

“... modern industry, by assigning as it does an important part in the process of production, outside the domestic sphere, to women, to young persons, and to children of both sexes, creates a new economical foundation for a higher form of the family and of the relations between the sexes. It is, of course, just as absurd to hold the Teutonic-Christian form of the family to be absolute and final as it would be to apply that character to the ancient Roman, the ancient Greek, or the Eastern forms which, moreover, taken together form a series in historic development. Moreover, it is obvious that the fact of the collective working group being composed of individuals of both sexes and all ages, must necessarily, under suitable conditions, become a source of humane development. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

In the factory system are to be found

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

Upon the same historical foundation, in the sense of not only throwing light on the past, but also of boldly foreseeing the future and bold practical activity directed towards its achievement, 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 itself unless it “constitutes itself *the nation*,” unless it is “national” (“though not in the bourgeois sense of the word”). But the development of capitalism tends more and more to break down the partitions that separate the nations from one another, does away with national isolation, substitutes class antagonism for national antagonism. In the developed capitalist countries, therefore, it is perfectly true that “the workingmen have no country,” and that “united action” of the workers, in the civilised countries at least, “is one of the first conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat” (*Communist Manifesto*). The state, which is organised violence, 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 “author-

<sup>1</sup> *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 496, Swan Sonnenschein and Co., London.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 489.—Ed.

ity" 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, economically dominating class that, with the help of this state, becomes also the politically dominating class, and thus acquires new means of subduing and exploiting the oppressed masses. The ancient state was thus the state of the slave-owners for subduing the slaves, just as the feudal state was the organ of the nobility for subduing the serf-peasants, and as the modern representative state is a tool for the exploitation of wage labour by capital." (Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, a work in which the writer expounds his own views and Marx's.)

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

"The first act," writes Engels in *Anti-Dühring*, "in which the state really comes forward as the representative of society as a whole—the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society—is at the same time its last independent act as a state. The interference of the state power in social relations becomes superfluous in one sphere after another, and then withers away. The government of persons is replaced by the administration of things and the direction of the processes of production. The state is not 'abolished,' it withers away."<sup>1</sup>

"The society, that is to reorganise production on the basis of a free and equal association of the producers, will transfer the machinery of state where it will then belong: into the museum of antiquities, by the side of the spinning-wheel and the bronze axe."<sup>2</sup>

Finally, concerning the attitude of Marxian socialism towards the small peasantry, which will continue to exist in the period of the expropriation of the expropriators, we must refer to a declaration by Engels expressing Marx's views. In an article *The Peasant Problem in France and Germany*, which appeared in the *Neue Zeit*,<sup>3</sup> he says:

"When we are in possession of the state power, we shall not even dream of forcibly expropriating the small peasants (with or without compensation), as we shall have to do in relation to the large landowners. Our task as regards the small peasants will first of all 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

<sup>1</sup> *Anti-Dühring*, p. 302.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, pp. 211-2.—Ed.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. XIII 1, pp. 301-2, 1894.—Ed.

social aid for this purpose. We shall then have ample means of showing the small peasant all the advantages of this change—advantages which even now should be explained to him."

### TACTICS OF THE CLASS STRUGGLE OF THE PROLETARIAT

Having discovered as early as 1844-45<sup>1</sup> that one of the chief defects of the earlier materialism was its failure to understand the conditions or recognise the importance of practical revolutionary activity, Marx, during all his life, along with his 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 particularly in the four volumes of his correspondence with Engels (*Briefwechsel*), published in 1913. This material is still far from having been collected, systematised, 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 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 totality 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 advanced class. All classes and all countries are at the same time looked upon not statically, but dynamically; *i. e.*, not as motionless, but as in motion (the laws of their motion being determined by the economic conditions of existence of each class). The motion, in its turn, is looked upon not only from the point of view of the past, but also from the point of view of the future; and, moreover, not only in accordance with the vulgar conception of the "evolutionists," who see only slow changes—but dialectically:

"In developments of such magnitude, twenty years are more than a day—so later on days may come in which twenty years are embodied," wrote Marx to Engels (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. III, p. 127).

<sup>1</sup> Lenin refers here to Marx's and Engels' works: *The Holy Family*, *German Ideology* and Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach*.—Ed.

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 periods of political stagnation, or periods when things are moving at a snail's pace along the road of so-called "peaceful" development, to increase the class consciousness, strength and fighting capacity of the 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 practically carrying out great tasks in great days in which "twenty years are embodied." 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, have formed 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."<sup>1</sup>

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 references by Marx and Engels to the example of the British labour movement; how, in consequence of industrial "prosperity," attempts are made "to buy the workers" (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. I, p. 136), to distract them from the struggle; how, generally speaking, this 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 their apparent bourgeois cor-

<sup>1</sup> *The Poverty of Philosophy*, p. 188, Chicago.—Ed.

ruption" (Vol. III, p. 127); how the British movement "lacks the mettle of the Chartists" (1866: Vol. III, p. 305); how the British workers' leaders are developing into something between "a radical bourgeois and a worker" (Vol. IV, p. 209, on Holyoake); how, owing to British monopoly, and as long as that monopoly lasts, "the British workingman will not budge" (Vol. IV, p. 433). The tactics of the economic struggle, in connection with the general course (and the outcome) of the labour 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:

"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."<sup>1</sup>

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, and subsequently never retracted 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 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 at the time of the bourgeois-democratic revolution—an analysis which, among other things, is an example of that materialism, which considers society in motion, and not only 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<sup>2</sup> (*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

<sup>1</sup> *Communist Manifesto*, p. 50, Moscow, 1933.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> February 11, 1865.—Ed.



slavery to the mere prospect of having to fight for freedom. When the revolutionary period of 1848-49 was over, Marx was strongly opposed to any playing at revolution (Schapper and Willich, and the fight with them), insisting on the need for knowing how to work under the new conditions, when quasi-"peacefully" new revolutions were in the making. 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:

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

While 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 workers' movement to the Prussians" (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. III, page 210), among other things, because he "favoured the *Junkers* and 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 dastardly to make an exclusive attack on the bourgeoisie in the name of the industrial proletariat but never to devote a word to the patriarchal exploitation of the rural proletariat under the lash of the great feudal aristocracy..."

During the period from 1864 to 1870, when the epoch of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Germany, that epoch of the fight of the exploiting classes of Prussia and Austria for completing the revolution *from above* in one way or another, was coming to an end, 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 that 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 of 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 with the utmost enthusiasm the revolutionary initiative of the masses, who were "storming heaven." (Letter of Marx to Kugelmann.<sup>1</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 battle, 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 Exceptional 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, on the spur of the moment, failed to manifest resolution, firmness, revolutionary spirit, readiness to resort to illegal struggle in reply to the Exceptional Law. (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. IV, pp. 397, 404, 418, 422, and 424; also letters to Sorge.)

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<sup>1</sup> Letter dated April 12, 1871.—Ed.



## FREDERICK ENGELS

*Oh, what a lamp of reason ceased to burn,  
What a heart had ceased to throb!<sup>1</sup>*

In London, on August 5, 1895, Frederick Engels breathed his last. After his friend Karl Marx (who died in 1883), Engels was the most remarkable scientist and teacher of the modern proletariat in the whole civilised world. Ever since fate brought Karl Marx and Frederick Engels together, the lifework of both friends became their common cause. To understand, therefore, what Frederick Engels has done for the proletariat, one must clearly master the significance of the work and teaching of Marx in the development of the contemporary labour movement. Marx and Engels were the first to show that the working class with its demands was the necessary outcome of the modern economic order, which together with the bourgeoisie inevitably creates and organises the proletariat. They have shown that it is not the well-meaning attempts of some noble-minded individuals that will deliver humanity from the ills which now oppress it, but the class struggle of the organised proletariat. Marx and Engels, in their scientific works, were the first to explain that socialism is not the fancy of dreamers but the final aim and the inevitable result of the development of the productive forces of modern society. All recorded history up till now was the history of class struggle, the change of domination and the victory of one social class over another. And this will continue until the bases of the class struggle and class rule—private property and anarchic social production—have ceased to exist. The interests of the proletariat demand the overthrow of these bases, and therefore the conscious class struggle of the organised workers must be directed against them. And every class struggle is a political struggle.

These views of Marx and Engels have now been made their own by the whole proletariat fighting for its emancipation, but when the two friends in the 'forties took part in the socialist literature and social movements of their time, such opinions were something quite

<sup>1</sup> From a well-known verse by Nekrassov written on the death of the famous revolutionary publicist of the 'fifties and 'sixties, Dobrolubov.

new. At that time there were many people—talented and mediocre, honest and dishonest—who, carried away by the struggle for political freedom and the struggle against the autocracy of kings, police and priests, did not see the antagonism of interests between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. These people did not even admit the idea of the workers coming forward as an independent social force. There were, on the other hand, many dreamers, some of them men of genius, who thought that it was but necessary to convince the rulers and governing classes of the injustice of the modern social order, and it would then be easy to establish peace on earth and general well-being. They dreamt of a socialism without struggle. Finally, almost all the socialists of that day and the friends of the working class generally considered the proletariat only an *ulcer* and observed with horror how, with the growth of industry, this ulcer was growing too. All of them, therefore, contemplated how to stop the development of industry together with the proletariat, how to stop the "wheel of history." Contrary to the general fear of the growth of the proletariat, Marx and Engels placed all their hopes on its continuous growth. The greater the number of proletarians, the greater will be their power as a revolutionary class, and the nearer and more possible the coming of socialism. In a few words, the services rendered by Marx and Engels to the working class may be expressed thus: they taught the working class to know itself and become class conscious and they substituted science for dreaming.

This is why the name and life of Engels should be known to every worker. This is why we must give in this volume (the aim of which is, as in all our publications, to awaken class consciousness in the Russian workers) an outline of the life and activity of Frederick Engels, one of the two great teachers of the modern proletariat.

Engels was born in 1820 in Barmen, in the Rhine province of the Prussian kingdom. His father was a manufacturer. In 1838, Engels was forced by family circumstances to enter one of the Bremen commercial houses as a salesman, before completing his course at the *gymnasium*. His commercial occupation did not prevent Engels from working on his scientific and political education. While still at the *gymnasium* he came to hate autocracy and the arbitrariness of officials. His studies of philosophy led him further. The teaching of Hegel dominated German philosophy at that time, and Engels became his disciple. Although Hegel himself was an admirer of the

autocratic Prussian state, in whose service he was occupying the post of professor in the Berlin University, the *teaching* of Hegel was revolutionary. The faith of Hegel in human reason and its rights, and the fundamental proposition of the Hegelian philosophy that a constant process of change and development is going on in the universe, had led those of the students of the Berlin philosopher, who did not desire to reconcile themselves with the actual state of things, to the idea that the struggle with the actual state of things, the struggle with the existing wrong and ruling evil, is equally rooted in the universal law of eternal development. If all things develop, if one set of institutions is replaced by others, then why should the autocracy of the Prussian king or the Russian tsar—or the enrichment of an insignificant minority, or the domination of the bourgeoisie over the people—continue forever?

The philosophy of Hegel spoke of the development of the mind and ideas; it was *idealistic*. From the development of the mind it deduced the development of nature, man, human and social relations. Marx and Engels while maintaining Hegel's idea of the eternal process of development,<sup>1</sup> rejected the preconceived idealistic outlook. Turning to life, they saw that it is not the development of mind that explains the development of nature, but on the contrary, mind must be explained from nature, from matter. . . . Contrary to Hegel and other Hegelians, Marx and Engels were materialists. Casting a materialistic glance at the universe and humanity, they perceived that just as material causes lay at the basis of all phenomena of nature, so also the development of human society was conditioned by the development of material productive forces. The relations in which men stand to each other in the production of things necessary for the satisfaction of their human needs depend upon the development of the productive forces. And it is in these relations that the explanation is to be found of all the phenomena of social life, human aspirations, ideas and laws.

The development of productive forces creates social relations based upon private property, but now we see that the same development of the productive forces deprives the majority of their property and

<sup>1</sup> Marx and Engels pointed out, many a time, that they, in their intellectual development, are very much indebted to the great German philosophers, particularly Hegel. "Without German philosophy," says Engels, "there would have been no scientific socialism."

concentrates it in the hands of an insignificant minority. It destroys property, the basis of the modern social order; this development itself tends towards the very aim which the socialists put before themselves. The socialists need but understand which of the social forces is, by its position in modern society, interested in the realisation of socialism and imbue this force with a consciousness of its interests and historical tasks. The proletariat is that force. Engels made his acquaintance with the proletariat in England, in the centre of British industry, in Manchester, whither he moved in 1842, entering into the service of a commercial house of which his father was a shareholder. Here, Engels did not merely sit in the factory office but walked about the slums in which the workers were cooped up and saw their poverty and misery with his own eyes. But he did not confine himself to personal observations. He read all that had been discovered before him concerning the position of the British working class and made a careful study of all the official documents that were accessible to him. The fruit of his studies and observations was the book which appeared in 1845: *The Condition of the Working Class in England*.

We have already mentioned above the chief service of Engels as the author of *The Condition of the Working Class in England*. There were many, even before Engels, who described the sufferings of the proletariat and showed the necessity of helping it. Engels was the *first* to say that the proletariat was *not merely* a suffering class, but that it was the shameful economic position in which the proletariat finds itself which inexorably drives it forward and forces it to fight for its final emancipation. And the fighting proletariat *will help itself by its own efforts*. The political movement of the working class will inevitably lead the workers to the consciousness that there is no way out for them except socialism. On the other hand, socialism will be a power only when it becomes the aim of the *political* struggle of the working class. Such are the main ideas of Engels' book *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, ideas, now owned by the entire thinking and fighting proletariat, but which at that time were quite new. These ideas were enunciated in a book, attractively written and full of the most authentic and terrible pictures of the distress of the British proletariat. That book was a terrible indictment of capitalism and the bourgeoisie. The impression created by it was very great. Engels' book began to be referred to everywhere as the

best picture of the conditions of the modern proletariat. And, in fact, neither before nor since 1845 did there appear so striking and truthful a picture of the distress of the working class.

It was only in England that Engels became a socialist. In Manchester he entered into relations with the workers of the British labour movement and began to write for the English socialist publications. In 1844, on returning to Germany via Paris, he became acquainted in that city with Marx, with whom he had already previously entered into correspondence. In Paris, under the influence of the French Socialists and French life, Marx also became a Socialist. Here the friends jointly wrote a book entitled *The Holy Family, or a Criticism of Critical Criticism*. In this book, which appeared a year before *The Condition of the Working Class in England* and of which the greater part was written by Marx, are laid the foundations of that revolutionary materialistic socialism, the chief ideas of which we expounded above. *The Holy Family* is a humorous nickname for the Bauer brothers, philosophers, and their disciples. These gentlemen preached criticism, which stands above any reality, above parties and politics, rejecting all practical activity, and only "critically" contemplates the surrounding world and the events which take place in it. The Messrs. Bauer judged the proletariat disdainfully as an uncritical mass. Marx and Engels decidedly attacked this absurd and harmful tendency. In the name of the worker—a real human personality, downtrodden by the ruling classes and the government—they called not for contemplation but for a struggle for a better order of society. They considered, of course, the proletariat as the power that is capable of waging such a struggle and that is interested in it. Even before the appearance of *The Holy Family*, Engels published in the *German-French Annals* of Marx and Ruge, the *Critical Essay of Political Economy* in which he considered, from the point of view of socialism, the main phenomena of the modern economic order as the necessary consequence of the rule of private property. The intercourse with Engels undoubtedly contributed to the decision of Marx to make a study of political economy, the science in which his works produced a whole revolution.

Engels lived in Brussels and Paris from 1845 to 1847, combining scientific pursuits with practical work among the German workers in Brussels and Paris. Here Marx and Engels came into contact with the secret German "Communist League," which commissioned

them to expound the main principles of socialism elaborated by them. This is how the famous *Manifesto of the Communist Party* of Marx and Engels, printed in 1848, originated. This little booklet is worth a whole number of volumes: its spirit gives life to the movement of the entire organised and fighting proletariat of the civilised world.

The revolution of 1848, which first of all broke out in France and then spread to other countries in Western Europe, brought Marx and Engels back to their native land. Here, in Rhenish Prussia, they found themselves at the head of the democratic *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* which was published in Cologne. The two friends were the soul of all the revolutionary democratic aspirations in Rhenish Prussia. They defended to the utmost the interests of the people and of freedom, against the reactionary forces. The latter, as is known, gained the upper hand. The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* was suppressed. Marx, who during his emigrant life lost his rights as a Prussian subject, was banished, while Engels took part in the people's armed uprising, fought for liberty in three battles, and after the defeat of the rebels escaped to London via Switzerland.

Marx also settled down in that city. Engels soon after became once more a clerk and afterwards a shareholder of the commercial house in Manchester in which he had worked in the 'forties. Up to 1870 he lived in Manchester while Marx lived in London, which did not, however, prevent them from maintaining a most lively intellectual intercourse: they corresponded almost daily. The two friends exchanged their views and knowledge in this correspondence and continued, in collaboration, to elaborate scientific socialism. In 1870, Engels moved to London and their common spiritual life, full of strenuous labour, was continued till 1883, the year when Marx died. Its fruit was, on the part of Marx, *Capital*, the greatest work on political economy of our age, and on the part of Engels—a whole number of large and small works. Marx worked on an analysis of the complicated phenomena of capitalist economy. Engels, in works written in a very easy and frequently polemic style, elucidated the more general scientific questions and various events of the past and present, in the spirit of the materialist conception of history and the economic theories of Marx. Of these works of Engels, we will mention: a polemical work against Dühring (here are analysed the most important questions in the domain of philosophy, natural

science and social science),<sup>1</sup> *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (translated into Russian, published in St. Petersburg, 1895), *Ludwig Feuerbach* (Russian translation with notes by Plekhanov, Geneva 1892), an article on the foreign policy of the Russian government (translated into Russian in the *Geneva Social-Democrat*, Nos. 1 and 2), some remarkable articles on the housing question, and finally, two small but very valuable articles on the economic development of Russia (*Frederick Engels on Russia*, translated into Russian by Vera Zasulich, Geneva, 1894). Marx died before completing his great work, *Capital*. However, there was a rough draft, and Engels, after the death of his friend, undertook the heavy labour of working up and publishing the second and third volumes of *Capital*. In 1885 he published Volume II and in 1894 Volume III. (He did not succeed in working up Volume IV.) A great deal of work was required on these two volumes. The Austrian Social-Democrat Adler rightly remarked that by the publication of Volume II and III of *Capital* Engels erected in memory of the genius that had been his friend, a majestic monument on which he without intending it indelibly carved his own name. These two volumes of *Capital* are, indeed, the work of both Marx and Engels. Ancient legends tell of various touching examples of friendship. The European proletariat may say that its science was created by two scholars and fighters, whose relations surpass all the most touching tales of the ancients concerning human friendship. Engels always—and, on the whole, justly so—placed himself behind Marx. “With Marx,” he wrote to an old friend, “I always played second fiddle.” His love for Marx when the latter was alive, and his reverence for Marx’s memory after the latter’s death, were infinite. This stern fighter and strict thinker possessed a deeply loving soul.

After the movement of 1848-49, Marx and Engels, in exile, were not occupied with science alone. Marx in 1864 formed the International Workingmen’s Association and led it during the course of a whole decade. Engels too took an active part in its affairs. The work of the International Association, which, according to the idea of Marx, united the proletarians of all countries, was of tremendous significance for the development of the labour movement. The uni-

<sup>1</sup> This is a wonderfully rich and instructive book. Unfortunately only a small portion of it is translated into Russian, containing an historical outline of the development of socialism—*Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*.

fying role of Marx and Engels continued even after the International Association came to an end in the ’seventies. Moreover, it may be said that their importance as spiritual leaders of the labour movement was constantly increasing in so far as the movement itself was growing incessantly. After the death of Marx, Engels alone continued to remain the counsellor and leader of the European socialists. His advice and directions were sought both by the German socialists (who, despite government persecution, rapidly and uninterruptedly increased in numbers) and the representatives of backward countries, such as Spaniards, Rumanians, and Russians, who had to think out and weigh their first steps. All of them drew upon the rich treasure of knowledge and experience of old Engels.

Marx and Engels, both of whom knew the Russian language and read Russian books, took a lively interest in Russia, followed with sympathy the Russian revolutionary movement and maintained connections with Russian revolutionaries. Both of them were *democrats* before they became socialists, and the democratic feeling of *hatred* towards political despotism was strongly developed in them. This direct political feeling together with a profound theoretical understanding of the connection between political despotism and economic oppression, as well as their rich experience of life, made Marx and Engels uncommonly responsive, particularly in regard to *politics*. Therefore, the heroic struggle of a small handful of Russian revolutionaries with the mighty tsarist government found the most sympathetic echo in the hearts of these tried revolutionaries. The inclination, on the contrary, of turning, for the sake of supposed economic advantages, from the immediate and important task of Russian socialists—the winning of political freedom—naturally appeared in their eyes as suspicious and was even considered by them a betrayal of the great cause of the social revolution. “The emancipation of the proletariat must be the work of the proletariat itself”—this is what Marx and Engels constantly taught. But in order that it may fight for its economic emancipation, the proletariat must win for itself certain *political* rights. Besides this, Marx and Engels clearly saw that a political revolution in Russia would be of tremendous importance also for the labour movement in Western Europe. Autocratic Russia was always a bulwark of the entire European reaction. The uncommonly favourable international position in which Russia was placed by the war of 1870, which for a long time put Germany and

France at loggerheads, only increased, of course, the importance of autocratic Russia as a reactionary force. Only a free Russia that requires the oppression of neither the Poles, Finns, Germans, Armenians nor that of other small peoples, and does not need the constant incitement of France against Germany—only a free Russia will enable modern Europe to breathe a sigh of relief from the military burdens, will weaken all the reactionary elements in Europe and increase the power of the European working class. This is why Engels, for the sake also of the success of the labour movement in the West, ardently desired the establishment of political freedom in Russia. By his death, the Russian revolutionaries have lost their best friend.

Eternal memory to Frederick Engels, the great champion and teacher of the proletariat!

Written in autumn, 1895.

## THE MARX-ENGELS CORRESPONDENCE

### ENGELS AS ONE OF THE FOUNDERS OF COMMUNISM

THE long promised publication of the correspondence between the famous founders of scientific socialism has, at last, seen the light of day. Engels bequeathed the publication to Bebel and Bernstein, and Bebel, shortly before his death, managed to complete his part of the editorial work.

The Marx-Engels correspondence, which was published a few weeks ago in Stuttgart by Dietz, occupies four big volumes. They contain 1,386 letters of Marx and Engels covering the long period from 1844 to 1883.

The editorial work, *i.e.*, the writing of prefaces to the letters of the various periods, has been done by Eduard Bernstein. As might have been expected, this work did not turn out satisfactorily either from a technical or ideological point of view. Bernstein, after his sadly-notorious "evolution" to extreme opportunist views, had no business to undertake the editing of letters thoroughly imbued with a revolutionary spirit. Bernstein's prefaces are in part hollow and in part simply false. For instance, instead of an exact, clear and direct characterisation of the opportunist errors of Lassalle and Schweitzer, exposed by Marx and Engels, you meet with eclectic phrases and thrusts, such as, "Marx and Engels were not always in the right against Lassalle" (Volume III, page xviii), or that they "were nearer" to the tactics of Schweitzer than to Liebknecht (Vol. IV, p. x). These attacks serve nothing but to screen and embellish opportunism. Unfortunately, an eclectic attitude to the ideological struggle of Marx with many of his opponents is gaining ever more ground in modern German social-democracy.

On the technical side—the index is unsatisfactory; there is one index for all the four volumes (it omits, for instance, the names of Kautsky and Stirling). The notes to individual letters are too meagre and are lost in the prefaces of the editor instead of being placed side by side with the corresponding letters, as Sorge did, etc.

The price of the publication is unduly high—about 20 rubles<sup>1</sup> for all the four volumes. There is no doubt that the complete correspondence could and should have been issued less luxuriously at a more accessible price, and, besides this a selection of what is most important from the point of view of principle should have been issued for wide distribution among workers.

All these defects of the publication naturally make an acquaintance with the correspondence more difficult. This is a pity, since its scientific and political value is tremendous. In this correspondence it is not merely that Marx and Engels here stand out before the reader in striking relief and in all their greatness. The extremely rich theoretical content of Marxism is unfolded most vividly since Marx and Engels again and again return in the letters to the most diverse aspects of their teaching, emphasising and explaining—at times discussing with each other and proving to each other—the most recent (in relation to previous views), most important and most difficult points.

The history of the labour movement throughout the world, at its most important moments and in the most essential points, passes before the reader with striking vividness. Even more valuable is the history of the *politics* of the working class. Prompted by most diverse occurrences, in various countries, in the old world and in the new, and at different historical moments, Marx and Engels would discuss what was most important from the point of view of principle in the formulation of questions concerning the *political* tasks of the working class. Now the epoch covered by the correspondence was just the epoch when the working class became demarcated from bourgeois democracy, the epoch of the rise of an independent labour movement, the epoch when the basic principles of proletarian tactics and policy were being determined. The more frequently one observes, nowadays, how the labour movement in various countries suffers from opportunism in consequence of the stagnation and decay of the bourgeoisie, in consequence of the labour leaders being engrossed in the trivialities of the day's work, etc.—the more valuable becomes the great wealth of material contained in the correspondence, displaying as it does, a most profound understanding of the fundamental revolutionary aims of the proletariat, and an unusually flexible definition of a given problem of tactics, from the point of view of these

<sup>1</sup> About £2 or \$10 par.—Ed.

revolutionary aims, and without the slightest concession to opportunism or revolutionary phraseology.

If one were to attempt to define in one word, so to say, the focus of the whole correspondence, the central point around which the entire network of the ideas, expressed and discussed, turns—that word would be: *dialectics*. The application of materialist dialectics to the elaboration of all political economy, from its foundations, to history, natural science, philosophy and the policy and tactics of the working class—that is what interested Marx and Engels above all. It is here that they made the most important and novel contribution and herein lies the stride forward made by their genius in the history of revolutionary thought.

In the account that follows, we intend to give, after a general review of the correspondence, an outline of the more interesting remarks and judgments of Marx and Engels, without in any way pretending to exhaust the entire contents of the letters.

#### I. GENERAL REVIEW

The correspondence opens with the letters of the twenty-four year old Engels to Marx in 1844. The situation in Germany at that time is brought into striking relief. The first letter is dated the end of September 1844 and was sent from Barmen, where the family of Engels lived and where he himself was born. Then Engels was not quite twenty-four years old. He is weary of the family surroundings and is endeavouring to tear himself free. His father—a despotic and religious manufacturer—is indignant with his son for running about to political meetings and for his communist convictions.

"Were it not for mother, whom I dearly love," Engels writes, "I would not have stood it even the few days which still remain before my departure. You cannot imagine," he complains to Marx, "what petty reasons, what superstitious fears are put forward here, in the family, against my departure."

While Engels was in Barmen, where he was delayed a little longer by a love affair, he gave in to his father and for two weeks he went to work in the office of his father's factory:

"Commerce is abominable," he writes to Marx. "Barmen is an abominable city, abominable is the way they while their time away here, and it is particularly abominable to remain not only a bourgeois but even a manufacturer, *i. e.*, a bourgeois who comes out actively against the proletariat." "I console myself," continues Engels, "by working on my book on the condition of the working class." (This book appeared, as is known, in 1845 and is one of the best in

the socialist literature of the world.) "Well, for outward appearances a communist may remain a bourgeois and the beast of burden of huckstery, as long as he does not engage in literary pursuits; but to carry on, at one and the same time, wide communist propaganda and engage in huckstery, in industrial business—this is impossible. Enough, I will go away. On the top of it the sleepy life in the family—Christian and Prussian through and through—I cannot stand it any longer, I might in the end become a German philistine and introduce philistinism into communism."

Thus wrote young Engels. After the Revolution of 1848 life forced him to return to his father's office and to remain there for many long years "the beast of burden of huckstery," but, nevertheless, he stuck to his guns and created for himself not a Christian and Prussian but quite another comradesly atmosphere, and he succeeded in becoming for his whole life a relentless enemy of the "introduction of philistinism into communism."

Public life in a German province in 1844 resembled that in Russia in the beginning of the twentieth century before the 1905 Revolution. All were rushing to politics, everywhere there was seething indignation and opposition against the government. The priests attacked the youth for their atheism and the children in bourgeois families quarrelled with their parents for their "aristocratic treatment of the servants or workers."

The general spirit of opposition found its expression in everybody declaring himself a communist.

"The Police Commissary in Barmen is a communist," writes Engels to Marx. "I was in Cologne, in Düsseldorf, in Elberfeld—everywhere, on every step, you come across communists!" "One ardent communist, an artist, a caricaturist named Seel, is going to Paris in two months. I am giving him an introduction to you. You will all like him. He is an enthusiast, loves music and will be useful as a cartoonist."

"Miracles are happening here in Elberfeld. Yesterday" (this was written on February, 22, 1845), "in the biggest hall, in the best restaurant of the city, we held our third communist meeting. The first meeting was attended by 40 persons, the second by 130 and the third by 200 at least. The whole of Elberfeld and Barmen, from the moneyed aristocracy to the petty shopkeepers, was represented, with the exception only of the proletariat."

These are Engels' exact words. In Germany, they were all communists then, except the proletariat. Communism was then a form of expression of the opposition moods of all, and most of all—of the bourgeoisie.

"The most stupid, the most lazy and most philistine people, whom nothing in the world interested, is simply becoming enraptured with communism."

The chief preachers of communism were then people like our *Narodniki*, "Socialist-Revolutionaries," "Narodnik Socialists," etc.,

in reality well-meaning bourgeois more or less furious with the government.

And in such a situation, among countless numbers of would-be socialist tendencies and fractions, Engels was able to force his way towards *proletarian* socialism, without fearing to break with a mass of good people and ardent revolutionaries but bad communists.

1846. Engels is in Paris. Paris is bubbling over with politics and discussion of various socialist theories. Engels ravenously studies socialism and makes the personal acquaintance of Cabet, Louis Blanc and other outstanding socialists; he runs about visiting newspaper editors and attending various circles.

His main attention is directed to the most serious and most widespread socialist teaching of that time—Proudhonism. Even before the publication of Proudhon's *Philosophy of Poverty* (October 1846; Marx's reply—the famous *Poverty of Philosophy* appeared in 1847), Engels criticised with relentless sarcasm and remarkable depth the main ideas of Proudhon which were then particularly taken up by the German socialist Grün. His excellent knowledge of the English language (which Marx mastered much later) and English literature enabled Engels at once (letter of September 18, 1846) to cite examples of the bankruptcy in England of the notorious Proudhonist "labour bazaars." Proudhon disgraces socialism, Engels exclaims indignantly. According to Proudhon the workers must *buy out* capital.

Engels at twenty-six simply destroys "true socialism." We find this expression in his letter of October 23, 1846 (long before the *Communist Manifesto*), where Grün is named as its chief representative. "Anti-proletarian, petty-bourgeois and philistine" teaching, "empty phrases," all sorts of "general humanitarian" aspirations, "superstitious fear of 'crude' communism" (*Löffel-Kommunismus*, literally: "spoon communism"), "peaceful plans of making humanity happy"—such are the epithets applied by Engels to *all* species of pre-Marxian socialism.

"The Proudhon Association's scheme," writes Engels, "was discussed for three evenings. At first I had nearly the whole clique against me, but at the end only Eisermann and the other three followers of Grün. The chief point was to prove the necessity for revolution by force" (October 23, 1846). . . . "In the end I got furious . . . and made a direct attack" on my opponents which "enabled me to lure" them "into an *open attack* on communism. . . . I announced that before I took part in further discussion we must vote whether we were to meet here as communists or not. . . . This greatly horrified the



Grünites" and they began to assure us that "they met together 'for the good of mankind'. . . . Moreover they must first know what communism really was. . . . I gave them an extremely simple definition" so as to admit of no subterfuges on the gist of the question. . . . "I therefore defined," writes Engels, "the objects of the communists in this way: 1) to achieve the interests of the proletariat in opposition to those of the bourgeoisie; 2) to do this through the abolition of private property and its replacement by community of goods; 3) to recognise no means of carrying out these objects other than a democratic revolution by force" (Written one and a half years before the 1848 Revolution).

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

A year afterwards, in his letter of November 24, 1847, Engels informs Marx that he has prepared a draft of the *Communist Manifesto*, declaring himself, by the way, against putting it in the form of a catechism as previously proposed.

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

This historical letter of Engels on the first draft of the work which traversed the whole world, and which, up to the present, is true in all its fundamentals, and is as full of life and as modern as if it were written yesterday, clearly proves that the names of Marx and Engels are justly placed side by side, as the names of the founders of modern Socialism.

Written in October 1913, and first published on November 28, 1920, in *Pravda*, No. 268.

## SPEECH AT THE UNVEILING OF A MONUMENT TO MARX AND ENGELS ON NOVEMBER 7, 1918

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

Humanity suffered and languished for ages under the oppression of a tiny handful of exploiters who tortured millions of toilers. But while the exploiters of the previous epoch, the landlords, robbed and pressed down the peasants, the serfs, who were disunited, scattered and ignorant, the exploiters of the new period saw before them, among the down-trodden masses, the vanguard of these masses: the industrial factory workers of the towns. The factory united them, town life enlightened them, the common struggle in strikes as well as revolutionary action hardened them.

The great world-wide historical service of Marx and Engels lies in the fact that they proved by scientific analysis the inevitability of the downfall of capitalism and its transition to communism under which there will be no more exploitation of man by man.

The great world-wide historical service of Marx and Engels lies in this, that they indicated to the proletarians of all countries their role, their task, their calling: to be the first to rise in the revolutionary fight against capital and unite around themselves in this struggle *all* the toilers and the exploited.

We are living in a happy time, when the forecast of the great socialists is beginning to come true. We all see the dawn of the international socialist revolution in a whole number of countries. The unspeakable horrors of the imperialist butchery of the peoples are evoking the heroic upsurge of the oppressed masses, and are increasing their forces tenfold in the struggle for emancipation.

May the monument to Marx and Engels remind the millions of workers and peasants that we do not stand alone in the struggle. The workers of the more advanced countries are rising side by side with us. Hard battles are still in store for them and ourselves. The yoke of capital will be broken in the common struggle and Socialism will finally triumph!

First published in 1926, *Collected Works*, Russian edition, Vol. XX, part II.



### THE THREE SOURCES AND THREE COMPONENT PARTS OF MARXISM

THE teaching of Marx evokes throughout the civilised world the greatest hostility and hatred on the part of all bourgeois science (both official and liberal) which regards Marxism as something in the nature of a "pernicious sect." No other attitude is to be expected, since there can be no "impartial" social science in a society which is built up on the class struggle. *All* official and liberal science *defends* wage-slavery in one way or another, whereas Marxism has declared relentless war on that slavery. To expect science to be impartial in a society of wage-slavery is as silly and naïve as to expect impartiality from employers on the question as to whether the workers' wages should be increased by decreasing the profits of capital.

However, this is not all. The history of philosophy and that of social science shows with perfect clearness that there is nothing in Marxism resembling "sectarianism" in the sense of a secluded, fossilised doctrine originating somewhere away from the high road of development of world civilisation. On the contrary, the genius of Marx manifested itself in that he provided the answers to questions which had already been put by the advanced brains of humanity.

His teaching came as a direct and immediate *continuation* of the teaching of the greatest representatives of philosophy, political economy, and socialism.

The teaching of Marx is all-powerful because it is true. It is complete and harmonious, providing men with a consistent view of the universe, which cannot be reconciled with any superstition, any reaction, any defence of bourgeois oppression. It is the lawful successor of the best that has been created by humanity in the nineteenth century—German philosophy, English political economy and French socialism.

It is these three sources, which are also the three component parts of Marxism, that we will briefly dwell upon.

#### I

The philosophy of Marxism is *materialism*. Throughout the recent history of Europe, and particularly at the end of the eighteenth century in France, which was the scene of the decisive battle against every kind of mediæval rubbish, against serfdom in institutions and ideas, materialism proved to be the only consistent philosophy, true to all the teachings of natural science, hostile to superstitions, cant, etc. The enemies of democracy tried, therefore, with all their energy, to "overthrow," undermine and defame materialism, and defended various forms of philosophic idealism, which always leads, in one way or another, to the defence and support of religion.

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

However, Marx did not stop at the materialism of the eighteenth century but moved philosophy forward. He enriched it by the achievements of German classical philosophy especially by Hegel's system, which in its turn had led to the materialism of Feuerbach. Of these the main achievement is *dialectics*, i.e., the doctrine of development in its fuller, deeper form, free from one-sidedness—the doctrine, also, of the relativity of human knowledge that provides us with a reflection of eternally developing matter. The latest discoveries of natural science—radium, electrons, the transmutation of elements—are a remarkable confirmation of the dialectical materialism of Marx, despite the doctrines of bourgeois philosophers with their "new" returns to old and rotten idealism.

While deepening and developing philosophic materialism, Marx carried it to its conclusion; he extended its perception of nature to the perception of *human society*. The *historical materialism* of Marx represented the greatest conquest of scientific thought. Chaos and arbitrariness, which reigned until then in the views on history and politics, were replaced by a strikingly consistent and harmonious scientific theory, which shows how out of one order of social life another and higher order develops, in consequence of the growth of the productive forces—how capitalism, for instance, grows out of serfdom.

Just as the cognition of man reflects nature (*i.e.*, developing matter) which exists independently of him, so also the *social cognition* of man (*i.e.*, the various views and doctrines—philosophic, religious, political, etc.) reflects the *economic order* of society. Political institutions are a superstructure on the economic foundation. We see, for example, that the various political forms of modern European states serve the purpose of strengthening the domination of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat.

The philosophy of Marx completes in itself philosophic materialism which has provided humanity, and especially the working class, with a powerful instrument of knowledge.

## II

Having recognised that the economic order is the foundation upon which the political superstructure is erected, Marx devoted all the greater attention to the study of that economic order. The principal work of Marx, *Capital*, is devoted to a study of the economic order of modern, *i. e.*, capitalist society.

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

Where the bourgeois economists saw a relation of things (the exchange of one commodity for another) Marx revealed a *relation between men*. The exchange of commodities expresses the connection between individual producers by means of the market. *Money* signifies that this connection is becoming closer and closer, inseparably combining the entire economic life of the individual producers into one whole. *Capital* signifies a further development of this connection: the labour power of man becomes a commodity. The wage labourer sells his labour power to the owner of land, of factories and instruments of labour. The worker uses one part of the labour day to cover the expenditure for the maintenance of himself and his family (wages), and the other part of the day he toils without remuneration and creates *surplus value* for the capitalist,

which is the source of profit, the source of wealth of the capitalist class.

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

Capital, created by the labour of the worker, presses upon the workers, ruins the petty owners and creates an army of unemployed. In industry the victory of large-scale production may be seen at once, but we also see the same phenomenon in agriculture: the superiority of big capitalist agriculture becomes greater, the application of machinery grows, peasant economy is caught in the noose of money-capital, it declines and becomes ruined under the burden of a backward technique. In agriculture, the forms of decline of petty production are different, but the decline itself is an indisputable fact.

By beating petty production, capital leads to the increase of the productivity of labour and to the establishment of a monopoly position for associations of the biggest capitalists. Production itself becomes more and more social; hundreds of thousands and millions of workers are linked up in a systematic economic organism, but the product of the collective labour is appropriated by a handful of capitalists. Anarchy of production, crises, a furious hunt after markets, and the insecurity of existence for the masses of population, are on the increase.

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

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

And the experience of all countries, whether old or new, clearly shows year after year, to an ever greater number of workers, the truth of Marx's teaching.

Capitalism has been victorious all over the world, but this victory is only the eve of the victory of labour over capital.

## III

After the overthrow of serfdom, when a "*free*" capitalist society appeared, it was at once discovered that this freedom signified a new system of oppression and exploitation of the toilers. Various socialist doctrines immediately began to arise as a reflection of this oppression and protest against it. But socialism in its first

origin was *utopian*. It criticised the capitalist society, it condemned it and damned it, it dreamed of its destruction, it drew phantastic pictures of a better order and endeavoured to convince the rich of the wickedness of exploitation.

But utopian socialism was unable to show a real way out. It could not explain either the essence of wage-slavery under capitalism, or discover the laws of its development, or find the *social force* which was capable of becoming the creator of a new society.

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

Not a single victory of political freedom over the class of feudal lords was won without desperate resistance. Not a single capitalist country was established on a more or less free and democratic basis without a life and death struggle between the different classes of capitalist society.

Marx was a genius because he was able before anyone else to draw from these facts and consistently elaborate the conclusion which world history teaches. This conclusion is the doctrine of the *class struggle*.

People always were and always will be the stupid victims of deceit and self-deceit in politics, as long as they have not learned to discover the *interests* of one or another of the classes behind any moral, religious, political and social phrases, declarations and promises. The supporters of reforms and improvements will always be fooled by the defenders of the old, as long as they will not realise that every old institution, however absurd and rotten it may appear, is kept in being by the forces of one or the other of the ruling classes. And there is *only one* way of breaking the resistance of these classes, and that is to find, in the very society which surrounds us, and to enlighten and organise for the struggle, the forces which can and, by their social position, *must* form the power capable of sweeping away the old and of establishing the new.

Only the philosophic materialism of Marx showed the proletariat the way out of the spiritual slavery in which all oppressed classes have languished up to the present. Only the economic theory of Marx explained the real position of the proletariat in the general system of capitalism.

The independent organisations of the proletariat are multiplying throughout the world from America to Japan and from Sweden to South Africa. The proletariat is being enlightened and educated in waging the class struggle, it is ridding itself of the prejudices of bourgeois society, consolidating itself ever more closely and learning to take the measure of its successes; it is hardening its forces and growing irresistibly.

March 1913.

## THE HISTORICAL DESTINY OF THE TEACHING OF KARL MARX

THE main thing in the teaching of Marx is the elucidation of the world-wide historical role of the proletariat as the builder of a socialist society. Has the progress of events in the world confirmed this teaching since it was expounded by Marx?

It was first put forward by Marx in 1844. Already the *Communist Manifesto* of Marx and Engels, which appeared in 1848, gave a consistent, systematic exposition of this teaching, which exposition still remains the best even now. World history, since that time, is clearly divisible into three main periods: 1) From the 1848 Revolution to the Paris Commune (1871); 2) From the Paris Commune to the Russian Revolution (1905); 3) Since the Russian Revolution.

Let us cast a glance on the fate of the teaching of Marx in each of these periods.

### I

In the beginning of the first period Marx's teaching does not by any means dominate. It is only one of very many fractions or streams in socialism. The forms of socialism which dominate are those which, in the main, are akin to our *Narodniki*; the lack of understanding of the materialist basis of the historical movement, the inability to assign the role and significance of each class in capitalist society, the masking of the bourgeois essence of democratic reorganisation by various, ostensibly socialist, phrases about "the people," "justice," "right," etc.

The 1848 Revolution struck a fatal blow at all these vociferous, multi-coloured, and noisy varieties of pre-Marxian socialism. In all countries the Revolution showed the various classes of society in action. The shooting of the workers by the republican bourgeoisie in the June Days in Paris, in 1848, finally established that the proletariat alone was of a socialist nature. The liberal bourgeoisie feared the independence of this class a hundred times more than any kind of reaction. Cowardly liberalism grovels before the latter.

The peasantry is satisfied with the abolition of the remnants of feudalism and passes over to the side of order and only from time to time wavers between *labour democracy and bourgeois liberalism*. All doctrines of class-less socialism and class-less politics turn out to be sheer nonsense.

The Commune of Paris (1871) completes this development of bourgeois reforms; it was only the heroism of the proletariat that brought about the consolidation of the republic, i.e., the form of state organisation in which the class relations appear in their most naked form.

In all other European countries a more confused and less finished development leads to the same formation of a bourgeois society. By the end of the first period (1848-71)—a period of storm and revolution—pre-Marxian socialism dies. Independent proletarian parties are born: the First International (1864-72) and the German Social-Democracy.

### II

The second period (1872-1904) is distinguished from the first by its "peaceful" character, by the absence of revolutions. The West has finished with bourgeois revolutions. The East has not yet grown ripe for them.

The West enters into a phase of "peaceful" preparation for the epoch of future transformations. Socialist parties, proletarian in essence, are formed everywhere, parties which learn to use bourgeois parliamentarism, to establish their own daily press, their educational institutions, their trade unions and their co-operatives. The teaching of Marx gains a complete victory and *expands in breadth*. The process of selection and gathering of the forces of the proletariat and its preparation for the battles ahead proceed slowly but steadily.

The dialectics of history is such that the theoretical victory of Marxism forces its enemies to *disguise themselves* as Marxists. Liberalism, rotten to the core, tries to revive itself in the form of socialist *opportunism*. The period of preparation of the forces for great battles, is interpreted by them as the renunciation of these battles. Improvements in the position of the slaves enabling them to carry on a fight against wage-slavery is explained by them in the sense that the slaves are selling their liberty rights for a penny. In a cowardly manner they preach "social peace" (i.e., peace with

slave-ownership), renunciation of the class struggle, etc. They have many adherents among socialist parliamentarians, the various officials in the labour movement, and the "sympathising" intellectuals.

### III

The opportunists hardly had time to finish their hymns of praise to "social peace" and the needlessness of storms under "democracy," when a new source of the greatest of world storms opened in Asia. The Russian Revolution was followed by the Turkish, the Persian and the Chinese. We are now living in the very epoch of these storms and their "repercussion" on Europe. Whatever fate may befall the great Chinese republic against which various "civilised" hyenas are now sharpening their teeth, no power in the world will re-establish serfdom in Asia, or wipe out the heroic democracy of the masses of the people in Asiatic and semi-Asiatic countries.

Some people, inattentive to the conditions of preparation and development of mass struggle, were reduced to a state of despair and anarchism by the long postponements of the decisive fight against capitalism in Europe. We now see how short-sighted and pusillanimous is this anarchist despair.

The fact of Asia, with its eight hundred million people, being drawn into the struggle for the same European ideals must be a source of courage and not of despair.

The Asiatic revolutions have shown us the same lack of backbone and baseness of liberalism, the same exceptional importance of the independence of the democratic masses, and the same sharp line dividing the proletariat from the bourgeoisie. Anyone who, after the experience of Europe and Asia, speaks of class-less politics and class-less socialism, simply deserves to be put in a cage, to be exhibited side by side with some Australian kangaroo.

After Asia, Europe has also begun to stir, but in no Asiatic way. The "peaceful" period of 1872-1904 has gone completely, never to return. High cost of living and the pressure of the trusts is causing an unprecedented intensification of the economic struggle, which has roused even the British workers who are most of all corrupted by liberalism. Before our eyes, a political crisis is maturing even in the "die-hard," bourgeois-*Junker* country, Germany. Owing to the feverish race for armaments, and the policy of imperialism, the

"social peace" of modern Europe is more like a barrel of gunpowder. And the decay of *all* bourgeois parties together with the maturing of the proletariat is proceeding steadily apace.

Since the rise of Marxism, every one of the three great epochs in world history has provided it with fresh proof and has brought it new triumphs. But the coming historical epoch is holding in store for Marxism, as the teaching of the proletariat, a still greater triumph.

March 14, 1913.

## ON REVOLUTIONARY MARXISM AND ITS DISTORTION\*

(From the Book: *What the "Friends of the People" Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats*)

IN speaking of the narrow interpretation of Marxism, I have in mind the Marxists themselves. In this connection, one cannot help remarking that Marxism is in a most grotesque manner narrowed down and distorted by our liberals and radicals when they begin to expound it in the columns of the legal press. And what an exposition! Only think to what an extent this revolutionary doctrine has to be mutilated so that it may fit the Procrustean bed of the Russian censorship! And our publicists perform this operation with a light heart: Marxism as expounded by them is almost reduced to a teaching which shows how private property, based on the labour of the owner, undergoes its dialectic development under capitalism, and how it is transformed into its negation, eventually becoming socialised. And with a serious face it is assumed that this "scheme" contains all that there is in Marxism, while omitting all the peculiarities of its sociological method, omitting the doctrine of the class struggle, omitting the direct object of the investigation, *i.e.*, to reveal all the forms of antagonism and exploitation so as to help the proletariat to cast them off. No wonder something so jejune and narrow that our radicals start pitying the poor Russian Marxists. Of course! Russian absolutism and Russian reaction would not be absolutism and reaction, if it were possible during their existence to expound Marxism wholly, accurately and fully, speaking out its conclusions right to the end! And if our liberals and radicals knew Marxism properly (at least from German literature) they would have been ashamed to mutilate it so in the columns of the censored press. If it is impossible to expound the theory—be silent, or explain that you are far from expounding everything, that you are omitting all that is most essential, but when you are expounding scraps of the theory, why scream about narrowness?

It is only because of this that we witness such curiosities, possible only in Russia, when among Marxists people are included who have

no notion of the struggle of classes, of the inevitable antagonism inherent in capitalist society, and of the development of this antagonism, people who have no idea of the revolutionary role of the proletariat! People even who come forward with plain bourgeois schemes if only they throw in here and there some words such as "money economy," its "necessity," and similar expressions; and it requires all the depth of wit of a Mr. Mikhailovsky to recognise these expressions as particularly Marxian.

Now Marx considered that the whole value of his theory lay in the fact that it is "in its very essence a critical<sup>1</sup> and revolutionary theory." And this latter quality is indeed entirely and absolutely inherent in *Marxism*, because the immediate task of this theory is to *reveal* all the forms of antagonism and exploitation in modern society, to trace their evolution, to prove their transitory nature, the inevitability of their transformation into another form, and *in this way to serve the proletariat so that it may put an end to every kind of exploitation as quickly and as easily as possible*. The irresistibly attractive force which draws the socialists of all countries to this theory lies just in this, that it combines rigid learning at its highest (being the last word of social science) with revolutionism, and this combination is not an accident; not only because the founder of the doctrine combined in his person both the scientist and the revolutionary, but this combination is welded together internally and inseparably in the theory itself. Indeed, the task of the theory and the aim of the science is here put plainly—to assist the class of the oppressed in the actual economic struggle.

"We do not say to it" (the world): "stop fighting, all your struggle is nonsense. We will provide you with the true slogan of the struggle." (Letter of Marx to Ruge, of September 1843.)

Consequently, according to Marx, the direct task of science is to give a true slogan of the struggle, *i.e.*, to be able to present this struggle objectively as a product of a definite system of production relations, to be able to *understand* the necessity of this struggle, its

<sup>1</sup> Observe that Marx speaks here of materialist criticism, which alone he considers scientific, *i.e.*, a criticism which confronts the politico-juridical, social facts, mode of living, etc., with the economics, with the system of production relations as well as with the interests of those classes which are inevitably being formed on the basis of the antagonistic social relations. Hardly any one can doubt that the Russian social relations are antagonistic. But no one has yet attempted to take them as a basis for *this kind* of criticism.

content, its progress and the conditions of its development. A "slogan of "struggle" cannot be given without a detailed study of every individual form of this struggle, without following every one of its steps when it passes from one form to another, so as to be able at every given moment to determine the position, without leaving out of account the general nature of the struggle and its general aim—the complete and final abolition of all exploitation and all oppression.

Try to compare the "critical and revolutionary" theory of Marx with the colourless rubbish which "our well-known" N. K. Mikhailovsky expounded in his "criticism" and against which he fought, and you will be amazed how there can, indeed, be people who consider themselves "ideologists of the toiling classes" and confine themselves to . . . that "flat disc" into which our publicists are turning the theory of Marx, wiping out of it all that is vital.

Try to compare the requirements of this theory with our *Narodniki* literature which, after all, also starts from the desire to be the ideologist of the toilers, a literature devoted to the history and present state of our economic forms in general and of the peasantry in particular—and you will be amazed how socialists could be satisfied with a theory which confined itself to a study and description of misery and to moralisings about this misery. Serfdom is represented not as a definite form of economic organisation, creating such and such exploitation, such and such antagonistic classes, such and such political, juridical and other forms—but simply as an abuse on the part of the landlords and an act of injustice to the peasants. The Peasant Reform is depicted not as a collision of definite economic forms and definite economic classes, but as a measure of the authorities, who erroneously "chose" the "wrong path" notwithstanding all their best intentions. Post-Reform Russia is depicted as a deviation from the true path, which is being accompanied by calamities for the toilers, and not as a system of antagonistic production relations which is taking such and such a course of development.

Now, however, this theory is undoubtedly discredited, and the sooner Russian socialists come to realise that with the present level of knowledge there can be no revolutionary theory outside of Marxism, and the sooner they direct all their efforts to the application of this theory to Russia, in theory and practice, the surer and the more rapid will be the success of the revolutionary work.

Written and published in 1894.

## ON THE THEORY OF MARXISM\*

(From the Article: *Our Programme*)

INTERNATIONAL social-democracy is at the present time passing through a period of ideological vacillations. The doctrines of Marx and Engels were hitherto considered to be a firm foundation of the revolutionary theory, but now voices are heard on all sides that these doctrines are inadequate and obsolete.

Those who declare themselves social-democrats and intend to come forward with a social-democratic organ must define exactly their attitude to the question which is far from agitating the German Social-Democrats alone.

We stand entirely on the basis of the theory of Marx: it was the first to transform socialism from an utopia to a science, to fix the firm foundation of this science and to indicate the path along which it is necessary to proceed, while developing this science further and elaborating it in every detail. It laid bare the essence of modern capitalist economy, explaining the manner in which the hire of the labourer, the purchase of labour-power, masks the enslavement of millions of propertyless people by a handful of capitalists, the owners of the land, factories, mines, etc. It showed that the whole trend of development of modern capitalism is towards the ousting of small production by large, and the creating of conditions which make a Socialist system of society possible and inevitable. It taught us to see under the veil of rooted customs, political intrigues, subtle laws and artful doctrines, the *class struggle*, the struggle between all species of propertied classes and the mass of non-possessors, the *proletariat*, which stands at the head of all the propertyless. It made clear the real task of a revolutionary socialist party: it is neither drawing up plans for the reconstruction of society, nor preaching sermons to the capitalists and their hangers-on about improving the lot of the workers, nor making conspiracies, *but the organisation of the class struggle of the proletariat and the leadership of this struggle, the final aim of which is the winning of polit-*

*ical power by the proletariat and the organisation of a socialist society.*

And we now ask: has anything new been introduced into this theory by its loud-voiced "renovators," gathered around the German socialist Bernstein, who have now raised such a noise? No, *nothing whatever*: they have not advanced the science, the development of which was bequeathed to us by Marx and Engels, a single step forward; they have not taught the proletariat any new methods of struggle; they only crawl backwards, picking up snatches of backward theories and instead of the theory of the struggle, they preach to the proletariat the theory of compliance, compliance with the most vicious enemies of the proletariat, the governments and bourgeois parties, who are untiring in their search for new means of baiting socialists. One of the founders and leaders of Russian Social-Democracy, Plekhanov, was quite right in mercilessly criticising the latest "criticism" of Bernstein, whose views have now been rejected also by the representatives of the German workers (at the Congress in Hanover).

We know that a pile of accusations will be heaped upon us for these words. The cry will be raised that we want to convert the Socialist Party into an order of "true believers" who persecute the "heretics" for deviations from "dogmas" and for any independent opinion, etc. We know all these fashionable and biting phrases. Only there is not a single grain of truth or sense in them. There can be no strong socialist party in the absence of a revolutionary theory uniting all the socialists, from which they draw all their convictions and which they apply in their modes of struggle and methods of activity. To defend such a theory, which you absolutely feel to be the truth, against unfounded attacks and attempts to deteriorate it, does not by any means imply that you are an enemy of *all* criticism. We do not by any means look upon the theory of Marx as something final and inviolable; on the contrary, we are convinced that it only laid the cornerstones of the science which socialists *must* advance in all directions, if they do not want to lag behind events. We think that the *independent* elaboration of Marx's theory is especially necessary for Russian socialists since this theory provides only the general guiding principles which in *detail* must be applied in England in a manner different from that applied in France, in France in a manner different from that applied in Germany, and

in Germany in a manner different from that applied in Russia. We will therefore gladly afford space in our paper for articles on theoretical questions and invite all comrades to a frank discussion of controversial points. . . .

Written in 1899.



## ENGELS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE THEORETICAL STRUGGLE

(From: *What Is To Be Done?*)

"DOGMATISM, doctrinarism," "ossification of the Party—the inevitable retribution that follows the violent strait-lacing of thought," these are the enemies against which the knightly champions of "freedom of criticism" rise in arms in *Rabocheye Dyelo* [*Workers' Cause*]. We are very glad that this question has been brought up and we would propose only to add to it another question:

Who are to be judges?

Before us lie two publishers' announcements. One, *The Programme of the Periodical Organ of the League of Russian Social-Democrats—Rabocheye Dyelo* (Reprint from No. 1 of *Rabocheye Dyelo*), and the other, *Announcement of the Resumption of Publication by the Emancipation of Labour Group*. Both are dated 1899, when the "crisis of Marxism" had long been on the order of the day. And what do we find? In the first production, we would seek in vain for any indication of this phenomenon, or definite elucidation of the position the new organ intends to occupy on this question. Of theoretical work and the urgent tasks that now confront it, not a word is said in this programme, nor in the supplements to it that were passed by the Third Congress of the League in 1901 (*Two Congresses*, pp. 15-18). During the whole of this time, the editorial board of *Rabocheye Dyelo* ignored theoretical questions, notwithstanding the fact that these questions excited the minds of Social-Democrats in all countries.

The other announcement, on the contrary, first of all points to the diminution of interest in theory observed in recent years, imperatively demands "vigilant attention to the theoretical aspect of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat," and calls for "ruthless criticism of the Bernsteinist and other anti-revolutionary tendencies" in our movement. The issues of *Zarya* [*Dawn*] that have appeared show to what extent this programme was carried out.

Thus we see that high-sounding phrases against the ossification of

thought, etc., conceal carelessness and helplessness in the development of theoretical ideas. The case of the Russian Social-Democrats strikingly illustrates the fact observed in the whole of Europe (and long ago noted also by the German Marxists) that the notorious freedom of criticism implies, not the substitution of one theory by another, but freedom from every complete and thought-out theory; it implies eclecticism and lack of principle. Those who are in the least acquainted with the actual state of our movement cannot but see that the great spread of Marxism was accompanied by a certain lowering of theoretical standards. Quite a number of people, with very little, and even totally lacking in, theoretical training, joined the movement for the sake of its practical significance and its practical successes. We can judge, therefore, how tactless *Rabocheye Dyelo* is, when, with an air of invincibility, it quotes the statement of Marx that: "A single step of the real movement is worth a dozen programmes." To repeat these words in a period of theoretical chaos is like wishing mourners at a funeral "many happy returns of the day." Moreover, these words of Marx are taken from his letter on the Gotha Programme, in which he *sharply condemns* the eclecticism in the formulation of principles: "If you must combine," Marx wrote to the Party leaders, "then enter into agreements to satisfy the practical aims of the movement, but do not haggle over principles, do not make 'concessions' in theory." This was Marx's idea, and yet there are people among us who strive—in his name!—to belittle the significance of theory.

Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement. This cannot be insisted upon too strongly at a time when the fashionable preaching of opportunism is combined with absorption in the narrowest forms of practical activity. The importance of theory for Russian Social-Democrats is still greater for three reasons, which are often forgotten:

The first is that our Party is only in the process of formation, its features are only just becoming outlined, and it has not yet completely settled its reckoning with other tendencies in revolutionary thought which threaten to divert the movement from the proper path. Indeed, in very recent times we have observed (as Axelrod long ago warned the Economists would happen) a revival of non-Social-Democratic revolutionary tendencies. Under such circumstances, what at first sight appears to be an "unimportant" mistake may give rise to

most deplorable consequences, and only the short-sighted would consider factional disputes and strict distinction of shades to be inopportune and superfluous. The fate of Russian Social-Democracy for many, many years to come may be determined by the strengthening of one or the other "shade."

The second reason is that the Social-Democratic movement is essentially an international movement. This does not mean merely that we must combat national chauvinism. It means also that a movement that is starting in a young country can be successful only on the condition that it assimilates the experience of other countries. In order to assimilate this experience, it is not sufficient merely to be acquainted with it, or simply to transcribe the latest resolutions. A critical attitude is required towards this experience, and ability to subject it to independent tests. Only those who realise how enormously the modern labour movement has grown in strength, will understand what a reserve of theoretical forces and political (as well as revolutionary) experience is required to fulfil this task.

The third reason is that the national tasks of Russian Social-Democracy are such as have never confronted any other socialist party in the world. Further on we shall deal with the political and organisational duties which the task of emancipating the whole people from the yoke of autocracy imposes upon us. At the moment, we wish to state that the *role of vanguard can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by an advanced theory.*<sup>1</sup> To understand what this means concretely, let the reader call to mind the predecessors of Russian Social-Democracy like Herzen, Belinsky, Chernyshevsky and the brilliant band of revolutionaries of the 'seventies; let him ponder over the world significance which Russian literature is now acquiring, let him... Oh! But that is enough!

Let us quote what Engels said in 1874 concerning the significance of theory in the Social-Democratic movement. Engels recognises *not two* forms of the great struggle of Social-Democracy (political and economic), as is the fashion among us, *but three, adding to the first two also the theoretical struggle.* His recommendations to the German labour movement, which has now become practically and politically strong, are so instructive from the point of view of present-day controversies, that we hope the reader will forgive us for quoting a long passage from his introduction to

<sup>1</sup> Italicised in the 1908 edition.—Ed. .

the *Peasant War in Germany*, which long ago became a literary rarity.

"The German workers have two essential advantages over those of the rest of Europe. First, they belong to the most theoretical people of Europe; they have retained that sense of theory which the so-called 'educated' people of Germany have totally lost. Without German philosophy which preceded it, particularly that of Hegel, German scientific socialism (the only scientific socialism that has ever existed) would never have come into existence. Without a sense of theory among the workers, this scientific socialism would never have become part of their flesh and blood as it has. What an immeasurable advantage this is may be seen, on the one hand, from the indifference of the English labour movement towards all theory, which is one of the chief reasons why it moves so slowly, in spite of the splendid organisation of the individual unions; on the other hand, from the mischief and confusion wrought by Proudhonism, in its original form among the French and Belgians, and in the further caricatured form at the hands of Bakunin, among the Spaniards and Italians.

"The second advantage is that, chronologically speaking, the Germans were almost the last to appear in the labour movement. Just as German theoretical socialism will never forget that it rests on the shoulders of Saint-Simon, Fourier and Owen, three men who, in spite of all their phantastic notions and utopianism, have their place among the most eminent thinkers of all time, and whose genius anticipated innumerable things the correctness of which can now be scientifically proved, so the practical German labour movement must never forget that it has developed on the shoulders of the English and French movements, that it was able simply to utilise their dearly-bought experience, and could now avoid their mistakes which in their time were mostly unavoidable. Without the English trade unions and the French workers' political struggles which came before, without the gigantic impulse given especially by the Paris Commune, where would we now be?

"It must be said to the credit of the German workers that they exploited the advantages of their situation with rare understanding. For the first time in the history of the labour movement, the three sides of the struggle, the theoretical, the political and the practical economic (resistance to the capitalists)—are being conducted in harmony, co-ordination and in a planned way. It is precisely in this, as it were, concentric attack, that the strength and invincibility of the German movement lies.

"It is due to this advantageous situation on the one hand, to the insular peculiarities of the English and to the forcible suppression of the French movements on the other, that the German workers for the moment form the vanguard of the proletarian struggle. How long events will allow them to occupy this post of honour cannot be foreseen. But as long as they occupy it, let us hope that they will discharge their duties in the proper manner. To this end it will be necessary to redouble our energies in every sphere of struggle and agitation. It is the specific duty of the leaders to gain an ever-clearer insight into all theoretical questions, to free themselves more and more from the influence of traditional phrases inherited from the old conception of the world, and constantly to keep in mind that socialism, having become a science, must be pursued as a science, *i.e.*, it must be studied. The task will be to spread with increased enthusiasm, among the masses of the workers, the ever-clearer insight thus acquired, to knit together ever more firmly the organisation both of the Party and of the trade unions. . . .

"If the German workers proceed in this way, they will not march exactly at the head of the movement—it is not in the interests of the movement that the workers of any one nation should march at its head—but they will occupy an honourable place in the battle line, and they will stand armed for battle when either unexpectedly grave trials or momentous events demand heightened courage, heightened determination and power to act."<sup>1</sup>

Engels' words proved prophetic. Within a few years, the German workers were subjected to severe trials in the form of the anti-Socialist law; but they were fully armed to meet the situation, and succeeded in emerging from it victoriously.

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

Written 1902.

<sup>1</sup> Third edition, Leipzig, 1875.—Ed.

## MARXISM AND REVISIONISM

THERE is a saying that if geometrical axioms affected human interests attempts would no doubt be made to refute them. Theories of natural history which came up against the old prejudices of theology caused and cause even today the most furious struggle. It is not to be wondered at then that the teaching of Marx, which directly serves the purposes of enlightening and organising the advanced class in modern society, which indicates the tasks of this class and proves the inevitable substitution of a new order for the present system, as a result of economic development—it is not to be wondered at that this teaching had to take by storm every step on its life course.

There is no need to speak of bourgeois science and philosophy, which are taught officially by official professors for the purpose of befuddling the minds of the growing youth of the possessing classes and "training" them against the enemy at home and abroad. This science will not hear of Marxism, declaring the latter to have been refuted and destroyed. Marx is attacked with equal zeal both by the young scholars who make their careers on the refutation of socialism, and the decrepit old men who treasure the testaments of all sorts of derelict "systems." The progress of Marxism and the dissemination and consolidation of its ideas among the working class cannot but effect the greater frequency and intensification of these bourgeois sallies against Marxism. But each time Marxism is "annihilated" by official science it grows ever stronger, ever more hardened, with its vitality ever more enhanced.

However, of all the doctrines connected with the struggle of the working class and mainly current among the proletariat, Marxism did not by any means consolidate its position all at once. For the first half century of its existence (from the forties of the nineteenth century) Marxism struggled with theories which were fundamentally hostile to it. In the first half of the 'forties Marx and Engels settled with the radical young Hegelians who maintained the standpoint of philosophic idealism. At the end of the 'forties the struggle began

in the field of economic doctrine, against Proudhonism. The 'fifties completed this struggle: the criticism of parties and doctrines which made their appearance in the stormy 1848. In the 'sixties the struggle is shifted from the domain of general theory to that which is nearer to the immediate labour movement: the ejection of Bakunism from the International. In the beginning of the 'seventies the Proudhonist Mühlberger comes forward for a short time in Germany, and, at the end of the 'seventies, the positivist Dühring. But the influence of the one and the other on the proletariat was already quite insignificant. Marxism is already absolutely victorious over all the other ideologies in the labour movement.

By the nineties of last century this victory was, in its main features, completed. Even in the Latin countries, where the traditions of Proudhonism were kept up longest, the labour parties, in effect, built up their programmes and tactics on a Marxist basis. The renewed international organisation of the labour movement, in the form of periodical international congresses, at once and almost without struggle took up the standpoint of Marxism on all essential matters. But when Marxism had ousted all more or less consistent doctrines hostile to it, the tendencies expressed in those doctrines set out to find other channels. The forms and occasions of the struggle changed, but the struggle continued. And the second half century of the existence of Marxism (the nineties of last century) started with the struggle of a tendency within Marxism that was hostile to Marxism.

The formerly orthodox Marxist, Bernstein, provided the name to this current. He came forward with the greatest noise, and with the most comprehensive formulation of amendments to Marx, revision of Marx, with revisionism. Even in Russia, where non-Marxian socialism maintained its position longest—and naturally so owing to the economic backwardness of the country and the preponderance of a peasant population crushed down by the remnants of serfdom—even in Russia, it is plainly growing into revisionism before our very eyes. Both in the agrarian question (municipalisation of all the land), as well as in general questions of programme and tactics, our social-*Narodniki* replace more and more with "amendments" to Marx the moribund and obsolescent remnants of their old system which was consistent in its own way and fundamentally hostile to Marxism.

Pre-Marxian socialism is smashed. It no longer continues the struggle on its own soil, but as revisionism on the general soil of Marxism. Let us, then, cast a glance on the ideological content of revisionism.

In the domain of philosophy, revisionism marched at the tail end of bourgeois professorial "science." The professors were going "back to Kant," so revisionism too trailed behind the Neo-Kantians. The professors repeated the age-old banalities of the priests against philosophic materialism—and the revisionists, smiling indulgently, mumbled (word for word according to the latest handbook) that materialism had long ago been "refuted." The professors slighted Hegel as a "dead dog," and while they themselves preached idealism of a sort a thousand times more petty and banal than Hegel's, they contemptuously shrugged their shoulders at dialectics—and so the revisionists too floundered behind them in the mud of the philosophic vulgarisation of science, replacing "the twisted" (and revolutionary) dialectics by "simple" (and peaceful) "evolution." The professors earned their official wages by adjusting their idealistic as well as their "critical" systems to the dominant mediæval "philosophy" (i.e., to theology), and the revisionists came closer to them, trying to maintain religion as a private matter not as far as the modern state was concerned, but in relation to the party of the advanced class.

There is no need to speak of the real class significance of such "amendments" to Marx—the thing is clear by itself. We will simply note that the only Marxist in the international social-democracy, who criticised those incredible banalities uttered by the revisionists, from the point of view of consistent dialectical materialism, was Plekhanov. It is all the more necessary decisively to emphasise this point since profoundly mistaken attempts are being made in our days to smuggle through the old and reactionary philosophic rubbish under the banner of criticism against the tactical opportunism of Plekhanov.<sup>1</sup>

Passing on to political economy, it must be noted, first of all, that the "amendments" of the revisionists in this domain were much more comprehensive and thorough. The attempt was made to influ-

<sup>1</sup> See *Outline of the Philosophy of Marxism* by Bogdanov, Bazarov and others. This is not the place to discuss this book, so I must, in the meantime, limit myself to the statement that I will show, in the nearest future, in a series of articles or a special pamphlet, that *everything* that is said in the text about the Neo-Kantian revisionists substantially applies also to the "new" Neo-Humist and Neo-Berkeleyan revisionists. (See *Complete Works*, Vol. XIII.—Ed.)

ence the public by "new data of economic development." It was said that concentration and the squeezing out of petty production by large-scale production does not take place at all in agriculture, and proceeds extremely slowly in commerce and industry. It was said that crises have now become rarer and weaker and that the cartels and trusts will probably make it possible for capital to do away with crises altogether. It was said that the theory of "collapse," for which capitalism is heading, was insolvent, in view of tendencies that make for the blunting and diminishing of the class contradictions. Finally, it was said that it would do no harm to correct Marx's theory of value in conformity with Böhm-Bawerk.

The struggle with the revisionists on these questions was as fruitful in bringing about a revival of the theoretical thought of international socialism as the polemics of Engels with Dühring were twenty years previously. The arguments of the revisionists had been analysed with facts and figures. It was proved that the revisionists had systematically touched up modern small-scale production. The technical and commercial advantage of big *production* over small, not only in industry but also in agriculture, is proved by irrefutable data. But commodity production in agriculture is much more weakly developed, and modern statisticians and economists usually understand but poorly how to distinguish the special branches (sometimes even the operations) of agriculture where one may observe the progressive process of agriculture being drawn into the *exchange* of world economy. Small-scale production maintains itself on the ruins of natural self-sufficing economy by an endless change for the worse in the matter of nourishment, by chronic starvation, prolongation of the working day, deterioration in the quality as well as in the treatment of cattle, in a word, by the same methods by which handicraft production maintained itself against capitalist manufacture. Every step forward in the advance of science and technique undermines inevitably and relentlessly the foundations of small-scale production in capitalist society. The task of socialist economics is to investigate this process in all its often complicated and intricate forms, and to prove to the small producer the impossibility of maintaining his position, the hopelessness of peasant farming under capitalism, and the necessity for the peasant to pass over to the standpoint of the proletariat. The revisionists have sinned in this question from the point of view of science by their superficial generalisation of

facts, onesidedly torn out of their context, and bearing no relation to the entire system of capitalism. They have also sinned from the point of view of politics by the fact that they have continually, willingly or unwillingly, called upon the peasant or driven him to adopt the standpoint of the master (*i.e.*, the standpoint of the bourgeoisie) instead of urging him to adopt that of the revolutionary proletariat.

Matters with revisionism were still worse in regard to the theory of crises and the collapse theory. Only for the shortest space of time and only the most short-sighted people could think of remaking the bases of the teachings of Marx under the influence of a few years of industrial boom and prosperity. Life very soon demonstrated to the revisionists that crises have not outlived their time: a crisis set in after the period of prosperity. The forms, the sequence and the aspect of particular crises changed, but crises remained an inevitable component part of the capitalist system. Cartels and trusts, while unifying production, at the same time strengthened, in a way obvious to all, the anarchy of production, the insecurity of the proletariat and the pressure of capital and thus intensified to an unprecedented degree the class contradictions. That capitalism is going to its downfall, in the sense of individual, political and economic crises as well as in that of the complete collapse of the entire capitalist system, has been made particularly obvious, and on a particularly large scale, by the latest gigantic trusts. The recent financial crisis in America, and the frightful extension of unemployment all over Europe, to say nothing of the near approach of an industrial crisis which is indicated by many symptoms—all this has led to the result that the recent "theories" of the revisionists have been forgotten by all, and even, it seems, by many of the revisionists themselves. Only the lessons, which this instability of the intellectuals has afforded the working class, must not be forgotten.

In regard to the theory of value, it only remains to be said that with the exception of exceedingly vague hints about and a longing for Böhm-Bawerk, the revisionists have given absolutely nothing, and have not, therefore, left the slightest mark on the development of scientific thought.

In the domain of politics, revisionism did really try to revise the foundation of Marxism, namely: the doctrine of the class struggle. Political freedom, democracy and universal suffrage destroy the basis of the class struggle—we were told—and make the old posi-

tion of the *Communist Manifesto*, that the workers have no country, untrue. Since, they say, "the will of the majority" rules under a democracy, one can neither look upon the state as an organ of class domination, nor refuse alliances with the progressive social-reformist bourgeoisie against the reactionaries.

These objections of the revisionists taken together undoubtedly represented a fairly harmonious system of views, namely, the old and well-known liberal bourgeois views. The liberals always said that bourgeois parliamentarism destroys classes and class divisions since the right to vote and the right to participate in state affairs are possessed by all citizens without distinction. The whole history of Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century, and the whole history of the Russian Revolution in the beginning of the twentieth, clearly show the absurdity of such views. Economic differences are not weakened but strengthened and intensified under the liberty of "democratic" capitalism. Parliamentarism does not remove but lays bare the essence of the most democratic republics, as organs of class oppression. In helping to enlighten and to organise immeasurably broader masses of the population than those which previously participated actively in political events, parliamentarism thereby, far from making for the removal of crises and political revolutions, introduces, on the contrary, the greatest exacerbation in the civil war at the time of these revolutions. The Paris events of the spring of 1871 and the Russian events of the winter of 1905 showed as clearly as can be how inevitably this exacerbation comes about. The French bourgeoisie, without a moment's hesitation, made a deal with the common national enemy, with the foreign army who had ruined its fatherland, in order to crush the proletarian movement. He who does not understand the inevitable inner dialectics of parliamentarism and bourgeois democracy, that lead to the dispute being decided by mass violence of an even sharper nature than that of former times—he, who does not understand this, will never be able, on the basis of this parliamentarism, to carry on a principled propaganda and agitation, and to really prepare the masses for a victorious participation in such "disputes." The experience of alliances, understandings and *blocs* with social-reformist liberalism in the West and with liberal reformism (the Constitutional-Democrats) in the Russian Revolution has convincingly shown that these agreements only blunt the consciousness of the masses, that they do

not strengthen but weaken the real significance of their struggles as they tie up the fighters with elements less capable of fighting and more wavering and treacherous. French Millerandism—the greatest experiment in the application of revisionist political tactics on a wide and really national scale—afforded a practical estimate of revisionism which the proletariat throughout the world will never forget.

The attitude of revisionism to the final aim of the Socialist movement was a natural complement to its economic and political tendencies. "The final aim is nothing, the movement is everything"—this catch phrase of Bernstein expresses the substance of revisionism better than many a long argument. To determine its conduct from case to case, to adapt itself to the events of the day and to the windings of political trivialities, to forget the basic interests of the proletariat and the main features of the entire capitalist system as well as the whole capitalist evolution, to sacrifice these basic interests for the sake of real or would-be advantages of the moment—such is the policy of revisionism. And it obviously follows from the very essence of such a policy that it may assume an infinite variety of forms and will give rise to one or other variety of revisionism, each time when there is some "new" question, or when there is a more or less unexpected and unforeseen turn of events, even though this turn changed the basic line of development to but an insignificant degree and for but the shortest period of time.

The inevitability of revisionism is conditioned by its class roots in modern society. Revisionism is an international phenomenon. There cannot be the slightest doubt, for every more or less informed and thinking socialist, that the relations between the orthodox and the Bernsteinists in Germany, the Guesdists and the Jauresists (and now particularly the Broussists), in France, the Social-Democratic Federation and the Independent Labour Party in Great Britain, Brouckuère and Vandervelde in Belgium, the integralists and reformists in Italy and the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks in Russia—that the relation between all these are everywhere substantially similar, notwithstanding the gigantic variety in the national conditions and historical moments of all these countries in their present state. The "division" within modern international socialism proceeds now, in reality, along *one* line in the various countries of the world, which is an evidence of a tremendous step forward as com-

pared with what was the case thirty or forty years ago, when different tendencies struggled with one another in the different countries inside a united international socialism. And the "revisionism from the Left," the outlines of which may now be observed in the Latin countries, under the title "Revolutionary Syndicalism," while "amending" Marxism, is also adapting itself to it: "Labriola in Italy and Lagardelle in France ever and anon appeal from Marx wrongly understood, to Marx rightly understood."

We cannot engage here in an analysis of the ideological substance of *this* revisionism, which has not yet, by far, developed to the extent reached by opportunist revisionism, has not yet assumed an international aspect, has not yet stood the test of one big practical battle with the socialist party even in one country. We, therefore, confine ourselves here to that "revisionism from the Right" which was described above.

What does the inevitability of revisionism in a capitalist society imply? Why is it more profound than the differences between the national peculiarities and the degrees of development of capitalism? Because, side by side with the proletariat in every capitalist country, there are broad sections of the petty bourgeoisie, of small masters. Capitalism was born and is constantly being born out of petty production. A whole number of "middle sections" are inevitably recreated by capitalism (appendages to factories, home work and small workshops scattered all over the country in view of the requirements of big industries, such as the bicycle and motor industries, etc.). These new petty producers are equally and just as inevitably thrown again into the ranks of the proletariat. It is quite natural that petty-bourgeois creeds again and again break through among the ranks of the broad labour parties. It is quite natural that this should be so and this always will be so right to the unfolding of the proletarian revolution, since it would be a foolish mistake to think that a "complete" proletarianisation of the majority of the population is necessary before such a revolution can be achieved. What we are frequently experiencing at present only in the domain of ideology, disputes about theoretical amendments to Marx, what at present leaks out in practice only in individual particular issues of the labour movement such as tactical differences with revisionists and splits on this basis—all this the working class will without fail still have to go through on an incomparably bigger scale,

when the proletarian revolution will sharpen all questions at issue and concentrate all differences on points of immediate importance for determining the conduct of the masses, and in the heat of the fight will make it necessary to separate enemies from friends, to throw out the bad allies for the purpose of dealing decisive blows at the enemy.

The ideological struggle of revolutionary Marxism against revisionism at the end of the nineteenth century is but the prelude to the great revolutionary battles of the proletariat that marches forward to the complete victory of its cause despite all the hesitations and weaknesses of philistinism.

Written in April 1908.



## DIFFERENCES IN THE EUROPEAN LABOUR MOVEMENT

THE main tactical differences in the modern labour movement in Europe and America may be summed up as the struggle with two main tendencies which depart from Marxism, from the theory that has actually become dominating in this movement. These two tendencies are revisionism (opportunism and reformism) and anarchism (anarcho-syndicalism and anarcho-socialism). Both these deviations from the Marxist theory and tactics which dominate the labour movement are to be observed in various forms and various shades in all civilised countries throughout the history of the mass labour movement of over half a century.

This fact alone makes it clear that these deviations cannot be explained either by accidents, or errors on the part of individuals or groups, or even by the influence of national peculiarities or traditions, etc. There must be some fundamental causes within the economic system itself and in the character of the development of all capitalist countries which constantly breed these deviations. The little book by the Dutch Marxist, Anton Pannekoek, *The Tactical Differences in the Labour Movement* (*Die taktischen Differenzen in der Arbeiterbewegung*, Hamburg, Erdmann Dubber, 1909), published last year, represents an interesting attempt to explain these causes. We will, in our further exposition, acquaint the reader with the conclusions of Pannekoek, which one cannot help recognising as quite correct.

One of the deeper causes which give rise to the periodical differences in regard to tactics is the very fact of the growth of the labour movement. If this movement be measured not by the standard of some phantastic ideal, but considered as a practical movement of ordinary people, it will become clear that the continued enrolment of fresh "recruits" and the drawing in of new sections of the toiling masses must inevitably be accompanied by hesitations in theory and tactics, by the repetition of old mistakes and by the temporary return to obsolete views and methods, etc. The labour movement of every

country periodically spends more or less of its reserves of energy, attention and time on the "training" of recruits.

Further. The pace of development of capitalism is not the same in various countries and different spheres of national economy. Marxism is more easily, more quickly, more fully and firmly mastered by the working class and its ideologists in conditions of the greatest development of big industry. Economic relations which are backward or fall behind in their development constantly lead to the appearance of adherents of the labour movement who master only certain aspects of Marxism, only separate sections of the new world outlook, only separate slogans and demands, being incapable of breaking decisively with all the traditions of the bourgeois world outlook in general and the bourgeois-democratic world outlook in particular.

Then, a constant source of differences is provided by the dialectic nature of social development which proceeds in contradictions and by means of contradictions. Capitalism is progressive since it destroys the old methods of production and develops the productive forces and at the same time, at a certain stage of development, it delays the growth of these productive forces. It develops, organises and disciplines the workers; and it presses, oppresses, leads to degeneration, poverty, etc. Capitalism itself creates its own grave-digger, itself creates the elements of the new system and, at the same time, these elements, without a "leap," can change nothing in the general condition of things, cannot touch the domination of capital. Marxism, as a theory of dialectical materialism is capable of embracing these contradictions of actual life, of the history of capitalism and the labour movement. But it is self-evident that the masses learn from life, and not from books, and consequently, individuals and groups constantly exaggerate and raise to a one-sided theory and one-sided system of tactics now one, now another feature of capitalist development, now one, now another "lesson" of this development.

Bourgeois ideologists, liberals and democrats, who do not understand Marxism and the modern labour movement, are constantly jumping from one helpless extreme to another. Now they explain that it is all because wicked persons "incite" class against class, and now they console themselves that the workers' party is a "peaceful party of reform." Both anarcho-syndicalism and reformism must



be considered as the direct product of this bourgeois world outlook and influence. They both seize upon *one* side of the labour movement, raise this one-sidedness to a theory and declare as mutually exclusive such tendencies or features of the labour movement as form the specific peculiarity of one or other period, of one or other of the conditions of activity of the working class. But real life and real history *include* in themselves these various tendencies, just as life and development in nature include in themselves both slow evolution and rapid leaps, breaks in gradualness.

The revisionists consider as phrases all arguments about "leaps" and about the principles underlying the antagonism of the labour movement to the old society. They accept reforms as a partial realisation of socialism. The anarcho-syndicalist rejects "petty work," particularly the utilisation of the parliamentary tribune. In practice these latter tactics amount to waiting for "big days" and exhibit an inability to gather the forces for creating big events. Both the revisionists and the anarcho-syndicalists hinder the most important and urgent business of uniting the workers in big, strong and well functioning organisations, capable of functioning well under *all* circumstances, imbued with the spirit of the class struggle, clearly recognising their aims and trained in the real Marxian world outlook.

Here we will permit ourselves a small digression and remark, in parentheses, to avoid possible misunderstanding, that Pannekoek illustrates his analysis *exclusively* by examples from West European history, particularly from Germany and France, and has *absolutely not had* Russia in view. If it sometimes appears that he hints at Russia, this simply is due to the fact that the fundamental tendencies which give rise to definite deviations from Marxist tactics, also manifest themselves with us, notwithstanding the enormous distinction between Russia and the West, in point of culture, modes of life, and historical and economic differences.

Finally, an exceedingly important cause giving rise to differences between members of the labour movement is the changes in the tactics of the ruling classes in general and of the bourgeoisie in particular. If the tactics of the bourgeoisie were always uniform or at least homogeneous, the working class would have quickly learned to reply by equally uniform or homogeneous tactics. The bourgeoisie in all countries in practice inevitably elaborates two systems of governing, two methods of struggle for its interests and for the

defence of its domination, and these two methods now replace one another and now interlace in different combinations. These are, first, the method of violence, the method of refusing all concessions to the labour movement, the method of supporting all ancient and dying institutions, the method of uncompromising rejection of reforms. Such is the substance of conservative policy, which is more and more ceasing to be in Western Europe the policy of the landlord classes, and is ever more becoming one of the varieties of general bourgeois policy. The second method is the method of "liberalism," of steps towards the development of political rights, of reforms, of concessions, etc.

The bourgeoisie passes from one method to another not through the malicious design of individuals and not by accident, but by force of the basic contradictoriness of its own position. A normal capitalist society cannot successfully develop without a stabilised representative system, without certain political rights being granted to the population, which is necessarily distinguished by the comparatively high claims it presents with regard to "culture." This demand for a certain minimum of culture arises from the very conditions of the capitalist mode of production with its high technique, complexity, flexibility, mobility, rapidity of development of world competition, etc. In consequence of this, fluctuations in the tactics of the bourgeoisie and transitions from the system of violence to the system of would-be concessions are peculiar to the history of all European countries for the last half century, and various countries mainly develop the application of one or other method at definite periods. For instance, England in the sixties and seventies of the nineteenth century was the classical country of "liberal" bourgeois policy, Germany in the seventies and eighties kept to the method of force, etc.

When this method ruled in Germany, a one-sided echo of this system of bourgeois government was the growth in the labour movement of anarcho-syndicalism, or, as it was then called, anarchism (the "Young" in the beginning of the 'nineties, and Johann Most in the beginning of the 'eighties). When a turn towards "concessions" took place in 1890, this turn proved, as it always has done, even more dangerous for the labour movement, since it gave rise to an equally one-sided echo of bourgeois "reformism": opportunism in the labour movement.

"The positive aim of the liberal progressive policy of the bourgeoisie," says

Pannekoek, "is to mislead the workers, to introduce a split in their ranks, to transform their politics into an impotent appendage of an impotent, always impotent and ephemeral, would-be reformism."

The bourgeoisie, not infrequently, attains its object, for a certain time, by means of a 'liberal' policy which represents, according to the just remark of Pannekoek, a "more cunning" policy. A part of the workers and a part of their leaders allow themselves to be deceived by seeming concessions. The revisionists proclaim as "obsoleto" the doctrine of the class struggle, or begin to carry on a policy which in fact renounces it. The zigzags of bourgeois tactics cause a strengthening of revisionism in the labour movement and not infrequently lead to differences within it to the point of a direct split.

All the causes of the kind indicated evoke differences in relation to the tactics within the labour movement and in the proletarian ranks. But there is not and there cannot be a Chinese wall between the proletariat and the adjacent sections of the petty bourgeoisie, including the peasantry. It is clear that the transition of individuals, groups, and sections of the petty bourgeoisie to the proletariat cannot but give rise, in its turn, to vacillations in the tactics of the latter.

The experience of the labour movement of various countries helps to elucidate the essence of Marxist tactics on concrete practical questions, and helps the younger countries to distinguish more clearly the true class significance of deviations from Marxism and more successfully to fight them.

December 29, 1910.

## ON SOME PECULIARITIES OF THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF MARXISM

OUR teaching—said Engels, referring to himself and his famous friend—is not a dogma, but a guide to action. This classical proposition emphasises with remarkable force and expressiveness that aspect of Marxism which is continually left out of view. And in leaving it out of view, we turn Marxism into something one-sided, crippled and dead, we take from it its living soul, we undermine its fundamental theoretical basis—dialectics, the teaching of historical development as being all-sided and full of contradictions; we cut its connection with the definite tasks of the epoch, which may change with every new turn in history.

And in our time, just among those who are interested in the destinies of Marxism in Russia, very frequently people are to be met with, who leave out of view precisely this side of it. And yet it is clear to all that Russia in recent years has passed through such abrupt changes as, with unusual rapidity and unusual sharpness, have altered the situation, the social and political situation that determines the conditions of action in an immediate and direct manner, and, consequently, the problems of action too. I am not speaking, of course, of general and fundamental problems, which do not change with turns in history, so long as the main correlation of the classes remain unchanged. It is quite obvious that this general direction of the economic (and not only economic) evolution of Russia, as well as the basic correlation between the various classes of Russian society has not changed during, say, the last six years.

But the problems of immediate and direct action have changed during this time very sharply just as the concrete social political situation has changed, and consequently, also in Marxism as a live doctrine, different aspects of it had to come to the front.

To elucidate this idea, let us cast a glance at the changes in the actual social political situation for the last six years. We distinguish at once two periods of three years each. One which concluded ap-

proximately in the summer of 1907 and the other in the summer of 1910. The first three years may be characterised, from a purely theoretical point of view, by the rapid changes in the main features of the state system of Russia; and the movement of these changes was very unequal, the amplitude of their oscillations both ways varying very considerably. The social-economic basis of these changes in the "superstructure" was such an open, imposing demonstration *en masse* of all classes of Russian society on the *most different* arenas (the Duma, activity outside the Duma, the press, unions, meetings, etc.), as is rarely to be seen in history.

The second three-year period, on the contrary, is characterised (we repeat that we confine ourselves here to a purely theoretical "sociological" point of view), by so slow an evolution as is equivalent, almost, to stagnation: no more or less noticeable changes in the state system, a complete or almost complete absence of open and diverse demonstrations of the *classes* in the majority of the "arenas" where these demonstrations took place in the previous period.

The similarity of both periods consisted in the evolution of Russia remaining the same throughout the first as well as the second period—it was the former capitalist evolution. The contradiction between such an economic evolution and the existence of a number of feudal and mediæval institutions was not removed, but remained as before; it was not smoothed out but rather sharpened by the penetration of a partly bourgeois spirit into one or the other of these individual institutions.

The difference between these periods is as follows: during the first period the question that stood in the foreground of the stage of historical action was how exactly the results of the rapid and uneven changes, indicated above, would shape themselves. The content of these changes could be nothing but bourgeois, owing to the capitalist nature of the evolution in Russia; however, there is a bourgeoisie and a bourgeoisie. The middle and big bourgeoisie, which stood on a platform of a more or less moderate liberalism, was, by its very class nature, afraid of sharp changes and endeavoured to maintain considerable remnants of the old institutions both in the agrarian system and in the political "superstructure." The village petty bourgeoisie, interlinked with the peasantry living "by the labour of their hands," could not but strive for *another kind* of bourgeois

transformation, which left much less room for all sorts of mediæval remains. The wage-workers in so far as they consciously concerned themselves with what was happening around them, could not but work out for themselves a definite attitude to this collision of two different tendencies, of which both remained within the framework of a bourgeois system, but implied quite different forms of it, a quite different pace of its development and a different breadth in the range of its progressive influence.

In this way, the period of the first three years, of necessity, and not accidentally, brought to a head those questions of Marxism which are usually called questions of tactics. There is nothing more erroneous than the opinion that disputes and divergencies over these questions were "intellectuals'" disputes, that they were "a struggle for influence over the immature proletariat," that they expressed "the adaptation of the intellectuals to the proletariat"—an opinion held by all kinds of *Vekhovtzy*.<sup>1</sup> On the contrary, it is just because this class had reached maturity that it could not remain indifferent to the collision of two distinct tendencies in the bourgeois development of Russia, and the ideologists of that class had to provide theoretical formulations in accordance with these distinct tendencies (in a direct or indirect way, as a direct or indirect reflection).

In the second three years, the collision between the different tendencies of the bourgeois development of Russia was *not* on the order of the day, since *both* these tendencies were pressed down by the hidebound reactionaries, were pushed back, driven inwards and stifled for some time. The mediæval hidebound reactionaries not only filled the proscenium but also the hearts of the broadest sections of bourgeois society with *Vekhist* moods, with the spirit of despondency and recantation. Not a collision of two methods of transformation of the old, but loss of faith in any kind of transformation, the spirit of "humility" and "penitence," a fascination for anti-social doctrines, a fashion for mysticism, etc.—this is what appeared on the surface.

And this strikingly sharp change was neither an accident nor solely the result of "external" pressure. The previous period had so deeply stirred up the sections of the population which for generations and

<sup>1</sup> Literally "landmark" men, from the name of a publication by a group of liberal writers who attacked the revolution and justified the reaction.—*Ed.*

centuries had kept aloof from political questions that were alien to them, that naturally and inevitably there started a "revaluation of all values"—new work on fundamental problems, new interests in theory, in the ABC and in study from the very beginning. Millions, awakened all at once from their long sleep, all at once faced with the most important problems, could not for long remain on that height, they could not go on without a break, without a return to the elementary questions, without new preparation which would help them to "digest" unprecedentedly rich lessons, and which would afford the masses, incomparably increased in number, the possibility of marching forward again but ever so much more firmly, more consciously, more confidently and more steadfastly.

The dialectics of the historical development proved to be such that the order of the day of the first period was the realisation of the immediate changes in all spheres of the life of the country, and in the second—to digest the experience, to enable much wider sections to master it, to enable this experience to penetrate to the subsoil (if one may so express oneself), to the backward ranks of the various classes.

It is just because Marxism is no dead dogma, no final, ready-made, unchangeable doctrine, but a living guide to action, it is just because of this that it could not but reflect the strikingly sharp change in the conditions of social life. The reflection of the change was deep disintegration, dispersion, all sorts of waverings, in a word—a most serious *inner crisis* of Marxism. Determined resistance to this disintegration, and a determined and stubborn fight for the *foundations* of Marxism again became the order of the day. The exceedingly wide sections of those classes who cannot avoid Marxism in the formulation of their tasks had mastered it during the preceding period with extreme one-sidedness and in a mutilated form, having learned by heart a few "slogans," a few answers to tactical questions *without understanding* the Marxian criteria of these answers. The "revaluation of all values" in various spheres of social life led to the "revision" of the more abstract and general philosophic foundations of Marxism. The influence of bourgeois philosophy in its various idealistic shades found its expression in the Machist infection among Marxists. The repetition of "slogans," which were crammed up, but not understood and not thought out, gave wide currency of empty phrases, amounting in fact to absolutely non-Marxian and

petty-bourgeois currents such as the frank or bashful "otzovism"<sup>1</sup> or the recognition of "otzovism" as a "legitimate shade" of Marxism.

On the other hand, the spirit of *Vekhovism*—the spirit of recantation which seized upon the widest sections of the bourgeoisie—penetrated also into the current which strives to steer Marxist theory and practice into the channel of "moderation and regularity." All that remained here of Marxism was nothing but the phraseology, which cloaks arguments (imbued with a spirit of liberalism) on "hierarchy," "hegemony," etc.

It cannot, of course, be the task of this article to enter upon a consideration of these arguments. It is sufficient to point them out so as to illustrate what was said above about the depth of the crisis which Marxism is undergoing, about its connection with the whole social-economic situation of the period in the midst of which we now find ourselves. It is impossible to brush aside the questions raised by this crisis. There is nothing more harmful and unprincipled than the attempts to get rid of them by means of a phrase. There is nothing more important than the mustering of *all* the Marxists, who have recognised the depth of the crisis and the necessity of fighting it, for the defence of the theoretical foundations of Marxism and its basic positions which are being distorted from the most opposite sides, by means of carrying the bourgeois influence to the various "travelling companions" of Marxism.

The previous three years have roused to active participation in social life wide sections, which, not infrequently, now begin to make a real acquaintance with Marxism for the first time. The bourgeois press creates, on this account, very many more delusions than previously and spreads them more widely. Disintegration in the ranks of Marxism is particularly dangerous in such conditions. To understand, therefore, the causes of the inevitability of this disintegration, in the time we are passing through, and to line up for a consistent struggle against it, is, in the most direct and exact meaning of the word, the task of the period facing Marxists.

January 5, 1911.

<sup>1</sup> The name given to a group of Bolsheviks who in 1908 proposed the recall of the Social-Democratic members from the Duma.—Ed.

## PREFACE TO THE RUSSIAN TRANSLATION OF MARX'S LETTERS TO KUGELMANN \*

OUR aim in publishing in a separate pamphlet the full collection of Marx's *Letters to Kugelmann* that were published in the German Social-Democratic weekly, the *Neue Zeit*, is to acquaint the Russian public more closely with Marx and Marxism. As was to be expected, Marx devoted a good deal of space in the correspondence to personal matters. This material is exceedingly valuable for the biographer. But for the general public, and the Russian working class in particular, those passages which contain theoretical and political material are of infinitely greater interest. It is particularly important and instructive for us in our present revolutionary times to consider carefully this material, which reveals Marx as a man who immediately responded to all questions of the labour movement and world politics. The editor of the *Neue Zeit* was quite right when he remarked that "we are elevated by an acquaintance with the personality of men whose thoughts and will took shape in conditions of grave upheavals." For the Russian Socialist in 1907, acquaintance with this material is doubly necessary, for it provides a wealth of very valuable indications concerning the immediate problems confronting the Socialist in all and every revolution his country is passing through. Just now Russia is passing through a "great upheaval." The policy Marx pursued in the comparatively stormy period of the 1860's should very often serve as a model of the policy a Social-Democrat should pursue in the present Russian Revolution.

We will therefore very briefly note the passages in Marx's correspondence which are particularly important from a theoretical point of view and we will deal in greater detail with his revolutionary policy as a representative of the proletariat.

Of outstanding interest from the point of view of a fuller and more profound elucidation of Marxism is the letter of July 11, 1868. In this letter, Marx, in the form of polemical remarks against the

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vulgar economists, very clearly expounds his conception of the so-called "labour" theory of value. The very objections to Marx's theory of value which naturally arise in the minds of the less-trained readers of *Capital* and which are for that reason more eagerly seized upon by the mediocre representatives of "professorial" bourgeois "science" are here analysed by Marx briefly, simply and with remarkable lucidity. Marx shows the way in which he proceeded, and the way one should proceed to arrive at an explanation of the law of value. By quoting examples of the most common objections he teaches us his *method*. He makes clear the connection between such a purely (it would seem) theoretical and abstract question as the theory of value and "the interests of the ruling classes" which require the "*perpetuation of confusion*." It is to be hoped that everyone who begins to study Marx and to read his *Capital* will read and re-read this letter when studying the first and more difficult chapters of *Capital*.

The other passages in the letters which are particularly interesting from the theoretical point of view are those in which Marx gives an estimation of various writers. Reading these opinions of Marx, vividly written, full of passion and displaying an all-embracing interest in all great ideological trends and in the analysis of these trends—reading these one feels that one is listening to the utterances of a thinker of genius. Besides his casual opinions of Dietzgen, those on the Proudhonists deserve the special attention of the reader. The "brilliant" intellectual youth of the bourgeoisie which throws itself "among the proletariat" in periods of social upheaval, which is incapable of acquiring the point of view of the working class and of carrying on persistent and serious work among the "rank and file" of proletarian organisations, is depicted by a few strokes with remarkable vividness.

Here we have an opinion of Dühring, as if in anticipation of the famous *Anti-Dühring* which Engels (in collaboration with Marx) wrote nine years later. There is a Russian translation of this book by Zederbaum which unfortunately contains not only omissions but also mistakes and is simply a bad translation. Here also is an estimation of Thünen touching simultaneously on Ricardo's theory of rent. Already in 1868 Marx had emphatically rejected "the mistakes of Ricardo" which he finally refuted in Volume III of *Capital* published in 1894 but which even today are repeated by the revisionists

—from our ultra-bourgeois and even “Black Hundred” Mr. Bulgakov to the “almost orthodox” Maslov.

Of interest also is Marx’s opinion of Büchner and his estimation of vulgar materialism and the “superficial twaddle” copied from Lange (the common source of “professorial” bourgeois philosophy!).

We will now pass to Marx’s revolutionary policy. In Russia a certain petty-bourgeois conception of Marxism finds surprisingly wide currency among Social-Democrats, the conception that a revolutionary period with special forms of struggle and special proletarian problems is almost an anomaly while a “constitution” and an “extreme opposition” is the rule. In no other country in the world at this moment is there such a profound revolutionary crisis as there is in Russia, and in no other country are there “Marxists” who (belittling and vulgarising Marxism) take up such a sceptical and philistine attitude towards the revolution. From the fact that in essence the revolution is a bourgeois revolution they draw the shallow conclusion that the bourgeoisie is the *driving force* of the revolution, that the tasks of the proletariat in this revolution are of an auxiliary and non-independent nature, that the proletarian leadership of this revolution is impossible!

How excellently this shallow interpretation of Marxism is exposed by Marx in his *Letters to Kugelmann*! Here is a letter dated April 6, 1866. At that time Marx had finished his principal work. Fourteen years before he wrote this letter he had already made his final estimation of the German Revolution of 1848. In 1850 he had himself refuted his own socialistic illusions of an impending socialist revolution in 1848. And in 1866, when only just beginning to observe the growth of new political crises, he writes:

“Will our philistines” (he has in mind the German liberal bourgeoisie) “at last realise that without a revolution which removes the Hapsburgs and Hohenzollerns . . . there must finally come another ‘Thirty Years’ War. . . .”

Not a shadow of illusion that the impending revolution (it happened from above and not from below, as Marx expected) would abolish the bourgeoisie and capitalism. It is a very clear and precise statement that it would only put aside the Prussian and Austrian monarchies. And what faith in this bourgeois revolution! What revolutionary passion of a proletarian warrior who realises the significance bourgeois revolution has for the advancement of the socialist movement!

Three years later, on the eve of the downfall of the Napoleonic Empire in France, Marx noted “a very interesting” social movement and in a *positive outburst of enthusiasm*, he says:

“The Parisians are making a regular study of their recent revolutionary past, in order to prepare themselves for the business of the impending new revolution.”

And describing the past struggle of classes which revealed itself in this study, Marx concludes:

“And so the whole historic witches’ cauldron is bubbling. When shall we” (in Germany) “be so far!”

Here is a lesson that should be learned by the Russian intellectual Marxists weakened by scepticism, sunk into torpor by pedantry, inclined to make penitent speeches, rapidly tiring of revolution, longing for a holiday, for the funeral of the revolution and its replacement by constitutional prose. They ought to learn from the theoretician and leader of the proletarians to have faith in the revolution, to acquire ability in rousing the working class to uphold their immediate revolutionary aims to the last, to acquire firmness of spirit which admits of no faint-hearted whimpering because of temporary setbacks to the revolution.

The pedants of Marxism think that this is all ethical twaddle, romance and lack of the sense of realism! No, gentlemen, this is the unification of revolutionary theory and revolutionary politics without which Marxism becomes Brentanoism, Struveism and Sombartism. The teachings of Marx have bound the theory and practice of the class struggle into one inseparable whole. And he who distorts a theory which soberly presents the objective position into a justification of what now exists and who strives to adapt himself as quickly as possible to every temporary ebb in the tide of revolution, to throw off as quickly as possible “revolutionary illusions” and to turn to “realistic” tinkering, is no Marxist.

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

Marx's estimation of the Commune is the crowning glory of the *Letters to Kugelmann*. And this estimation becomes particularly valuable when compared with the methods of the Right wing Russian Social-Democrats. Plekhanov, who, after December 1905, faint-heartedly exclaimed: "They should not have resorted to arms," had the modesty to compare himself to Marx. Marx, he hinted, also put the brakes on the revolution in 1870.

Yes, Marx *too* put the brakes on the revolution. But see what a gulf is opened up between Plekhanov and Marx when this comparison (which Plekhanov himself makes) is made!

In November 1905, a month before the first revolutionary wave reached its culminating point, Plekhanov not only refrained from emphatically warning the Russian proletariat, but on the contrary spoke very definitely about the necessity to "*learn to use arms and to arm*." A month afterwards, however, when the struggle flared up, Plekhanov, without making the slightest attempt to analyse its significance and its role in the general march of events and its connection with the previous forms of struggle, hastened to play the part of a penitent intellectual and exclaimed: "They should not have resorted to arms."

In September 1870, six months before the Commune, Marx emphatically warned the French workers: any attempt at upsetting the new government would be desperate folly, he said in his well-known Address of the International. He revealed *in advance* the nationalistic illusions concerning the possibility of a movement in the spirit of 1792. He had the prescience to say, *not after the event*, but many months before: Don't resort to arms."

And what was his attitude when this *hopeless* cause (according to his own September declaration) began to be realised in March 1871? Did he merely take the opportunity (as Plekhanov did in regard to the December events) to "take a dig" at his enemies, the Proudhonists and Blanquists who were leading the Commune? Did he, like a scolding school-mistress, say: "I told you so, I warned you, see what you got for your romanticism, your revolutionary ravings"? Did he preach to the Communards, as Plekhanov did to the December fighters, the sermon of the smug philistine: "They should not have resorted to arms"?

No. On April 12, 1871, Marx writes an *enthusiastic* letter to Kugelmann—a letter which we would gladly see hung on the wall

of the home of every Russian Social-Democrat and of every literate Russian worker.

In September 1870 Marx called the insurrection desperate folly, but in April 1871, when he saw the mass movement of the people, he treated it with the great attention of a man participating in great events which marked a step forward in the world-historical revolutionary movement.

This is an *attempt*, he says, to destroy the bureaucratic military machine and not simply to place it in other hands. And he sings a veritable *hosanna* to the "*heroic*" Paris workers led by the Proudhonists and Blanquists.

"What elasticity," he writes, "what historical initiative, what a capacity for self-sacrifice in these Parisians. . . . History has no like example of a like greatness."

The *historical initiative of the masses* is what Marx values above everything. Oh, if only our Russian Social-Democrats would learn from Marx how to appreciate the *historical initiative* the Russian workers and peasants displayed in October and December 1905!

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

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

Oh, how our present "realist" wiseacres among the Marxists, who are deriding revolutionary romanticism in Russia in 1906-07, would have scoffed at Marx at that time! How they would have mocked at the *materialist and economist*, the enemy of utopia, who pays homage to an "attempt" to "storm heaven"!

What a flood of tears these "men in mufflers"<sup>1</sup> would have shed, what condescending smiles or commiseration they would have bestowed upon him for his rebel tendencies, utopianism, etc., etc., and for his estimation of this heaven-storming movement!

But Marx was not filled with the wisdom of these gudgeons who are afraid to discuss the *technique* of the higher forms of revolutionary struggle. It was precisely the *technical* questions of the in-

<sup>1</sup> A character in one of Chekhov's stories who was always muffled up in all weather and who on hearing of some proposed new endeavour would exclaim "I do hope nothing bad will come of it."—Ed.



sururrection that he discussed. Defence or attack? he asks, as if the military operations were taking place outside of London, and he decides that it must be attack: "*They should have marched at once on Versailles. . . .*"

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

The insurgents who began the "reckless" (September 1870) business of storming the heavens "should have marched at once on Versailles."

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

Yes, it is not for nothing that Plekhanov compared himself to Marx!

The "second mistake," continues Marx in his *technical* criticism, was that "the Central Committee" (the *military leadership*—note, this refers to the Central Committee of the National Guard) "surrendered its power too soon."

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

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

And Marx, without concealing from the proletariat a single mistake committed by the Commune, dedicated to this *exploit* a work which *to this very day* serves as the best guide in the struggle for the "heavens" and as a terrible bugbear for the liberal and radical "swine."

Plekhanov dedicated to December a "work" which has almost become the bible of the Cadets.<sup>1</sup>

No, it is not for nothing that Plekhanov compared himself to Marx.

Apparently Kugelmann replied to Marx with some expressions of doubt and pointed out the hopelessness of the business and compared realism with romanticism—at least he compared the Commune, the insurrection, with the peaceful demonstration in Paris on June 13, 1849.

<sup>1</sup> The abbreviated title of the Constitutional-Democratic Party.—Ed.

Immediately Marx reads Kugelmann a severe lecture (letter of April 17, 1871). He writes:

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

In September 1870 Marx called the insurrection desperate folly. But when the *masses* rose Marx wanted to march with them, to learn with them in the process of the struggle and not to give them bureaucratic admonitions. He realised that it would be quackery or hopeless pedantry to attempt to calculate the chances in advance *with complete accuracy*. Above everything else he put the fact that the working class heroically, self-sacrificingly and taking the initiative itself, *makes* world history. Marx looked upon this history from the point of view of those who make it without being able to calculate *exactly* the chances beforehand and not from the point of view of a moralising intellectual and philistine who says: "It was easy to foresee . . . they should not have resorted to. . . ."

Marx was also able to appreciate the fact that moments occurred in history when the desperate struggle of the *masses* even for a hopeless cause is *necessary* for the sake of the further education of these masses and their training for the *next* struggle.

To our present quasi-Marxists who love to quote Marx merely for the purpose of learning to estimate the past and not to acquire the ability to mould the future—to them such a *method of presenting* the question is incomprehensible and even alien in principle. This did not even occur to Plekhanov when he began to "put the brake on," after December 1905. . . .

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

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

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

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

February 1907.



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

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

We will not dwell here in detail upon the importance of these letters for the history of socialism and for the purpose of throwing full light on the activity of Marx and Engels. This side of the matter requires no explanation. Let us just note that for an understanding of the published letters, an acquaintance with the fundamental works on the history of the International is necessary (see Jaekh, *International*), and further also with the German and American labour movement (see *History of the German Social-Democracy* by Fr. Mehring and *History of Socialism in America* by Morris Hillquit), etc.

Neither shall we attempt to give here a general outline of the contents of this correspondence or an estimate of the various periods to which it relates. Mehring has done this excellently in his article: *Der Sorgesche Briefwechsel* (*Neue Zeit* 25 Jahrg., No. 1-2)<sup>1</sup> which will probably be appended by the publisher to this translation or issued in a separate Russian edition.

An acquaintance with the intimate side of the activity of Marx and Engels, during a period of almost thirty years (1867-1895), is productive of lessons which the militant proletariat must make its own and which are of particular interest for Russian socialists in the present revolutionary epoch. It is, therefore, not surprising that also in our Social-Democratic literature, the first attempts to acquaint the readers with the letters of Marx and Engels to Sorge were linked up with the "burning" issues of Social-Democratic tactics in the Russian Revolution (Plekhanov's *Sovremennaya Zhizn* [*Contemporary Life*], the Menshevik *Otkliki* [*Echoes*]). We intend to fix the

<sup>1</sup> "The Sorge Correspondence," *New Times*, 25th year, No. 12.—Ed.

attention of the reader upon an estimate of those passages in the published correspondence which are specially important from the point of view of the modern problems of the workers' party in Russia.

In these letters Marx and Engels have most frequently dealt with the burning questions of the Anglo-American and German labour movements. This is comprehensible, since they were Germans living at that time in England and corresponding with their American comrades. On the French labour movement and particularly on the Paris Commune Marx expressed himself much more frequently and in greater detail in the letters which he wrote to the German Social-Democrat, Kugelmann.

It is exceedingly instructive to compare how Marx and Engels dealt with the questions of the Anglo-American and of the German labour movements. This comparison acquires particularly great significance when we consider that Germany on the one hand, and England and America on the other, represent different stages of capitalist development, different forms of domination of the bourgeoisie as a class, in the whole of the political life of these countries. From a scientific point of view, we observe here an example of materialist dialectics, an ability to bring to the front and to emphasise the various points and various aspects of a question in application to the concrete peculiarities of one or other of the political and economic conditions. From the point of view of the practical policy and tactics of a workers' party, we see here an example of the way in which the creators of the *Communist Manifesto* defined the tasks of the struggling proletariat in application to the different stages of the national labour movement in various countries.

What Marx and Engels criticise most sharply in Anglo-American Socialism is its isolation from the labour movement. The leading motive in all their numerous references to the Social-Democratic Federation in England and the American Socialists is the accusation that they have reduced Marxism to a dogma, to a "rigid (*starre*) orthodoxy," that they see in it "a symbol of faith but *not a guide to action*," that they are incapable of adapting themselves to the labour movement proceeding close to them, which, though theoretically helpless, is a living, mighty, mass movement.

"Had we from 1864 to 1873 insisted on working together only with those who openly adopted our platform"—Engels exclaims in his letter of January 27, 1887—"where should we be to-day?"

And in a previous letter (December 28, 1886), referring to the question of the influence of the ideas of Henry George on the working class in America, he writes:

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

These are very interesting passages. Here some Social-Democrats hastened to make use of them in defence of the idea of a "labour congress" or something in the nature of the "broad Labour Party" of Larin. Why not use them in defence of a "Left bloc"?—we would ask such precocious "utilisers" of Engels. The letters from which the quotations have been taken relate to a time when the workers in America voted at the elections for Henry George. Mrs. Wischnewetzky, an American who married a Russian, and who translated the works of Engels, asked him, as may be seen from Engels' reply to her, to take Henry George properly to task. Engels writes (on December 28, 1886) that *the time has not yet arrived for this*, since it would be better for a labour party to begin to organise itself even on a programme which was not quite pure. Later on the workers would themselves realise the position, they

"would learn by their mistakes," but "anything that might delay or prevent that national consolidation of the workingmen's party—no matter what platform—I should consider a great mistake."

Engels, of course, understood perfectly well and noted many a time the whole absurdity and *reactionary essence* of the ideas of Henry George from a *socialist* point of view. There is a most interesting letter in the Sorge correspondence, from Marx, of June 30, 1881, in which he gives an estimate of Henry George as the ideologist of the *radical bourgeoisie*. "Theoretically the man [Henry George] is utterly backward" (*total arrièrè*), wrote Marx. Nevertheless, Engels was not afraid to march together with this *socialist reactionary* in the elections, provided there were people who could warn the masses of "the consequences of their own mistakes" (Engels in his letter of November 29, 1886).

Engels wrote in the same letter regarding the Knights of Labour, an organisation of American workers, as follows:

"Their 'rottenest side was their political neutrality. . . . The first step of importance for every country newly entering into the movement is always the organisation of the workers as an independent political party, no matter how, so long as it is a distinct workers' party."

It is obvious that absolutely nothing can be deduced from this in defence of a leap *from* social-democracy to a non-party labour congress, etc. But that a joint election campaign with radical "social-reactionaries" is sometimes necessary must be concluded from this quotation by everyone who does not wish to accuse Engels of reducing Marxism to a "dogma," "orthodoxy," "sectarianism," etc.

But what is more interesting, of course, is to dwell not so much upon the American-Russian parallels (we had to refer to them to answer our opponents), as on the *fundamental* features of the Anglo-American labour movement. These features are: the absence of any large, *democratic* problems on a national scale, facing the proletariat; the complete subjection of the proletariat to bourgeois politics; sectarian isolation of handfuls of socialists from the proletariat; not the slightest success of the Socialists at elections among the working masses, etc. He who forgets these fundamental conditions and undertakes to draw wide conclusions from "American-Russian parallels," displays extreme superficiality.

If Engels lays so much stress upon the economic organisation of the workers in such conditions it is because he is dealing with the most stabilised democratic systems which confront the proletariat with purely socialist problems. If Engels emphasises the importance of an independent labour party, though even with a bad programme, it is because in the countries concerned, the workers hitherto had shown no sign of political independence, and in politics dragged and still drag behind the bourgeoisie.

It would be ridiculing the historical method of Marx, if we were to attempt to apply the conclusions drawn from such reasoning to countries or historical situations where or when the proletariat had formed its party before the liberal bourgeois formed theirs; where or when the tradition of voting for bourgeois politicians is absolutely unknown to the proletariat; and where or when the next and immediate tasks are not socialist but bourgeois-democratic.

Our idea will become still clearer to the reader if we compare the opinions of Engels on the Anglo-American movement with his opinions on the German movement.

There is also quite a mass of exceedingly interesting views on these movements in the published correspondence. And one leading motive in all of them is something quite different: warning against the "Right wing" in the workers' party, merciless war upon *opportunism*.

in Social-Democracy (sometimes even *furious*, as, for instance, the one waged by Marx in 1877-79).

Let us first of all corroborate this by quotations from the letters, and then give an estimate of the matter.

The opinions of Marx on Höchberg and Co. must, first of all, be noted here. Fr. Mehring, in his article, *The Sorge Correspondence*, tries to tone down the attacks of Marx, as well as the later attacks of Engels on the opportunists, and, in our opinion, goes rather too far in doing so. In particular, in regard to Höchberg and Co., Mehring insists upon his view that Marx's estimate of Lassalle and the Lassalleans was incorrect. But we repeat that what we are interested in here is not an historical estimate of the correctness or exaggeration of the attacks of Marx on particular Socialists, but, in general, the *principle* underlying Marx's estimate of definite *currents* in Socialism.

While complaining about the compromises of the German Social-Democrats with the Lassalleans and with Dühring (letter of October 19, 1877), Marx also condemns the compromise "with a whole gang of half mature students and super-wise doctors" ("Doctor" is in German a scientific degree corresponding to our Russian "Candidate" or "one who graduated from the university in class A"), who made it their task to give socialism a "higher idealist" tendency, i.e., to replace its materialist basis (which requires serious objective study before operating with it) by a new mythology with its goddesses of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. One of the representatives of this tendency is the publisher of the Journal *Zukunft* [*The Future*], Dr. Höchberg, who "bought his way in" to the Party, with, I admit, "the noblest" of intentions, but intentions be hanged! Seldom has anything appeared more pitiable and "more modest presumption" than the programme of his *Zukunft* (letter No. 70).

In another letter written almost two years afterwards (September 19, 1879), Marx rebuts the gossip that Engels and himself were behind J. Most, and gives Sorge a detailed account of his attitude towards the opportunists in the German Social-Democratic Party. The *Zukunft* was conducted by Höchberg, Schramm and Ed. Bernstein. Marx and Engels refused to take part in such a publication and when the question was raised of establishing a new Party organ, with the participation of the same Höchberg and with his financial assistance, Marx and Engels at first demanded the appointment of Hirsch as responsible editor to control this "mixture of doctors, students and

professorial socialists" and later on even addressed a circular to Bebel, Liebknecht and other leaders of the Social-Democratic Party, warning them that unless the tendency of Höchberg, Schramm and Bernstein changed, they would openly fight against "such vulgarisation" (in German: *Verluderung*—a still stronger word) "of the theory and the Party."

This was the time in the German Social-Democratic Party which Mehring in his "history" described as "a year of confusion" (*Ein Jahr der Verwirrung*). After the Exceptional Law, the Party did not all at once find the true path, falling at first into the anarchism of Most and the opportunism of Höchberg and Co.

"These people," writes Marx about the latter, "who are nonentities from a theoretical point of view and good for nothing from the practical, want to tame socialism (which they have concocted according to university prescriptions) and particularly the Social-Democratic Party, and enlighten the workers, provide them with 'elements of education,' as they express themselves, out of their fund of confused half-knowledge and, above all, they want to make the Party look respectable in the eyes of the petty bourgeoisie. However, they are nothing but miserable counter-revolutionary windbags."

Marx's "furious" attack led to the retreat of the opportunists and . . . to their effacement. In a letter of November 19, 1879, Marx announces that Höchberg has been removed from the editorial committee and that all the influential leaders of the Party, Bebel, Liebknecht, Bracke and Co. have *renounced* his ideas. The Social-Democratic Party organ, *The Social-Democrat*, began to appear under the editorship of Vollmar, who at that time belonged to the revolutionary wing of the Party. A year afterwards (November 5, 1880), Marx relates that he and Engels constantly struggled against the "miserable" policy of *The Social-Democrat* and often fought *sharply* (*wobei es oft scharf hergeht*). Liebknecht visited Marx in 1880 and promised that there would be "improvement" in *all respects*.

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

On June 20, 1882, Engels writes to Sorge and speaks of this struggle as a thing of the past:

"In general, things in Germany are going splendidly. It is true that the literary gentlemen in the Party tried to turn the Party towards reaction, but they failed ignominiously. The abuse to which the Social-Democratic workers are being subjected has made them even more revolutionary than they were three years ago. . . . These gentlemen (the Party literary people) desired at all costs, at the price of meekness, humility and bootlicking, to obtain, cap in hand, the

repeal of the law against Socialists which has so rudely deprived them of their literary earnings. With the fall of this law, the split will undoubtedly manifest itself and Messrs. Vierecks, Höchbergs and others will form a separate Right wing; it will be possible from time to time to enter into negotiations with them, until they have finally effaced themselves. This opinion was expressed by us immediately the law against the Socialists was passed, when Höchberg and Schramm published in the *Jahrbuch* (*Annual*) what was under the circumstances a most infamous estimate of the work of the Party and demanded from the Party more respectable, more educated and more elegant manners." (By using the word "*gebildetes*" instead of "*gebildetes*" [educated] Engels hints at the Berlin accent of the German literateurs.)

This forecast of a Bernsteinian, made in 1882, received remarkable confirmation in 1898 and in the following years.

And it may be said without exaggeration that since then, particularly after the death of Marx, Engels was untiring in straightening the line distorted by the German opportunists.

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

1885. In appraising the whole business of the *Dampfersubvention*, Engels writes (on June 3) that "the thing nearly resulted in a split." The "philistine aspirations" of the Social-Democratic Deputies were "*colossal*." "A petty-bourgeois Socialist fraction is inevitable in such a country as Germany," says Engels.

1887. Engels replies to Sorge who wrote to say that the Party is disgracing itself by the election of such Deputies as Viereck (a Social-Democrat of the Höchberg cut). There is nothing to be done—Engels excuses himself—nowhere can the workers' party get good Deputies for the Reichstag.

"The gentlemen from the Right wing are aware that they are tolerated only because of the anti-Socialist law and that on the very day when the Party obtains its freedom of action once more they will be thrown out of it."

And in general Engels preferred that "the Party be above its parliamentary heroes rather than that it should be the other way about" (March 3, 1887). Liebknecht is a conciliator—Engels complains—he always covers up differences by phrases. But when things come to a split he will be with us at the decisive moment.

1889. Two International Social-Democratic Congresses in Paris. The opportunists (with the French Possibilists at their head) and

the Revolutionary Social-Democrats had split. Engels (he was then sixty-eight years of age) throws himself into the fight like a youth. A number of letters (beginning with January 12, and up to July 20, 1889) are devoted to the struggle against the opportunists. Not only they but also the Germans, Liebknecht, Bebel and others, are not spared for their conciliationism.

The Possibilists have sold themselves to the government, writes Engels on January 12, 1889. And he impeaches the members of the British Social-Democratic Federation for having allied themselves with the Possibilists.

"The running about and the enormous correspondence in connection with this damned Congress leave me no time for anything else." (May 11, 1889.)

The Possibilists are bustling about, but our people are asleep, Engels writes angrily. Now even Auer and Schippel are demanding that we should go to the Congress of the Possibilists. But this "at last" opened the eyes of Liebknecht. Engels, together with Bernstein, writes pamphlets (signed by Bernstein—Engels calls them "our pamphlets") against the opportunists.

"With the exception of the S.D.F., the Possibilists have not a single Socialist organisation on their side in the whole of Europe." (June 8, 1889.) "Consequently, they fall back upon the non-Socialist trade unions" (let our adherents of a broad Labour Party, of a Labour Congress, etc., note this!). "From America they receive one Knight of Labour."

The opponent is the same as in the fight with the Bakunists.

"Only with this difference that the banner of the Anarchists has been replaced by the banner of the Possibilists. The same selling of their principles to the bourgeoisie for concessions retailed, and mainly for well-paid jobs for the leaders (members of town councils, labour exchanges, etc.)."

Brousse (the leader of the Possibilists) and Hyndman (the leader of the S. D. F. which united with the Possibilists) attack "authoritarian Marxism" and want to form the "nucleus of a new International."

"You cannot imagine how naïve the Germans are! It has cost me tremendous efforts to explain even to Bebel what it is really all about." (June 8, 1889.)

And Engels was jubilant when after the two Congresses met, it turned out that the Revolutionary Social-Democrats numerically outstripped the Possibilists (*united with the trade unionists*, the S. D. F., a part of the Austrians, etc.). (July 17, 1889.) He was overjoyed that the conciliatory plans and proposals of Liebknecht and others had failed. (July 20, 1889.)

"And our sentimental conciliatory brethren deservedly received for all their amicableness a rough kick in the softest part of their anatomy. Perhaps this will cure them for some time."

... Mehring was right (*Der Sorgesche Briefwechsel*) that Marx and Engels cared very little for "good manners."

"They did not reflect much when dealing a blow, but neither did they whimper at the blows they received." "If you think," Engels wrote once, "that pin-pricks can pierce my old, well-hardened and thick hide, you are mistaken."

"And this insensitiveness acquired by them," Mehring writes about Marx and Engels, "they presupposed also in others."

1893. The chastisement of the "Fabians," at once suggests itself . . . when passing an opinion on the Bernsteinists (for did not Bernstein "nourish" his opportunism in England on "Fabians"?):

"The Fabians are an ambitious group here in London who have understanding enough to realise the inevitability of the social revolution but who could not possibly entrust this gigantic task to the rough proletariat alone and are therefore kind enough to set themselves at the head. Fear of the revolution is their fundamental principle. They are the 'educated' *par excellence*. Their socialism is municipal socialism; not the nation but the *municipality* is to become the owner of the means of production, at any rate for the time being. This socialism of theirs is then represented as an extreme but inevitable consequence of bourgeois liberalism, and hence follow their tactics of not decisively fighting the Liberals as adversaries but of pushing them on towards socialist conclusions and therefore of intriguing with them, of *permeating liberalism with socialism*, of not putting up Socialist candidates against the Liberals but of fastening them on to the Liberals, forcing them upon them, or deceiving them, into taking them . . . that they are either lied to and deceived themselves or else misrepresent socialism, they do not of course realise.

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

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

#### A CLASSICAL ESTIMATE OF THE OPPORTUNISM OF THE INTELLECTUALS IN SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY

1894. The Peasant Question.

Engels writes on November 10, 1894:

"On the Continent success is developing the appetite for more success, and catching the peasant, in the literal sense of the word, is becoming the fashion. First the French in Nantes declare through Lafargue not only (what I had written to them) that it is not our business to hasten by direct interference of our own the ruin of the small peasant which capitalism is seeing to for us, but they also add that we must directly *protect* the small peasant against taxation, usurers and landlords. But we cannot co-operate in

this, first because it is stupid and second because it is impossible. Next, however, Vollmar comes along in Frankfort and wants to bribe the *peasantry as a whole*, though the peasant he has to do with in Upper Bohemia is not the debt-laden poor peasant of the Rhineland but the middle and even the big peasant who exploits his men and women farm servants and sells cattle and grain in masses. And that cannot be done without giving up the whole principle."

1894. December 4.

"...The Bavarians have become very, very opportunistic and have almost turned into an ordinary people's party (I am speaking of the majority of leaders and many of the novices who have joined the Party). They voted in the Bavarian Diet for the budget as a whole, and Vollmar, in particular, organised an agitation among the peasants with the object of drawing to his side *not the farmhands* but the rich peasants of Upper Bavaria—people who own from twenty to eighty acres of land approximately, from eight to thirty two hectares), *i.e., those who are quite incapable of managing without wage labourers....*"

From this we see that for more than ten years Marx and Engels systematically and unflinchingly fought opportunism in the German Social-Democratic Party and hunted down intellectual philistinism and vulgarity in socialism. This is an exceedingly important fact. The general public knows that the German Social-Democracy is considered a model of Marxist politics and tactics of the proletariat, but it does not know that a constant war had to be waged by the founders of Marxism against the "Right wing" (Engels' expression) of that party. And it is no accident that soon after the death of Engels, this war, which had remained latent, broke out into an open war. It is an inevitable result of decades of historical development of the German Social-Democracy.

And now two lines pursued by Engels (and Marx) stand out before us with especial distinctness in their recommendations, directions, amendments, admonitions and instructions. While they called upon the Anglo-American socialists more and more insistently to fuse with the labour movement and to rid their organisations of the narrow and hardened sectarian spirit, they taught the German Social-Democrats more and more insistently to beware of falling into philistinism, into "parliamentary idiotism" (an expression of Marx in his letter of September 19, 1872), into philistine intellectual opportunism.

Is it not characteristic that our Social-Democratic gossips have raised a noise about the recommendations of the first kind and have tightened their lips, keeping silence about the recommendations of

the second kind? Is not *such* one-sidedness in estimating Marx's and Engels' letters the best indication of some of our Russian Social-Democratic "one-sidedness". . . ?

At present when there are symptoms of profound ferment and wavering in the international labour movement, when the extremes of opportunism, "parliamentary idiotism" and philistine reformism have given rise to the opposite extreme of revolutionary syndicalism—at present, the general line of the "amendments" of Marx and Engels to Anglo-American and German Socialism acquires exceptional importance.

In such countries where there are *no* Social-Democratic labour parties, *no* Social-Democratic members of Parliament, *no* systematic, consistent, Social-Democratic policy in the question of elections or the press, etc.—in such countries Marx and Engels taught the Socialists to break *at all costs* with narrow sectarianism and *affiliate* with the labour movement, so as to *rouse politically* the proletariat, since the proletariat displayed *almost no* political independence either in England or America in the last third of the nineteenth century. In these countries, where historic bourgeois-democratic tasks are almost non-existent, the political arena was *entirely* filled by the triumphant self-satisfied bourgeoisie, which, for its art of deceiving, corrupting and bribing the workers, has no equal in the world.

To think that Marx's and Engels' advice to the Anglo-American labour movement may simply and directly be applied to Russian conditions, is to use Marxism not for an elucidation of its *method*, not for the *study* of the concrete historic peculiarities of the labour movement in definite countries, but for the purpose of settling petty factional accounts of the intellectuals.

On the contrary, in a country where the bourgeois-democratic revolution has remained unfinished, where "military despotism trimmed with parliamentary forms" (an expression of Marx in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme*) ruled and rules supreme, where the proletariat has long since been drawn into politics and is pursuing a social-democratic policy, in such a country, Marx and Engels feared above everything else parliamentary vulgarisation and philistine reconciliation in the problems and scope of the labour movement.

It is all the more our duty to emphasise and to put in the forefront *this* aspect of Marxism in the age of bourgeois-democratic revolu-

tion in Russia, because here, in our country, a voluminous, "brilliant," rich, liberal-bourgeois press is trumpeting with a thousand voices to the proletariat about the "exemplary" loyalty, parliamentary legalism, modesty and moderation of the neighbouring German labour movement.

This mercenary lie of the bourgeois betrayers of the Russian Revolution did not originate by accident or through the personal depravity of some past or future ministers from the Cadet<sup>1</sup> camp. Its origin lies in the profound economic interests of the Russian liberal landlords and liberal bourgeois. And the letters of Marx and Engels will serve as an indispensable weapon for all Russian Socialists in the struggle with this lie, this "stupefying of the masses" (*Massenverdummung*—an expression of Engels in his letter of November 29, 1886).

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

"The revolutionary language and action of the French has made the hypocrisy of the Vierecks and Co. (the opportunist Social-Democrats in the German parliamentary Social-Democratic fraction) appear in a still more ugly form." (The question here is the formation of a labour party in the French Chamber and the Decazeville strike, which split the French Radicals from the French proletariat.) "Only Liebknecht and Bebel spoke in the last debates, and both of them spoke well. With such debates we can again show ourselves in decent society which was not always the case before. It is in general good that the role of the Germans as leaders of the international social movement is disputed, particularly since they sent to the Reichstag such a large number of philistines (which, however, was inevitable). *In peaceful times everything in Germany becomes philistine* and at such moments the sting of French competition is *absolutely necessary*. . . ." (Letter of April 29, 1886.)

Such are the lessons which must be mastered more deeply than ever by the R. S. D. L. P.<sup>2</sup> which finds itself preponderatingly under the ideological influence of German Social-Democracy.

These lessons are taught us not by one or other particular passage from the correspondence of these greatest men of the nineteenth century, but by the whole spirit and content of their criticism of the international experience of the proletariat, a criticism which is comradely, straight and devoid of all diplomacy and petty considerations.

To what extent all the letters of Marx and Engels are really im-

<sup>1</sup> Constitutional-Democrats.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party.

bued with this spirit may be seen also from the following comparatively private, but highly characteristic passages.

In 1889 a young and fresh movement of the untrained and unskilled simple labourers (gas-workers, dockers, etc.), a movement full of a new revolutionary spirit, began in England. Engels was enthusiastic about it, and he triumphantly emphasises the role of Marx's daughter, "Tussy," who agitated among them.

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

Comments are superfluous.

Another example. In 1891 there was danger of a European war. Engels corresponded about it with Bebel and they agreed that in the event of Germany being attacked by Russia, the German Socialists must desperately fight the Russians and any of their allies.

"If Germany is crushed, then we shall be too, while in the most favourable case the struggle will be such a violent one that Germany will only be able to maintain herself by revolutionary means, so that very possibly we shall be forced to come into power and play the part of 1793." (Letter of October 24, 1891.)

This for the information of those opportunists who have shouted from the housetops that a "Jacobin" perspective for the Russian workers' party in 1905 was un-social-democratic! Engels plainly pointed out to Bebel the possibility of the Social-Democrats having to participate in a provisional government.

It is quite natural that with such views as they held on the tasks of the Social-Democratic labour parties, Marx and Engels had the most fervent faith in the Russian Revolution and its powerful world significance. For a period of almost twenty years, we may see in this correspondence their ardent expectation of a revolution in Russia.

Here is Marx's letter of September 27, 1877, in which he waxes enthusiastic over the Eastern crisis:

"Russia has long been standing on the threshold of an upheaval, all the elements of it are prepared. . . . The gallant Turks have hastened the explosion by years with the thrashing they have inflicted. . . . The upheaval will begin *secundum artem*" (according to all the rules of art) "with some playing at constitutionalism and there will be a fine row (*il y aura un beau tapage*). If mother nature is not particularly unfavourable towards us we shall still live to see the fun!" (Marx was then sixty-one years old.)

Mother nature did not, and was unable to, permit Marx to "live to see the fun." But he foretold the "playing at constitutionalism," and his words seem as though they were written in relation to the First and Second Russian Dumas. Now the warning given to the people about "playing at constitutionalism" was the "very soul" of the boycott tactics that were so hated by the liberals and opportunists. . . .

Here is Marx's letter of November 5, 1880. He is delighted with the success of *Capital* in Russia and takes up the side of the *Narodovolitsi* against the group of *Chernoperebeltsi*.<sup>1</sup> Marx hit off exactly the elements of anarchism in the views of the latter, but he did not know and could not possibly have known of the impending evolution of the *Chernoperebeltsi-Narodniki* into Social-Democrats. Marx attacked them with all the force of his cutting sarcasm:

"These gentlemen are against all political-revolutionary action. Russia should by a somersault land into the Anarchist-Communist-Atheist Millenium! This leap they are in the meantime preparing with the duldest of doctrinaire methods. They have taken the so-called principles of their doctrine from the late Bakunin."

We may see from this how Marx would have estimated the importance of "political revolutionary action" of *Social-Democracy*<sup>2</sup> in Russia of 1905 and following years.

Here is a letter by Engels of April 6, 1887:

"It seems, on the other hand, there is going to be a crisis in Russia. The recent attempts caused great embarrassment . . . ."

The same in the letter of April 9, 1887. . . .

<sup>1</sup> *Narodnaya Volya* (party of the *People's Will*, advocating political action, but confining it to terror and conspirative circles), *Cherny Peredel* (*Black Redistribution*, rejecting politics, but putting their faith into spontaneous rebellions of the peasantry and advocating the division of the land among the peasants), two groups into which the Land and Freedom Party split in 1879.

<sup>2</sup> By the way, if my memory does not fail me, Plekhanov or V. I. Zasulich told me in 1900-03 about the existence of a letter from Engels to Plekhanov on *Our Differences* [the title of a book by Plekhanov, published in 1885 in which he criticises the views of the *Narodniki*, counterposing to them the theory of Marxism.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*] and on the nature of the forthcoming revolution in Russia. It would be interesting to know exactly whether there was such a letter, whether it still exists and whether it is not time to publish it.



"The army is full of discontented conspiring officers." (Engels was then under the impression of the revolutionary struggle of the *Narodnaya Volya* Party; he placed his hopes in the officers and as yet did not see the revolutionary spirit of the soldiers and sailors which manifested itself so brilliantly eighteen years later....) "I do not think the present position will last for even another year. And when the revolution breaks out in Russia, then Hurrah!"

A letter of April 23, 1887:

"In Germany persecution" of Socialists "follows upon persecution. Bismarck, it seems, wants to prepare everything so that at the moment when a revolution breaks out in Russia, which is a question of a few months, Germany may immediately follow her example."

The months turned out to be very, very long ones. There is no doubt that philistines will be found, who, with a knitting of brows and a wrinkling of faces, will sharply condemn the "revolutionism" of Engels or will indulgently laugh at the old utopias of the old revolutionary emigrant.

Yes, Marx and Engels erred much and frequently in their estimate of the imminence of revolution, in their hopes of its victory (for instance, in 1848, in Germany), in their faith in the imminence of a German "republic" ("to die for the republic," wrote Engels of that epoch recalling his feelings as a participant in the military campaign for a national constitution in 1848-49). They were mistaken in 1871 when they were engaged in "raising the South of France for which they" (Becker writes "we" about himself and his nearest friends: letter No. 14 of July 21, 1871) "did, sacrificed and risked all that was in the power of man . . ." the same letter says: "if we had had more money in March and April we would have roused the whole of Southern France and would have saved the Paris Commune."

But *such* mistakes of the giants of revolutionary thought who tried to raise and did raise the proletariat of the whole world above the level of petty, common and farthing tasks, are a thousand times more noble, magnificent and *historically* more valuable and more truthful than the wisdom of official liberalism singing, shouting, appealing and speaking about the vanity of revolutionary vanities, the uselessness of revolutionary struggle and the charm of counter-revolutionary "constitutional" nonsense. . . .

The Russian working class will win its freedom and will push Europe forward by its revolutionary action, full as it may be of mistakes, and let the philistines pride themselves upon the infallibility of their revolutionary inaction.

April 19, 1907.

## HYNDMAN ON MARX

HENRY MAYERS HYNDMAN, one of the founders and leaders of the British Social-Democratic Party, has recently published his voluminous memoirs. The book of almost five hundred pages is called *The Record of an Adventurous Life*<sup>1</sup> and represents the reminiscences, vividly written, of the author's political activities and the "famous" people with whom he was acquainted. Hyndman's book affords much interesting material for a characterisation of British Socialism and for an estimate of some of the most important questions of the whole international labour movement.

We therefore think that it will be opportune to devote a few small articles to Hyndman's book, especially in view of the fact that the *Russkiye Vedomosti* [*Russian News*], a Right wing Cadet journal (of October 14), came out with an article by Dioneo, a liberal, which offers a remarkable example of liberal elucidation, or, more correctly, befogging of these questions.

Let us begin with Hyndman's reminiscences of Marx. Hyndman only made his acquaintance in 1880, being, apparently, very little informed of his teachings and of socialism generally. It is characteristic of English conditions that Hyndman (who was born in 1842) was up to that time a colourless "democrat" with connections and sympathies in the Conservative or Tory Party. Hyndman turned towards socialism after reading *Capital* (in the French translation) during one of his numerous voyages to America between 1874 and 1880.

Proceeding, in the company of Karl Hirsch, to make the acquaintance of Marx, he compares him in his mind with . . . Mazzini!

The standard of these comparisons is apparent from this, that the influence of Mazzini on those around him he styles "personal and individually ethical," while that of Marx "almost wholly intellectual and scientific." Hyndman went to Marx as to a "supreme analytic genius" eager to learn from him, while what attracted him in Mazzi-

<sup>1</sup> Published by Macmillan & Co., London, 1911.—Ed.



ni was his character and "elevation of thought and conduct." That Marx's was "the more powerful mind cannot be disputed," Hyndman, it cannot be gainsaid, understood very badly in 1880 (and does not entirely understand even now, but of that later) the difference between a bourgeois democrat and a socialist.

"The first impression of Marx as I saw him was that of a powerful, shaggy, untamed old man, ready, not to say eager, to enter into conflict and rather suspicious himself of immediate attack. Yet his greeting to us was cordial and his first remarks to me, after I had told him what a great pleasure and honour I felt it to be to shake hands with the author of *Capital*, were agreeable enough; for he told me he had read my articles on India<sup>1</sup> with pleasure and had commented on them favourably in his newspaper correspondence.

"When speaking with fierce indignation of the policy of the Liberal Party, especially in regard to Ireland, the old warrior's small deep-sunk eyes lighted up, his heavy brows wrinkled, the broad, strong nose and face were obviously moved by passion, and he poured out a stream of vigorous denunciation, which displayed alike the heat of his temperament and the marvellous command he possessed over our language. The contrast between his manner and utterances when thus deeply stirred by anger and his attitude when giving his views on the economic events of the period was very marked. He turned from the role of prophet and vehement denunciator to that of the calm philosopher without any apparent effort, and I felt from the first that on this latter ground many a long year might pass before I ceased to be a student in the presence of a master.

"I had been surprised in reading *Capital* and still more when perusing his smaller works, such as his pronouncement on the Commune of Paris and his *Eighteenth Brumaire*, how he combined the ablest and coolest examination of the economic causes and social effects with the most bitter hatred of classes and even of individual men, such as Napoleon III, and M. Thiers, who, according to his own theories, were little more than flies upon the wheels of the great Juggernaut car of capitalist development. Marx, of course, was a Jew, and to me it seemed that he combined in his own person and nature, with his commanding forehead and great overhanging brow, his fierce glittering eyes, broad, sensitive nose and mobile mouth, all surrounded by a setting of untrimmed hair and beard, the righteous fury of the great seers of his race, with the cold analytical powers of Spinoza and the Jewish doctors. It was an extraordinary combination of qualities, the like of which I have known in no other man.

"As I went out with Hirsch, deeply impressed by the great personality we had left, Hirsch asked me what I thought of him. 'Well,' I replied, 'I think he is the Aristotle of the nineteenth century.' And yet as I said it I knew that this did not cover the ground. For one thing it was quite impossible to think of Marx as acting the courtier to Alexander while carrying on the profound studies which have so deeply influenced later generations, and besides, he never so wholly segregated himself from immediate human interests—notwithstanding

<sup>1</sup> Up to his recent turn towards chauvinism, Hyndman was a resolute enemy of British imperialism and in 1878 fought a noble campaign of exposure of the shameful violence, brutalities, plunder and outrage (to the length of flogging of political "criminals") by which Englishmen of all parties made themselves notorious in India, including even the "educated" and "radical" writer, John Morley.

much that has been said to the contrary—as to be able to consider facts and their surroundings in the cold hard light of the greatest philosopher of antiquity. There can be no doubt whatever that his hatred of the system of exploitation and wage-slavery by which he was surrounded was not only intellectual and philosophic but bitterly personal.

"I remember saying to him once that as I grew older I thought I became more tolerant. 'Do you,' he said, 'do you?' It was quite certain he didn't. It has been, I think, Marx's deep animosity to the existing order of things and his scathing criticism of his opponents which has prevented many of the educated well-to-do class from appreciating his masterly life-work at its full value, and has rendered third-rate sciolists and logomachists, like Boehm-Bawerk, such heroes in their eyes, merely because they have misrepresented and attempted to 'refute' him. Accustomed as we are nowadays, especially in England, to fence always with big soft buttons on the points of our rapiers, Marx's terrible onslaughts with naked steel upon his adversaries appeared so improper that it was impossible for our gentlemanly sham-fighters and mental gymnasium men to believe that this unsparing controversialist and furious assailant of capital and capitalists was really the deepest thinker of modern times."

In 1880, Marx was almost unknown to the English public. His health was at that time already noticeably failing. His strenuous work (up to sixteen hours a day and more mental labour!) had sapped his organism; the doctors had forbidden him to work in the evening, and Hyndman tells us that he had the advantage of his hours of rest for conversations with him from the end of 1880 till the beginning of 1881.

"Our method of talking was peculiar. Marx had a habit, when at all interested in the discussion, of walking actively up and down the room, as if he were pacing the deck of a schooner for exercise. I had acquired, on my long voyages, the same tendency to pacing to and fro when my mind was much occupied. Consequently, master and student could have been seen walking up and down on opposite sides of the table for two or three hours in succession, engaged in discussing the affairs of the past and the present."

What Marx's position was in the various questions which he discussed with Hyndman, the latter does not tell us more or less comprehensively even *on a single question*. From the above, it will be observed that Hyndman concentrated above all and almost exclusively on the *anecdotic* side of the matter, which is in keeping with the rest of his book. The autobiography of Hyndman is the biography of an English bourgeois philistine, who, being the best of the best of his class, finally breaks his way through to socialism, without ever completely ridding himself of bourgeois traditions and bourgeois views and prejudices.

Hyndman repeats the philistine reproaches in relation to Marx and Engels that they were "autocrats" in "what was supposed to be

a democratic" International, that they did not understand practical matters, that they had no knowledge of men, etc. But never does he attempt to give an analysis of any of these reproaches on the basis of an exact and concrete exposition of the circumstances of the subject matter in question.

What we get is an anecdote but not an historical analysis by a Marxist. Marx and Engels opposed the cause of German Social-Democratic unity (with the Lassalleans) and unity was necessary! This is all that Hyndman says. That Marx and Engels were, as a matter of principle, a thousand times right against Lassalle and the Lassalleans—of that not a word is to be found in Hyndman's book. He does not even raise this question. Hyndman does not even ask himself whether "democracy" (organisational), in the epoch of the International, was not a cover for the bourgeois sects, which were disrupting the building up of a proletarian social-democracy.

Hence also the history of the break between Hyndman and Marx is so related that we get absolutely nothing but gossip (in the spirit of the Messrs. Dioneo). Engels, we are told, was "exact, suspicious, jealous"; Marx's wife told Hyndman's that Engels was the "evil genius" (!) of Marx; Engels, whom Hyndman never even met (despite what Dioneo wrote in the *Russkiye Vedomosti*) was "not disinclined to give full weight to the exchange value of his ready cash in his relations with those whom he helped" (Engels was very rich, Marx very poor). And Engels, we are told, made mischief between Marx and Hyndman, fearing that the latter, being then a wealthy man, might take his (Engels') place as a wealthy friend of Marx!!

To copy just such unspeakable banalities is, of course, a pleasure to the liberals. But to become acquainted even with those letters to Sorge (from Marx and Engels), to which Hyndman himself refers, and to analyse them, where necessary—that, it goes without saying, is not in the interests of the liberal scribblers! They do not trouble about this! And yet a reference to these letters, and a comparison with Hyndman's memoirs at once decide the matter.

In 1880, Hyndman published a pamphlet, *England for All*, in which he passes over to socialism, while remaining a very, very confused bourgeois democrat. The pamphlet was written for the Democratic Federation (not a socialist organisation), which had then been formed and which contained a mass of anti-socialist elements. And here

Hyndman, retailing and copying *Capital* in two chapters of his pamphlet, *without mentioning Marx*, vaguely speaks in the preface about a certain "great thinker and original writer," to whom he is much indebted, etc. "This too served as a reason for Engels to cause a quarrel between Marx and myself"—Hyndman tells us, and quotes at the same time, a letter from Marx to himself (of December 8, 1880) in which Marx writes that according to Hyndman's statement Hyndman does "not share the views of my" (Marx's) "party as far as England is concerned."

It is quite clear what the difference was about, but it has not been understood, noticed or appreciated by Hyndman. It was this—Hyndman was then (as Marx writes also point-blank to Sorge on December 15, 1881) a "well-meaning petty-bourgeois writer," "half bourgeois and half-proletarian." It is clear that when a man becomes acquainted with Marx, enters into close relations with him, calls himself his disciple, then forms a "Democratic" Federation and writes for it a pamphlet with a distortion of Marxism and suppresses the name of Marx—it is clear that Marx could not let it pass without a "furious" protest. And, it appears, there was such a protest, since Marx in the same letter to Sorge quotes extracts from Hyndman's letters of apology in which he justifies himself by saying that "the English do not like to learn from foreigners" and that "the name of Marx is so hated" (!) etc. (Hyndman himself mentions that he destroyed almost all the letters he received from Marx, so that one cannot expect a revelation of the truth from that quarter.)

Fine excuses, are they not? And now when the question of those differences between Hyndman and Marx is perfectly clear, when even Hyndman's book itself proves that there is much of the philistine and the bourgeois in the views of Hyndman (for instance, the kind of argument with which Hyndman defends capital punishment for criminals!), what explanation is given there for the breach with Marx? "Intrigues" by Engels who for forty years followed with Marx the same line of principle!! If even all the rest of Hyndman's book was nothing but honey, this one spoon of tar would have been enough. . . .

Marx's differences with Hyndman are revealed most characteristically by what the latter relates of Marx's estimate of Henry George. This estimate is known from Marx's letter to Sorge of June 30, 1881. Hyndman defended Henry George before Marx with the following arguments:

"George will teach more by inculcating error than other men can impart by complete exposition of the truth. Marx would not hear of this as a sound contention. The promulgation of error could never be of any good to the people, that was his view. To leave error unrefuted is to encourage intellectual immorality. For ten who go farther, a hundred may very easily stop with George, and the danger of this is too great to run."

Thus spoke Marx!!

And Hyndman informs us that, on the one hand, he still maintains his previous opinion of George, and on the other that "George was a boy with a bright farthing dip fooling around within the radius of a man using an electric searchlight."

The comparison is splendid, but . . . but it was risky on the part of Hyndman to give this splendid comparison side by side with his miserable gossip about Engels.

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## AN ESTIMATE OF MARX BY INTERNATIONAL LIBERALISM

ONE of Turgenev's heroes paraphrased a verse of a great German poet in the following manner:

*Wer den Feind will versteh'n  
Muss in Feindes Lande geh'n*

which means: "He who wants to know his enemy must go into the enemy's country" to acquaint himself directly with the enemy's customs, morals and methods of reasoning and action.

It will not be amiss for Marxists to glance at the comments on the commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the death of Marx uttered by the influential political organs of various countries and particularly in the liberal and "democratic" bourgeois journals, which combine the possibility of influencing the masses of readers with the right to speak in the name of official, governmental and titled professorial science.

Let us begin our review with the *Russkiye Vedomosti*. This is the most imperturbable (and most dull), most scientific (and most far removed from life) of professorial journals. A dry and wooden tone—they call it "objectivity" in the language of professors, "ordinary and extraordinary"—predominates in the little article devoted to the twenty-fifth anniversary of Marx's death (No. 51, March 1.) Some facts and little facts is what the author of the article tries to confine himself to. And, as an impartial historian, he is ready to give Marx his due—at least for the past which is already dead and of which one may speak in an insipid manner. The *Russkiye Vedomosti* recognises Marx as an "extraordinary figure" and a "great man of science," "an outstanding leader of the proletariat" and organiser of the masses. But this recognition relates to the past: Now, says the journal, "new paths are really necessary," i.e., new paths for the labour movement and socialism unlike the "old Marxism." The journal does not tell us what exactly these new paths are, it is too live a subject for the professors and too unsafe for the virtuosi in the art of "tactful silence." But clear hints are given:

"Many of his" (Marx's) "logical constructions have been destroyed by scientific analysis and by the unmerciful criticism of events. Among scientists there are almost no followers faithful to his system as a whole; German Social-Democracy, the spiritual child of Marx, has diverged a good deal from the revolutionary path indicated by the founders of German Socialism."

You see that the author leaves but very little unsaid in his desire to *amend* Marx according to the revisionists.

Another influential paper, the *Ryech* [*Speech*], the organ of a political party, which plays first fiddle in the concert of Russian liberalism, comes out with a much more live estimate of Marx. The tendency is, of course, the same as in the *Ruskiye Vedomosti*, but while there we had a preface to a thick volume, here we have political slogans which supply the immediate directives for a whole number of speeches from the parliamentary tribune upon all current events and all contemporary questions. The article, *Karl Marx and Russia*, (No. 53 Marx 2), is written by the well-known turn-coat, Mr. Izgoev, an example of those Russian intellectuals, who at twenty-five to thirty years of age are "pro-Marxian," at thirty-five to forty are pro-liberal and afterwards are pro-Black-Hundred.

Mr. Izgoev deserted the Social-Democrats for the liberals (as he himself as well as the arch-renegade, Mr. Struve, has declared) just at the time when after the first astounding successes of the revolution a difficult period set in of long, arduous struggles with the strengthening counter-revolution. And Mr. Izgoev is highly typical in this respect. He makes clear and shows exceedingly well whom this prudish professorial estimate of Marx benefits and *whose work* this titled "science" does.

Marx, the intriguing tactician," thunders Mr. Izgoev about Marx, "strongly interfered with Marx, the great scientist, and caused him to commit not a few errors."

The basic error, of course, was that besides the correct, reasonable, "evolutionary Marxism," shared by the "majority" (the majority of philistines?), there arose a revolutionary Marxism—pernicious, unscientific, fantastic and "adulterated by the Populist brew." Our liberal is especially indignant at the role of *this* Marxism in the Russian Revolution. Only think: they talk of the dictatorship of the proletariat for the purpose of effecting this very "bourgeois revolution," or even of "the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, which is perfectly phantastic on the lips of Marxists."

"No wonder that the kind of revolutionary Marxism, which the different shades of Bolsheviks in Russia have made their own, has completely failed..."

"They are compelled to think of the establishment of the usual 'bourgeois' (ironical quotation marks by Mr. Izgoev) 'constitution.'"

Here you have an ideologically completed and politically ripe Octobrist, fully assured that what has completely failed is Marxism and revolutionary tactics, but in no way the Cadet tactics of compromise, betrayal, and treachery!

Let us proceed further. Let us pass from the Russian press to the German, which works in a free atmosphere, face to face with an open socialist party, expressing its views in dozens of daily organs. The *Frankfurter Zeitung*, one of the wealthiest, most widespread and most "democratic" bourgeois newspapers in Germany, devotes a big leading article to the twenty-fifth anniversary of Marx's death (in its evening edition, No. 76, March 16). The German "democrats" straightway take the bull by the horns.

"One can quite understand," they tell us, "that the Social-Democratic press has this day honoured its teacher in numerous articles. But Marx has been recognised as a great man even in an influential national liberal journal, though with the usual reservations. Yes, of course, he was great, but he was a great corrupter."

The newspaper, in which is represented the flower of that species of Black-Hundred ideology, called European liberalism, explains that it does not in the least doubt the personal honesty of Marx, but, that his theories have caused incalculable harm. In introducing the conception of determinism and law in the domain of social phenomena, in denying the significance of morality and the conditional relative nature of our knowledge, Marx founded an anti-scientific utopia and a real "church" of his sectarian disciples. And his most baneful idea is that of the *class* struggle. Herein is all the evil! Marx treated seriously the old expression of two nations within each of the civilised nations, a nation of "exploiters" and a nation of "exploited" (these unscientific expressions are placed by the Journal in killingly ironical quotation marks). Marx forgot the obvious, clear and, for all healthy people, self-evident truth, that in social life, "the aim is not struggle but agreement." Marx "split the people in parts, for he hammered it into his men that there is nothing in common between them and the others, that they are mortal enemies."

"What could be more natural," the Journal asks, "than that Social-Democracy, agreeing in many practical demands with many of the bourgeoisie, should seek a rapprochement with them? But this is precisely what did not happen

owing to the Marxian theory. Social-Democracy has condemned itself to isolation. For a certain time it might have been thought that a change in principle was coming in this respect. That was when the revisionists started their campaign. But this turned out a mistake, and the difference between the revisionists and ourselves is, among other things, that we have understood this mistake while they have not. The revisionists thought and still think that it is possible in some way to keep to Marx and yet become a different party. Vain hope. Marx must either be swallowed whole or cast away altogether, but half measures are of no use whatever...."

Quite true! And it does happen that you, liberal gentlemen, sometimes tell the truth by accident!

"So long as Social-Democracy honours Marx, so long will it be unable to rid itself of the class struggle and of all other things which make the problem of living with it so difficult. The scientific world is agreed that not one of the politico-economic theories of Marxism has proved true . . . ."

So, so, gentlemen. You have excellently expressed the essence of bourgeois science, bourgeois liberalism and of its whole policy. You understand that Marx cannot be swallowed in parts. The Izgoevs and the Russian liberals have not yet grasped this. They too will soon realise it.

And here, in conclusion, is the conservative organ of the bourgeois republic, the *Journal des Débats*. In its issue of March 15, it writes, on the occasion of the anniversary, that the Socialists—these "wild equalitarians"—preach the cult of their great men, that the chief evil of the teaching of Marx, who "hated the bourgeoisie," is the theory of the struggle of *classes*.

"He preached to the working classes not temporary disputes followed by periods of truce, but a holy war, a war of extermination and expropriation, a war for the promised land of collectivism . . . a monstrous utopia. . . ."

The bourgeois papers write well when stung to the quick. Life becomes brighter when you see how the unity of the liberal enemies of the proletariat all over the world becomes consolidated, since this unity is one of the pledges of the unification of the millions of the international proletariat, which will, at all costs, win for itself its promised land.

March 25, 1908.

## MARX ON THE AMERICAN "BLACK REDISTRIBUTION"

AN article of Marx against Kriege on the agrarian question was mentioned in No. 12 of the *Vperyod* [*Forward*]. That was not in 1848 as is erroneously indicated in the article by Comrade —y, but in 1846. Hermann Kriege, then a very young man and a collaborator of Marx, removed in 1845 to America and established a journal there, the *Volkstribun* [*The Peoples' Tribune*] for the propaganda of communism. But he conducted this propaganda in such a way that Marx was obliged to come out on behalf of the German Communists and protest vehemently against the manner in which Hermann Kriege was compromising the Communist Party. The criticism of Kriege's policy, which was published in 1846 in the *Westphälisches Dampfboot*<sup>1</sup> and reprinted in Volume II of Mehring's edition of the *Works of Marx*, is of tremendous interest for Russian Social-Democrats of to-day.

The agrarian question was placed in the foreground by the very progress of the American social movement, just as is the case at present in Russia, and the question precisely at issue was not a developed capitalist society, but the creation of the primary and fundamental conditions for the proper development of capitalism. This latter circumstance is of particular importance for a parallel between the attitude of Marx to the American ideas of "black redistribution" and the attitude of Russian Social-Democrats to the modern peasant movement.

Kriege gave no material in his journal for a study of the concrete social peculiarities of the American system and for the elucidation of the true character of the movement of agrarian reformers in those days who strove for the abolition of rent. Instead Kriege clothed the question of the agrarian revolution (quite in the style of our "Socialist-Revolutionaries") in exuberant and alluring phrases:

"Every poor person," wrote Kriege, "will at once become a useful member of human society as soon as he is assured of the possibility of productive labour."

<sup>1</sup> *Westphalian Steamer*, a monthly magazine published at that time in Germany.—Ed.

Such a possibility will be assured to him forever if society will grant him a piece of land on which he will be able to keep himself and his family. If this gigantic area (i.e., 1400 million acres of North American state lands) is withdrawn from commerce and secured in restricted amounts for labour,<sup>1</sup> an end will be put to poverty in America with one blow. . . ."

To this Marx replies:

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

And so we have before us a real plan for an American black redistribution: the withdrawal of the bulk of land from commerce, the right to the land, the limitation of the size in land-ownership or in the use of the land. And Marx comes forward from the very beginning with a sober criticism of this utopianism: he points out the inevitability of the transformation of the patriarchal system into an industrial, i.e., to use the language of today, the inevitability of the development of capitalism. But it would be a big mistake to think that the utopian dreams of the members of the movement led Marx to take up a negative attitude to the movement in general. Nothing of the kind. Already then, at the very beginning of his literary career, Marx understood how to strip the realistic and progressive content of a movement of its ideological trumpery. In the second section of his criticism entitled *The Economics (i.e., the political economy) of the "Peoples' Tribune" and the Attitude of the Latter to Young America*, Marx writes:

"We recognise, to the full, the historical justification of the movement of the American national reformers. We know that this movement strives to attain a result which, it is true, would, at the present moment, serve as an impulse to the development of the industrialism of modern bourgeois society, but which, being the fruit of a proletarian movement, must, in its attack on landed property in general and particularly in the conditions existing at present in America, lead eventually by its logical sequence to communism. Kriege, having joined the anti-rent movement with other Communists in New York, clothes this simple fact in florid phrases, without entering upon a consideration of the content of the movement itself. He proves by this that he is in the dark about the connection existing between 'Young America' and American social conditions. Let us give another example of how he casts his enthusiasm for humanity over the agrarians' plan of partitioning the land on an American scale.

<sup>1</sup> Just remember what the *Revolutionnaya Rossiya* [organ of the Socialist-Revolutionaries.—Ed.], beginning with No. 8, wrote on the transfer of land from capital to labour, the importance of the state lands in Russia, of equal land tenure, of the bourgeois idea of drawing land into commerce, etc. Exactly the same as Kriege!

"An article entitled 'What We Want,' in the *Peoples' Tribune*, No. 10, states: 'The American National Reformers call the land the common heritage of all the people . . . and demand from the national legislature such measures as would secure the 1400 million acres of land, that have not fallen yet into the hands of grabbing speculators, as the inalienable common property of the whole of humanity.' And now in order to retain for the whole of humanity this inalienable and common heritage, he accepts the plan of the National Reformers: 'To provide for the maintenance of every peasant, whatever his country of origin, 160 acres of American land.' This plan is expounded as follows in No. 14 in an article, 'An Answer to Konze': 'No one must receive as his property more than 160 acres of this still untouched land of the people, and even these 160 acres, only on condition that he cultivates them himself.' And so an immediate division of the land is necessary in order to retain the land as 'the inalienable common property' of 'the whole of humanity.' Kriege imagines that he has the power to prohibit by some law the necessary consequences of this partition—concentration, industrial progress, etc. He imagines that 160 acres of land is something equivalent to itself as though the value of such an area did not vary according to quality. The 'peasants' will exchange among themselves and with other persons the products of the land if not the land itself. And once it comes to this, it will soon turn out that one 'peasant, even without capital, will, thanks to his labour and the greater natural fruitfulness of his 160 acres, force another peasant to the position of his farmhand. And then, is it not all the same whether the land or its products 'fall into the hands of grabbing speculators'? Let us consider seriously this present which Kriege makes to humanity: 1400 million acres are to be retained as inalienable public property of the whole of humanity. And with this, every peasant is to receive 160 acres. We can therefore calculate the size of Kriege's 'humanity.' Exactly 8,750,000 'peasants' or, reckoning five persons to a family, 43,000,000 persons. We can similarly calculate the duration of this 'forever,' in the course of which the proletariat, as humanity, is to claim for itself at least in the U.S.A., all the land. If the population of the U.S.A. will increase as rapidly as it did up to the present, i.e., double in 25 years, this 'forever' will last for not quite 40 years. These 1400 million acres will be occupied in 40 years, and the future generations will have nothing to claim. But as the free grant of land will greatly increase immigration, Kriege's 'forever' may come to an end even earlier, particularly if it be taken into account that the quantity of land for 44,000,000 persons will not be enough even to serve as a channel for absorbing European pauperism alone in its present state since every tenth person is a pauper in Europe and the British Isles alone have 7,000,000 of them. Similar political economic naivety is to be met with in No. 13 in the article 'To the Women' in which Kriege says that if the city of New York would give away its 52,000 acres on Long Island,<sup>1</sup> it would be sufficient 'at once' to emancipate New York forever from all pauperism, misery and crime.

"If Kriege had regarded the movement striving towards the emancipation of the land as a preliminary form of the proletarian movement, necessary under certain circumstances; if he had appraised this movement as one which, by reason of the position of the class from which it proceeded, would necessarily develop later into a communist movement; if he had shown how the communist tendencies in America must, at first, come forward in this agrarian form, though apparently it contradicts all communism—there would then be nothing to object to. But Kriege declares this form of the movement of cer-

<sup>1</sup> An island which is part of New York.—Ed.

tain living people, which is but of a subordinate significance, to be the cause of humanity. Kriege, against his better knowledge, puts forward this cause as the final and highest aim of every movement in general, transforming in this way certain objects of the movement into sheer bombastic nonsense. In the same article in No. 10 of his journal he chants the following song of triumph: 'And thus would the old dreams of the Europeans be realised. Land would be ready for them on the other side of the ocean and they would only have to take and fructify it with the labour of their hands, and they could throw in the teeth of the tyrants of the world the proud declaration: This is *my* cabin, which you have not built, this is *my* hearth which fills your hearts with envy.'

"Kriege might add: This is *my* pile of dung which has been produced by myself, my wife, my children, my farmhands and my cattle. And who are those Europeans who would have discovered in it the realisation of their dreams? Not the communist workers, but the bankrupt shopkeepers and guild artisans or the ruined peasants who are yearning for the good luck of again becoming petty bourgeois and peasants! And what is this dream which is to be realised with the aid of these 1400 million acres? Nothing else but the conversion of all people into private owners. Such a dream is as possible of realisation and as communistic as the dream to turn all people into emperors, kings or popes."

The criticism of Marx is full of venom and sarcasm. He castigates Kriege for precisely those aspects of his views which we now see in our "Socialist-Revolutionaries": the domination of phrases, petty-bourgeois utopias put forward as the highest revolutionary utopianism, failure to understand the real foundations of the modern economic order and its development. Marx, who as yet was only a potential economist, points out, with remarkable perspicacity, the role of exchange, and commodity economy. If not land—says he—then the peasants will exchange the products of the land, and this statement says everything! This statement of the question is in many, many respects applicable to the Russian peasant movement and its petty-bourgeois "socialist" ideologists.

But Marx is, at the same time, very far from merely "repudiating" this petty-bourgeois movement, and from doctrinaire ignoring of it, out of fear (characteristic of bookish people) of soiling his hands by contact with revolutionary petty-bourgeois democracy. While ridiculing without mercy the absurdity of the ideological trappings of the movement, Marx endeavours to determine materialistically and soberly its *real* historic content, its inevitable consequence which must follow by reason of the objective conditions regardless of the will and consciousness, the dreams and theories of these or the other persons. Marx therefore does not condemn, but fully approves of the support of the movement by communists. Tak-

ing up a dialectical standpoint, i.e., considering the movement from every side, taking into account the past as well as the future, Marx notes the revolutionary aspects of the attack on land ownership and recognises this petty-bourgeois movement as a peculiar and primary form of the proletarian and communist movement. What you are dreaming to attain by this movement, says Marx to Kriege, you will not achieve; you will get petty-bourgeois isolation instead of fraternity, and instead of the peasant allotments becoming inalienable, they will be drawn into commercial exchange, and instead of a blow being struck at the grabbing speculators, the base of capitalist development will be widened. But the capitalist evil, which you are vainly dreaming to avoid, is historically a virtue, since it will hasten social development tremendously and will bring many times nearer the new and higher forms of the communist movement. The blow struck at land-property will facilitate the inevitable further blows at property in general. The revolutionary action of a lower class bringing about a change, which will temporarily provide well-being on a very narrow scale to some people (not to all by any means), will facilitate the inevitable further revolutionary action of the very lowest class, making for a change, which will really ensure full human happiness to all toilers.

The statement of the case against Kriege by Marx should serve as a model for us Russian Social-Democrats. There is no doubt about the really petty-bourgeois nature of the modern peasant movement in Russia. This we must explain with all our power and in this connection fight, relentlessly and without any mercy, all the illusions of all the "Socialist-Revolutionaries" or primitive socialists. Our constant aim, not to be forgotten for a single moment, must be the organisation of a separate, independent party of the proletariat, striving, through all the democratic upheavals, towards a complete Socialist revolution. But to turn our backs upon the peasant movement on this ground would be hopeless philistinism and pedantry. No, there is no doubt about the revolutionary and democratic nature of this movement, and we must support it with all our power, develop it, make it politically conscious and definite in a class sense, push it further, march together with it hand in hand to the end—since our goal lies very much further than that of any peasant movement. We are marching to the final goal—the end of the very division of society into classes. There is hardly another country in the world in

which the peasantry undergoes so much suffering, such oppression and outrages as in Russia. The more hopeless this oppression of the peasantry, the more powerful will be its awakening, the more invincible its revolutionary onslaught. It is the business of the conscious revolutionary proletariat to support this onslaught with all its power, so as not to leave a single stone of this old, accursed, feudal and autocratic slavery of Russia, and to create a new generation of bold and free people, to create a new republican country, where there will be full scope for the unfolding of our proletarian struggle for socialism.

April, 1905.

## THE VULGAR BOURGEOIS REPRESENTATION OF DICTATORSHIP AND MARX'S VIEWS ON DICTATORSHIP

(From: *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*)

MEHRING tells us in his notes to his edition of Marx's articles from *Die Neue Rheinische Zeitung* of 1848 that incidentally the following reproach was made to this newspaper in the bourgeois publications. *Die Neue Rheinische Zeitung* was alleged to demand "the immediate introduction of a dictatorship as the only means of achieving democracy" (Marx, *Nachlass*, Vol. III, p. 53). From the vulgar bourgeois standpoint the concepts dictatorship and democracy mutually exclude each other. Not understanding the theory of class struggle, and accustomed to see on the political arena only a petty squabble of various bourgeois circles and cliques, the bourgeois conceives the dictatorship to be the repeal of all liberties, of all guarantees of democracy, tyranny of every kind and all possible abuses of power in the personal interests of the dictator. In effect, it is precisely this vulgar-bourgeois viewpoint that permeates the writings of our Martynov, who winds up his "new campaign" in the new *Iskra* by attributing the partiality of the *Vperyod* and the *Proletari* for the slogan of dictatorship to Lenin's "being obsessed by a passionate desire to try his luck" (*Iskra*, No. 103, p. 3, col. 2). In order to explain to Martynov the concept of class dictatorship as distinguished from personal dictatorship and the tasks of democratic dictatorship as distinguished from socialist dictatorship, it would be useful to dwell on the views of *Die Neue Rheinische Zeitung*.

On September 14, 1848, *Die Neue Rheinische Zeitung* wrote:

"After a revolution, every provisional organisation of the state requires a dictatorship, and an energetic dictatorship at that. From the very beginning we have reproached Kamphausen (the head of the Ministry after March 18, 1848) for not acting dictatorially, for not having immediately smashed up and eliminated the remnants of old institutions. And while Mr. Kamphausen was thus lulling himself with constitutional dreams, the defeated party (i.e., the party of reaction) strengthened its positions in the bureaucracy and in the army, and here and there even began to venture upon open struggle."

These few words, Mehring justly remarks, sum up in a few propositions all that was propounded by *Die Neue Rheinische Zeitung*



in long articles on Kamphausen's Ministry. What do these words of Marx imply? That the provisional revolutionary government *must* act dictatorially (a proposition which *Iskra* was altogether unable to grasp since it was fighting shy of the slogan: dictatorship); that the task of such a dictatorship is to destroy the remnants of old institutions (precisely what was clearly indicated in the resolutions of the Third Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party on the struggle against the counter-revolution and which, as we have indicated above, was omitted in the resolution of the Conference). Thirdly, and finally, it follows from these words that Marx castigated the bourgeois democrats for entertaining "constitutional illusions" in an epoch of the revolution and open civil war. The meaning of these words becomes particularly obvious from the article in *Die Neue Rheinische Zeitung* of June 6, 1848, in which Marx wrote:

"The Constituent National Assembly must first of all be an active, revolutionary-active assembly. But the Frankfurt Assembly is busying itself with school exercises in parliamentarism while allowing the government to act. Let us assume that this learned assembly succeeded after mature consideration in working out the best agenda and the best constitution. But what would be the use of the best agenda and of the best constitution, if the government had in the meantime placed the bayonet on the agenda?"

Such is the meaning of the slogan: dictatorship. Hence we can gauge what Marx's attitude would have been towards resolutions, which call the "decision to organise a constituent assembly" a decisive victory, or which invite us to "remain a party of the extreme revolutionary opposition."

Great questions in the life of nations are settled only by force. The reactionary classes are usually themselves the first to resort to violence, to civil war; they are the first to "place the bayonet on the agenda" as the Russian autocracy did and is doing systematically, consistently, everywhere, all over the country ever since January 9. And since such a situation has arisen, since the bayonet has really taken the first place on the political agenda, since the uprising has become necessary and urgent—the constitutional illusions and school exercises in parliamentarism are becoming only a screen for the bourgeois betrayal of the revolution, a screen for the "desertion" of the bourgeoisie from the cause of the revolution. The genuinely revolutionary class must, then, advance precisely the slogan of dictatorship.

On the question of the tasks of this dictatorship Marx had already written in *Die Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, as follows:

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"The National Assembly should have acted dictatorially against the reactionary attempts of the obsolete governments and then it would have gained for itself public opinion of such power against which all bayonets and rifle butts would have proved of no avail. . . . But this assembly bores the German people instead of carrying the people with it or being carried away by it."

In the opinion of Marx, the National Assembly should have

"eliminated from the actually existing regime of Germany everything that contradicted the principle of the sovereignty of the people," then "it should have consolidated the revolutionary basis on which it was founded in order to make the sovereignty of the people, won by the revolution, secure against all attacks."

Thus, the tasks which Marx set before the revolutionary government, or the dictatorship in 1848, amounted in substance, first of all, to *democratic* revolution, i.e., defence against counter-revolution and actual elimination of everything that contradicted the sovereignty of the people. And this is nothing else than the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship.

To proceed: which were the classes that in the opinion of Marx could have and should have achieved that task (to carry into effect the principle of the people's sovereignty to the end and to beat off the attacks of the counter-revolution)? Marx talks of the "people." However, we know that he always ruthlessly combated the petty-bourgeois illusions about the unity of the "people," and about the absence of class struggle among the people. In using the word "people," Marx did not thereby gloss over the class differences, but united certain elements which were capable of carrying the revolution to the end.

After the victory of the Berlin proletariat on March 18, wrote *Die Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, the results of the revolution turned out to be twofold:

"On the one hand, the arming of the people, the right of association, the sovereignty of the people actually won; on the other hand, the preservation of the monarchy and the Ministry of Kamphausen, Hansemann, i.e., the government of the representatives of the high bourgeoisie. Thus the results of the revolution have been twofold and inevitably had to lead to a rupture. The people have emerged victorious; they have won liberties of a decisively democratic nature, but direct power has been transferred not into their hands but into those of the big bourgeoisie. In a word, the revolution has not been completed. The people allowed the formation of a ministry of the big bourgeois, and the big bourgeois betrayed their objectives immediately by offering an alliance to the old Prussian nobility and bureaucracy. Arnim, Canitz and Schwerin have joined the Cabinet."

"The high bourgeoisie, anti-revolutionary from the very beginning, have concluded a defensive and offensive alliance with reaction out of fear of the people that is to say, the workers and the democratic bourgeoisie." (Italics ours.)

Thus, not only a "decision to organise a Constituent Assembly," but even its actual convocation is insufficient for a decisive victory of the revolution! Even after a partial victory in an armed struggle (the victory of the Berlin workers over the troops on March 18, 1848) an "incomplete" and "unfinished" revolution is possible. What does its final consummation depend on? It depends on the question, into whose hands is the immediate rule transferred. To those of the Petrunkeviches or Rodichevs, that is to say, the Kamphausens and the Hansemanns, or of the *people*, i.e., of the workers and the democratic bourgeoisie? In the first case the bourgeoisie will possess power, and the proletariat—"freedom to criticise," freedom to "remain a party of extreme revolutionary opposition." Immediately after victory the bourgeoisie will enter into an alliance with reaction (this would also inevitably happen in Russia, if, for example, the St. Petersburg workers gained only a partial victory in a street fight with the troops and allowed Messrs. Petrunkevich and Co. to form a government). In the second case a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship, i.e., a complete victory of the revolution, would be possible.

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

A clear answer to this question is supplied by the following passage in an article in *Die Neue Rheinische Zeitung* of July 29, 1848:

"...the German revolution of 1848 is only a parody of the French revolution of 1789.

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

"On July 11, 1848, four months after the March barricades, the feudal services overpowered the German people. *Teste Gierke cum Hansemanno*.<sup>1</sup>

"The French bourgeoisie of 1789 did not for a moment abandon its allies—the peasants. It knew that its rule was based on the destruction of feudalism in the villages, the creation of a free landowning (*grundbesitzenden*) peasant class.

<sup>1</sup> "Witness to this are Gierke and Hansemann." Hansemann was the minister of the party of the big bourgeoisie (like Trubetskoy or Rodichev, etc., in Russia), Gierke was the minister of agriculture in the Hansemann Cabinet, who worked out a "bold" project for "abolishing feudal services," professedly "without compensation," but which in fact abolished only the minor and unimportant services while preserving or granting compensation for the more substantial ones. Mr. Gierke was somewhat like the Russian Messrs. Kablukovs, Manuilovs, Hertzensteins, and similar bourgeois-liberal friends of the *muzhik*, who desire the "extension of peasant land ownership" but do not wish to offend the landlords.

## THE BOURGEOIS REPRESENTATION OF DICTATORSHIP 133

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

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

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

Making corresponding allowances for the concrete national peculiarities and substituting serfdom for feudalism, all these propositions will be fully applicable to Russia of 1905. There is no doubt that by learning from the experience of Germany as elucidated by Marx, we cannot adopt any other slogan for a decisive victory of the revolution, except the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. There is no doubt that the main constituent parts of the "people," whom Marx in 1848 contrasted with the resisting reaction and the treacherous bourgeoisie, are the proletariat and the peasantry. Undoubtedly, in Russia too, the liberal bourgeoisie and the gentlemen of *Osvobozhdeniye* are betraying and will betray the peasantry, i.e., they will confine themselves to a pseudo reform, and will take the side of the landlords in the decisive struggle between them and the peasantry. Only the proletariat is capable of supporting the peasantry to the end in this struggle. There is no doubt, finally, that in Russia the success of the peasant struggle, i.e., the transfer of the whole of the land to the peasantry, will signify a complete democratic revolution and form the social support of the revolution carried to its end, but it will by no means signify a socialist revolution, or "socialisation," which is talked about by the ideologists of the petty bourgeoisie—the Socialist-Revolutionaries. The success of the peasant uprising, the victory of the democratic revolution will but clear the way for a genuine

and decisive struggle for socialism on the basis of a democratic republic. In this struggle the peasantry, as a landowning class, will play the same treacherous vacillating part as that played at present by the bourgeoisie in its struggle for democracy. To forget this means to forget socialism, to delude oneself and to deceive others with regard to the real interests and tasks of the proletariat.

In order not to leave any gaps in the presentation of the views held by Marx in 1848, it is necessary to note one substantial difference between German Social-Democracy of that time (or the Communist Party of the Proletariat, as it was called) and present-day Russian Social-Democracy. Let us quote Mehring:

"*Die Neue Rheinische Zeitung* appeared on the political arena as the 'organ of democracy.' And although an unmistakably red thread ran through all its articles it directly defended the interests of the bourgeois revolution against absolutism and feudalism more than the interests of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. You will find very little material in its columns about the separate labour movement during the revolution, although one should not forget that along with it there appeared twice a week, under the editorship of Moll and Schapper, a special organ of the Cologne Labour League. In any case the reader of to-day will immediately notice how slight was the attention paid by the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* to the German labour movement of its day, although its most capable representative, Stephan Born, was a pupil of Marx and Engels in Paris and Brussels, and in 1848 wrote to their newspaper in Berlin. Born mentions in his *Memoirs* that Marx and Engels never in the slightest degree expressed their disapproval of his agitation among the workers. But the subsequent declarations of Engels render probable the supposition that they were dissatisfied, at least with the methods of this agitation. Their dissatisfaction was well founded in so far as Born was forced to make many concessions to the proletariat, whose class consciousness was as yet entirely undeveloped in the greater part of Germany, concessions which could not stand the test of criticism from the standpoint of the Communist Manifesto. Their dissatisfaction was unfounded—in so far as Born managed none the less to keep up the agitation conducted by him on a relatively high plane. . . . No doubt Marx and Engels were historically and politically right when they thought that the working class was above all interested in pushing the bourgeois revolution as far as possible. . . . Nevertheless, remarkable proof of how the elementary instinct of the labour movement is able to correct the conceptions of the most brilliant thinkers is provided by the fact that in April 1849, they expressed themselves in favour of a specific workers' organisation and of participation in the labour congress, which was being prepared especially by the East Elba (East Prussia) proletariat."

Thus it was only in April 1849, after the revolutionary newspaper had been published for almost a year (*Die Neue Rheinische Zeitung* made its first appearance on June 1, 1848), that Marx and Engels declared themselves in favour of a special workers' organisation! Until then they were merely running an "organ of democracy" un-

connected by any organisational ties with an independent workers' party! This fact—monstrous and incredible from our present-day standpoint—clearly shows us what an enormous difference there was between the German workers' party of those days and the present Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. This fact shows also how much less the proletarian features of the movement, its proletarian current, were in evidence in the German democratic revolution (because of the backwardness of Germany—its disintegration in 1848 both in the economic and political fields). This should not be forgotten in evaluating the declarations which Marx repeatedly made during this period and a little later about the need for independently organising a proletarian party. Marx drew this practical conclusion only as a result of the experience of the democratic revolution almost a year later: so philistine and petty-bourgeois was the whole atmosphere in Germany then. This conclusion is to us an old and solid acquisition of half a century's experience of international Social-Democracy—an acquisition with which we *started* to organise the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. In our case it is absolutely impossible for revolutionary proletarian papers to keep outside the pale of the Social-Democratic Party of the proletariat, or for them to appear even once simply as "organs of democracy."

But the contrast which only began to reveal itself between Marx and Stephan Born exists in our case in a form which is the more developed, the more powerfully the proletarian current manifests itself in the democratic stream of our revolution. Speaking of the probable dissatisfaction of Marx and Engels with the agitation conducted by Stephan Born, Mehring expresses himself too mildly and too evasively. This is what Engels wrote about Born in 1885 (in the preface to the *Enthüllungen über den Kommunistenprozess zu Köln, Zürich, 1885*.<sup>1</sup>

The members of the Communist League stood everywhere at the head of the extreme democratic movement, proving thereby that the League was an excellent school of revolutionary activity.

"Stephan Born, a compositor, who was an active member of the League in Brussels and Paris, founded in Berlin a 'Workers' Brotherhood' (*Arbeiter-Verbrüderung*) which had a considerable following and lasted until 1850. Born, a highly talented young man, was, however, in too great a hurry to come forward as a public man. He 'fraternised' with a very motley crew (Krethi and

<sup>1</sup> *Revelations about the Trial of the Communists at Cologne, Zurich, 1885, —Ed.*

Plethi), in order to gather a crowd of people around himself. He was by no means the man to introduce unity into discordant tendencies, to bring light into chaos. Therefore, in the official publications of this Brotherhood one constantly came across a muddle and a confusion of the views of the *Communist Manifesto* with guild reminiscences and aspirations, with fragments of the views of Louis Blanc and Proudhon, with an apology of protectionism, etc.—in fine, these people wanted to be all things to all men (*Allen Alles sein*). They were especially engaged in organising strikes, trade unions, producers' associations, forgetting that first of all it was necessary by means of political victories to win the ground upon which alone such things may be made durable" (italics ours). "And when the victories of reaction forced the leaders of this Brotherhood to realise the need for taking a direct part in the revolutionary struggle—they were, of course, deserted by the confused masses, which hitherto had surrounded them. Born took part in the Dresden uprising in May 1849 and had a lucky escape. The Workers' Brotherhood, on the other hand, kept aloof from the great political movement of the proletariat, as an isolated body which existed mainly on paper and which played such a secondary role that the reaction deemed it necessary to close it only in 1850, and its branches even several years later. Born, whose real name was *Buttermilch* (*buttermilk*), did not after all become a public man, but became an unimportant Swiss professor, who instead of translating Marx into guild language is translating the kind-hearted Renan into sentimental German."

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

Our new *Iskra*-ists are also bent on "Economism" and with such unreasonable zeal as to earn the praises of the monarchist bourgeoisie for their "enlightenment." They too collect round themselves a motley crowd, by flattering the "Economists," by demagogically attracting the unconscious masses with the slogans of "self-activity," "democracy," "autonomy," etc., etc. Their labour unions, too, often exist only on the pages of the braggart new *Iskra*.<sup>1</sup> Their slogans and resolutions display an equal lack of comprehension of the tasks of the "great political movement of the proletariat."

Written in 1905.

<sup>1</sup> Literally in the Russian "the Khlestakov new *Iskra*." Khlestakov is a character in Gogol's comedy, *The Inspector General*, who is presented as a liar and braggart.—Ed.

## KARL MARX THE UTOPIAN AND ROSA LUXEMBURG THE PRACTICAL

(From the Article: *The Right of Nations to Self-Determination*)

WHILE declaring the independence of Poland to be a utopia and repeating it *ad nauseam*, Rosa Luxemburg exclaims ironically: Why not raise the demand for the independence of Ireland?

It is obvious that the "practical" Rosa Luxemburg is unaware of Karl Marx's attitude to the question of the independence of Ireland. It is worth while dwelling upon this, in order to give an analysis of the *concrete* demand for national independence from a really Marxist and not an opportunist standpoint.

Marx had a habit of "sounding," as he expressed himself, his Socialist acquaintances, verifying their consciousness and force of convictions. Having made the acquaintance of Lopatin, Marx wrote to Engels on July 5 (June 22), 1870, and expressed a highly flattering opinion of the young Russian Socialist, but added, at the same time:

"... *Poland* is his weak point. On this point he speaks quite like an Englishman—say an English Chartist of the old school—about Ireland."

Marx asks a Socialist belonging to the oppressing nation of his attitude to the oppressed nation and he at once reveals the defect common to the Socialists of the dominant nations (the British and the Russian): they fail to understand their Socialist duties towards the downtrodden nations, they chew the cud of prejudices, borrowed from the bourgeoisie of the "Great Powers."

It must be pointed out, before passing on to the positive declarations of Marx on Ireland, that in general the attitude of Marx and Engels to the national question was strictly critical, and they recognised its historical relativity. Thus, Engels wrote to Marx on May 23, 1851, that the study of history leads him to pessimistic conclusions in relation to Poland, that the importance of Poland is temporary, only until the agrarian revolution in Russia. The role of the Poles was one of "brave stupidity."

"And one cannot point to a single instance in which Poland represented progress successfully, even if only in relation to Russia, or did anything at

all of historic importance." Russia contains more elements of civilisation, education, industry and of the bourgeoisie than the "Poles whose nature is that of the idle cavalier.... What are Warsaw, and Cracow compared to St. Petersburg, Moscow, Odessa, etc.!"

Engels had no faith in the success of an uprising of the Polish nobles.

But all these thoughts, so full of genius and penetration, by no means prevented Engels and Marx from treating the Polish movement with the most profound and ardent sympathy twelve years afterwards, when Russia was still asleep and Poland was seething.

When drafting the Address of the International in 1864, Marx writes to Engels (on November 4, 1864) that the nationalism of Mazzini has to be fought. Marx writes: "In so far as international politics come into the Address I speak of countries, not nationalities, and denounce Russia, not the *minores gentium*" (the minor people). Marx had no doubt as to the subordinate position of the national question as compared with the "labour question." But his theory is as far from ignoring the national question as heaven from earth.

1866 arrives. Marx writes to Engels about the "Proudhonist clique" in Paris, which "declares nationalities to be an absurdity and attacks Bismarck and Garibaldi. As polemics against chauvinism their tactics are useful and explainable. But when the believers in Proudhon (my good friends here, Lafargue and Longuet, also belong to them) think that all Europe can and should sit quietly and peacefully on their hindquarters until the gentlemen from France abolish *la misère de l'ignorance* . . . they become ridiculous." (Letter of June 7, 1866.)

"Yesterday," Marx writes on June 20, 1866, "there was a discussion in the International Council<sup>1</sup> on the present war.... The discussion wound up, as was to be expected, with the question of 'nationality' in general and the attitude we should take towards it.... The representatives of 'Young France' (non-workers) came out with the argument that all nationalities and even nations were 'antiquated prejudices.' Proudhonised Stirnerism . . . the whole world waits until the French are ripe for a social revolution.... The English laughed very much when I began my speech by saying that our friend Lafargue, etc., who had done away with nationalities, had spoken 'French' to us, i.e., a language which nine-tenths of the audience did not understand. I also suggested that by the negation of nationalities he appeared, quite unconsciously, to understand their absorption into the model French nation."

The conclusion that follows from all these critical remarks of Marx is clear: The working class should be the last to make a fetish

<sup>1</sup> The Council of the First International of which Marx was leader.—Ed.

of the national question, since the development of capitalism does not necessarily awaken *all* nations to independent life. But to brush aside the mass national movements once they have started and to refuse to support what is progressive in them means, in effect, to pander to *nationalistic* prejudices, and namely to recognise "one's own as the model nation" (or, we will add on our part, as the nation possessing the exclusive privilege of building up a state).<sup>1</sup>

But let us return to the question of Ireland.

Marx's position on this question is most clearly expressed in the following extracts from his letters:

"I have done my best to bring about this demonstration of the British workers in favour of Fenianism.... I used to consider the separation of Ireland from England impossible. I now consider it inevitable, although after separation there may come *federation*."

This is how Marx wrote to Engels on November 2, 1867.

In his letter of November 30 of the same year, he added:

"...what shall we advise the *English* workers? In my opinion they must make the *repeal of the Union*" (i.e., the separation of Ireland from Great Britain) "(in short, the affair of 1783, only democratised and adapted to the conditions of the time) into an article of their *pronunziamento*. This is the only *legal* and therefore only possible form of Irish emancipation which can be admitted in the programme of an *English* party. Experience must show later whether a purely personal union can continue to subsist between the two countries....

"What the Irish need is:

"1) Self-government and independence from England;

"2) An agrarian revolution. . . ."

Marx attached such great importance to the question of Ireland that he delivered lectures of one and a half hour's duration at the German Workers' Union on this subject (letter of December 17, 1867).

Engels notes in a letter of November 20, 1868, "the hatred for the Irish on the part of the British workers," and almost a year afterwards (October 24, 1869), returning to this question he writes:

"*Il n'y a qu'un pas*" (it is only one step) "from Ireland to Russia.... The example of "Irish history shows one how disastrous it is for a nation when it has subjugated another nation. All the abominations of the English have their origin in the Irish Pale. I have still to work through (*ochsen*) the

<sup>1</sup> Compare also Marx's letter to Engels of June 3, 1867. "... I have learned with real pleasure from the Paris letters to the Times about the pro-Polish sentiments of the Parisians as against Russia.... Proudhon and his little doctrinaire clique are not the French people."

Cromwellian period, but this much seems certain to me, that things would have taken another turn in England but for the necessity in Ireland of military rule and the creation of a new aristocracy."

Let us note, by the way, Marx's letter to Engels of August 18, 1869:

"In Posen... the Polish workers... have brought a strike to a victorious end by the help of their colleagues in Berlin: This struggle against Monsieur le Capital even in the subordinate form of the strike—is a very different way of getting rid of national prejudices from that of the bourgeois gentlemen with their peace declamations."

The policy on the Irish question pursued by Marx in the International may be seen from the following:

On November 18, 1869, Marx writes to Engels that he spoke for one and a quarter hours in the Council of the International on the question of the attitude of the British Ministry to the Irish amnesty and proposed the following resolution:

"Resolved,

"that in his reply to the Irish demands for the release of the imprisoned Irish patriots—a reply, contained in his letter to Mr. O'Shea, etc.,—Mr. Gladstone deliberately insults the Irish nation;

"that he clogs political amnesty with conditions alike degrading to the victims of misgovernment and the people they belong to;

"that having, in the teeth of his responsible position, publicly and enthusiastically cheered on the American slaveholders' rebellion, he now steps in to preach to the Irish people the doctrine of passive obedience;

"that his whole proceedings with reference to the Irish amnesty question are the true and genuine offspring of that 'policy of conquest,' by the fiery denunciation of which Mr. Gladstone ousted his Tory rivals from office;

"that the General Council of the International Workingmen's Association express their admiration of the spirited, firm and high-souled manner in which the Irish people carry on their amnesty movement;

"that these resolutions be communicated to all branches of and workingmen's bodies connected with the International Workingmen's Association in Europe and America."

On December 10, 1869, Marx writes that his report on the Irish question to be submitted to the Council of the International will be framed on the following lines:

"... quite apart from all phrases about 'international' and 'humane' justice for Ireland—which are to be taken for granted in the International Council—it is in the direct and absolute interest of the English working class to get rid of their present connection with Ireland. And this is my most complete conviction, and for reasons which in part I cannot tell the English workers themselves. For a long time I believed that it would be possible to overthrow the Irish regime by English working class ascendancy. I always expressed this point of view in *The New York Tribune* [an American journal to which Marx contributed]. Deeper study has now convinced me of the opposite. The

English working class will *never accomplish anything* before it has got rid of Ireland.... English reaction in England had its roots... in the subjugation of Ireland." (Marx's emphasis.)

The policy of Marx on the Irish question should now be quite clear to the readers.

Marx, the "utopian," is so "impractical" that he stands for the separation of Ireland, which has not been realised even half a century afterwards.

What gave rise to this policy of Marx, and was it not a mistake?

In the beginning, Marx thought that it was not the national movement of the oppressed nation, but the labour movement of the oppressing nation that would emancipate Ireland. Marx makes no absolute of the national movement, knowing, as he does, that only the victory of the working class can bring about the complete emancipation of all nationalities. It is impossible to estimate beforehand all the possible correlations between the bourgeois emancipation movements of the oppressed nations and the proletarian emancipation movement of the oppressing nation (the very problem which to-day makes the national question so difficult in Russia).

However, matters turned out so that the British working class fell under the influence of the Liberals for a fairly long time, became their tail end and by adopting a Liberal-Labour policy beheaded itself. The bourgeois movement of emancipation in Ireland grew stronger and assumed revolutionary forms. Marx reconsidered his view and corrected it. "How disastrous it is for a nation when it has subjugated another nation." The working class of Great Britain cannot possibly emancipate itself before Ireland is liberated from the British yoke. Reaction in Great Britain is strengthened and fed by the enslavement of a number of nations!).

And Marx, piloting in the International a resolution of sympathy with the "Irish nation" and the "Irish people" (the clever L. VI. would probably have rated poor Marx for forgetting about the class struggle!), preaches the *separation* of Ireland from Great Britain, "although after separation there may come federation."

What are the theoretical grounds for this conclusion of Marx? The bourgeois revolution has in the main long since been completed in Great Britain. But it has not yet been completed in Ireland; it is being completed now, after the lapse of half a century, by the reforms of the British Liberals. If capitalism in Great Britain had

been overthrown as quickly as Marx at first expected, there would have been no place for a bourgeois-democratic and general national movement in Ireland. But once it arose, Marx advises the British workers to support it, to give it a revolutionary impulse and lead it to a final issue in the interests of *its own* liberty.

The economic ties between Ireland and England in the sixties of last century were of course even closer than the ties of Russia with Poland, Ukraine, etc. The "impracticability" and "impossibility of realising" the separation of Ireland (if only owing to geographical conditions and the immense colonial power of Great Britain) were quite obvious. While, in principle, an enemy of federalism, Marx in this instance agrees also to federation,<sup>1</sup> only that the emancipation of Ireland should come about in a revolutionary and not in a reformist way, through the movement of the mass of the people of Ireland supported by the working class of England. There can be no doubt that only such a solution of the historical problem will most further the interests of the proletariat and the pace of social development.

It turned out differently. Both the Irish people and the British proletariat proved feeble. Only now, through the miserable deals between the English Liberals and Irish bourgeoisie, is the Irish question being solved (the example of Ulster shows with what difficulty) through the land reform (with compensation) and autonomy (not introduced so far). Well then? Does it follow that Marx and Engels were "utopians," that they put forward national demands impossible of realisation, that they allowed themselves to be influenced by the Irish petty-bourgeois nationalists (there is no doubt about the petty-bourgeois nature of the Fenians), etc.?

No. Marx and Engels pursued also in the Irish question a consistently proletarian policy, which really educated the masses in the

<sup>1</sup> By the way, it is not difficult to see why, from a social-democratic point of view, *neither* federation nor autonomy is to be implied by the right of "self-determination." (Although, speaking in the abstract, the one and the other fall under self-determination.) The right to federation is, in general, an absurdity, since federation is a two-sided contract. It goes without saying that Marxists in general cannot place the defence of federalism in their programme. As far as autonomy is concerned, Marxists defend not the right to autonomy but autonomy *itself*, as a general, universal principle of a democratic state with a diverse national composition, with sharp differences in the geographical and other conditions. Consequently the recognition of the "right of nations to autonomy" is as absurd as the "right of nations to federation."

spirit of democracy and socialism. Only such a policy could have saved both Ireland and England from half a century of delay of the necessary reforms and from their being mutilated by the Liberals to please the reactionaries.

The policy of Marx and Engels in the Irish question serves as the greatest example (an example which retains its tremendous *practical* importance up to the present time) of the attitude which the proletariat of the dominating nations should adopt towards national movements. It serves as a warning against that "servile haste," with which the philistines of all countries, colours and languages hurry to declare as "utopian," all changes in the frontiers of states established by the violence and privileges of the landlords and bourgeoisie of one nation.

If the Irish and British proletariat had not accepted the policy of Marx and had not put forward the slogans of the separation of Ireland—that would have been the worst opportunism on their part, the forgetfulness of the tasks of democrats and socialists, a concession to *British* reaction and to the *British* bourgeoisie.

Published in 1914.



## MARXISM AND PROUDHONISM ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION

(From the Theses: *The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination*)

In contrast to the petty-bourgeois democrats, Marx regarded all democratic demands without exception not as an absolute, but as an historic expression of the struggle of the masses of the people, led by the bourgeoisie against feudalism. There is not a single democratic demand which could not serve and has not served, under certain conditions, as an instrument of the bourgeoisie for deceiving the workers. To single out one of the demands of political democracy, namely, the self-determination of nations, and to oppose it to all the rest in this respect is fundamentally wrong in theory. In practice, the proletariat will be able to retain its independence only if it subordinates its struggle for all the democratic demands, not excluding the demand for a republic, to its revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie.

On the other hand, in contrast to the Proudhonists who "denied" the national problem "in the name of the social revolution," Marx, having in mind mainly the interests of the proletarian class struggle in the advanced countries, put into the foreground the fundamental principle of internationalism and socialism, *viz.*, no nation can be free if it oppresses other nations. It was precisely from the standpoint of the interests of the revolutionary movement of the German workers that Marx, in 1848, demanded that victorious democracy in Germany should proclaim and grant freedom to the nations that the Germans were oppressing. It was precisely from the standpoint of the revolutionary struggle of the English workers that Marx in 1869 demanded the separation of Ireland from England, and added: "Although after separation there may come federation." Only by putting forward this demand did Marx really educate the English workers in the spirit of internationalism. Only in this way was he able to oppose the revolutionary solution of a given historic

task to the opportunists and bourgeois reformism which even now, half a century later, has failed to achieve the Irish reform." Only in this way was Marx able—unlike the apologists of capital, who shout about the right of small nations to secession being utopian and impossible and about the progressive nature not only of economic but also of political concentration—to urge the progressive nature of this concentration in a *non-imperialist* manner, to urge the bringing together of the nations not by force, but on the basis of a free union of the proletarians of all countries. Only in this way was Marx able *also* in the sphere of national questions to oppose the revolutionary action of the masses to the merely verbal and often hypocritical recognition of the equality and self-determination of nations. The imperialist war of 1914-16 and the Augean stables of hypocrisy of the opportunists and Kautskyists it exposed have strikingly confirmed the correctness of Marx's policy which must serve as the model for all the advanced countries; for all of them now oppress other nations.<sup>1</sup>

Written in the beginning of March 1916.

<sup>1</sup> Reference is often made—recently, for instance, by the German chauvinist Lentsch (in *Die Glocke* [*The Bell*], No. 8-9)—to the fact that Marx's hostility to the national movement of certain peoples, for example, the Czechs in 1848, refutes the necessity of recognising the self-determination of nations from the point of view of Marxism. This is incorrect, for in 1848 there were historical and political grounds for drawing a distinction between "reactionary" and revolutionary-democratic nations. Marx was right when he condemned the former and defended the latter. The right to self-determination is one of the demands of democracy which must naturally be subordinated to the general interests of democracy. In 1848 and subsequent years, those general interests were concentrated primarily in the struggle against tsarism.



## MARXISM OR PROUDHONISM

(From the Article: *Discussion on Self-Determination Summed up*)

QUITE as an exception, our Polish comrades parry our reference to Marx's attitude towards the separation of Ireland, not by inference, but directly. What is their objection? Reference to the position Marx held from 1848 to 1871, they say, is "not of the slightest value." The argument advanced in support of this unusually angry and positive assertion is that Marx "at the same time" expressed his opposition to the strivings of the "Czechs, South Slavs, etc.," towards independence.

The argument is advanced in a particularly angry tone precisely because it is particularly unsound. According to the Polish Marxists, Marx was simply a muddlehead who "at one and the same time" said contradictory things! This is altogether untrue, and it is altogether un-Marxian. The "concrete" analysis which our Polish comrades demand, *but do not themselves apply*, makes it necessary for us to investigate whether the different attitudes Marx adopted towards different, concrete, national movements did not spring from one and the same socialist philosophy.

As is generally known, Marx was in favour of Polish independence in the interests of *European* democracy in its struggle against the power and influence—we may say the omnipotence and predominating reactionary influence—of tsarism. That this attitude was correct was most clearly confirmed in practice in 1849, when the Russian serf army crushed the revolutionary-democratic rebellion for national liberation in Hungary. From that time to Marx's death, and even later, until 1890, when there was a danger of tsarism allied with France waging a reactionary war against *non-imperialist* and nationally independent Germany, Engels stood first and foremost for a struggle against tsarism. It was for this, and no other reason, that Marx and Engels were opposed to the national movement of the Czechs and South Slavs. A cursory perusal of the writings of Marx and Engels during the years 1848-49 will prove to anyone

who is really interested in Marxism, and not just in waving it aside, that Marx and Engels drew a definite distinction between "wholly reactionary peoples" serving as "Russian outposts in Europe," and "revolutionary peoples," namely, the Germans, Poles and Magyars. This is a fact. And this fact was *incontrovertibly* indicated *at the time*: in 1848 a revolutionary people fought for liberty, of which the principal enemy was tsarism, whereas the Czechs, etc., were really reactionary nations, the outposts of tsarism.

What is the lesson to be drawn from this *concrete* example, which must be analysed *concretely* if one wishes to be true to Marxism? Only this: 1) that the interests of the liberation of a number of big and very big nations of Europe are higher than the interests of the movements for liberation of small nations; 2) that the demand for democracy must be applied not isolatedly, but on a European—today we should say a world—scale.

That is all. There is not a hint in this of repudiation of the elementary socialist principle, which the Poles are forgetting, but to which Marx was *always* true, namely, that no nation can be free if it oppresses other nations. If the concrete situation which confronted Marx in the period when tsarist influence was predominant in international politics were to repeat itself in the form, for instance, that a number of nations were to start a socialist revolution (as the bourgeois-democratic revolution was started in Europe in 1848), and if *other* nations were found to be serving as the main bulwarks of bourgeois reaction—then we would be in favour of a revolutionary war against the latter, in favour of "crushing" them, destroying all their outposts, no matter what small national movements arose. Consequently we must not by any means reject examples of Marx's tactics—this would mean professing Marxism in words while rejecting it in practice—but analyse them concretely in order to draw from them invaluable lessons for the future. The various demands of democracy including self-determination are not an absolute, they are a *particle* of the general democratic (at present general socialist) *world* movement. In individual concrete cases, a particle may contradict the whole; if it does, then it must be rejected. The republican movement in one country may be merely a weapon in the hands of clerical or financial and monarchical intrigue of other countries; if so, we must *not* support this particular concrete movement. But it would be ridiculous on these

grounds to delete the slogan of a republic from the programme of international Social-Democracy.

In what way has the concrete situation changed from 1848-71 to 1898-1916? (I take the most important landmarks of imperialism as a period, namely, from the Spanish-American imperialist war to the European imperialist war.) Tsarism has obviously and incontrovertibly ceased to be the main bulwark of reaction, first, because it is supported by international finance capital, particularly that of France; second, because of 1905. At that time the system of big national states—the democracies of Europe—was bringing democracy and socialism into the world in spite of tsarism.<sup>1</sup>

Marx and Engels did not live to see the period of imperialism. At the present time a system of a handful of “great” imperialist nations has come into being (five or six in number), each of which oppresses other nations, and this oppression is one of the causes of the artificial retardation of the collapse of capitalism, of artificial support of opportunism and social-chauvinism in the imperialist nations which dominated the world. At that time, West European democracy which had liberated the big nations, was opposed to tsarism, which manipulated certain small national movements for reactionary ends. At the present time an *alliance* of tsarist imperialism with advanced capitalist European imperialism on the basis of their general oppression of a number of nations confronts the socialist proletariat whose ranks are split into a chauvinist, “social-imperialist” section and a revolutionary section.

These are the concrete changes that have taken place in the situation, which the Polish Social-Democrats ignore in spite of their promise to be concrete! From this logically follows the need for a concrete change in the *application* of the unchanged socialist principles: *then* the first thing was “against tsarism” (and against certain

<sup>1</sup> Ryazanov published in Grünberg's *Archives of the History of Socialism* (1915, I) a very interesting article by Engels on the Polish question written in 1866. Engels emphasises the necessity for the proletariat to recognise the political independence and “self-determination” (right to dispose of itself) of the great nations of Europe. He points out the absurdity of the “principle of nationalities” (particularly in its Bonapartist application), i.e., of putting any of the small nations on a level with these big ones. “Russia,” says Engels, “possesses an enormous amount of stolen property” (i.e., oppressed nations) “which she will have to return on the day of reckoning.” Both Bonapartism and tsarism take advantage of this national movement of small nations for their own benefit against European democracy.

small national movements that were being manipulated for anti-democratic purposes) and *for* the big-nation revolutionary peoples of the West. *Now* it is against the united, straightened front of the imperialist nations, of the imperialist bourgeoisie, of the social imperialists, and *for* utilising *all* national movements against imperialism for the purposes of the socialist revolution. The *purser* the proletarian struggle against a general imperialist front becomes at the present time, the more urgent becomes the internationalist principle: “No nation can be free if it oppresses other nations.”

The Proudhonists, *in the name* of the doctrinal conception of the social revolution, ignored the international role of Poland and turned their backs on national movements. The attitude of the Polish Social-Democrats is equally doctrinaire, for they *break up* the international front of struggle against the social-imperialists, they (objectively) help the latter by vacillating in the question of annexations. It is precisely the international front of proletarian struggle that has changed in relation to the concrete position of the small nations; then (1848-71) the small nations were important as potential allies, either of “Western democracy” and the revolutionary nations, or of tsarism; now (1898-1914) the small nations have lost that significance; their significance now lies in that they are sources fostering the parasitism and consequently the social imperialism of the “Great Power” nations. The important thing is not the question as to whether one-fiftieth or one-hundredth part of the small nations will be liberated before the socialist revolution, but the fact that in the epoch of imperialism, owing to objective causes, the proletariat has been split up into two international camps, one of which is corrupted by the crumbs which fall from the table of the bourgeoisie of the Great Powers—obtained, among other sources, from the two-fold or threefold exploitation of small nations—while the other cannot free itself without freeing the small nations, without educating the masses in an anti-chauvinist, i.e., anti-annexationist, i.e., “self-determinationist,” spirit.

Our Polish comrades ignore this most important aspect of the question; they do *not* view things from the central position in the epoch of imperialism, they do not consider them from the point of view of the division of the international proletariat into two camps.

Here are a few more concrete examples of their Proudhonism:

1) the attitude towards the Irish rebellion in 1916, of which we

shall speak later; 2) the declaration contained in the theses (II, 3 at the end of § 3), to the effect that the slogan of the socialist revolution "must not be covered up by anything." To think that the slogan of the socialist revolution can be "covered up" by being *combined* with a consistently revolutionary position on every question, including the national question, is certainly profoundly un-Marxian.

The Polish Social-Democrats are of the opinion that our programme is a "national-reformist" programme. Compare the two practical proposals: 1) for autonomy (Polish theses, III, 4), and 2) for the right of secession. It is here, and here alone, that our programmes differ! And is it not evident that it is the first proposal that is reformist and not the second? A reformist change is one that leaves the foundations of the power of the ruling class intact, a mere concession by the ruling class that leaves its power unimpaired. A revolutionary change undermines the foundations of power. A reformist change in the national programme does *not* abolish *all* the privileges of the ruling nation; it does *not* establish complete equality; it does *not* abolish *every kind* of national oppression. The "autonomous" nation does not possess equal rights with the "ruling" nation; our Polish comrades could not have failed to note this had they not obstinately avoided (like our old "Economists"<sup>1</sup>) an analysis of *political* terms and categories. Prior to 1905, autonomous Norway, as a part of Sweden, enjoyed the widest autonomy, but it did not enjoy equality with Sweden. Only by its free secession was its equality manifested and proved (and we will add in parenthesis that this free secession created a foundation for a more intimate and more democratic rapprochement, based on equal rights). As long as Norway was merely autonomous, the Swedish aristocracy had *one* additional privilege; and this privilege was not "mitigated" by secession (the essence of reformism is that it mitigates an evil, but does not remove it) but *entirely* removed (the principal criterion of the revolutionary character of a programme).

We must note, in passing, that autonomy as a reform, differs in

<sup>1</sup> An opportunist current in Russian Social-Democracy, in the nineties of last century, which held that the labour movement should confine itself to the economic struggle leaving politics to the liberals. They proved the forerunners of the Mensheviks.—Ed.

principle from the freedom of secession as a revolutionary measure. This goes without saying. But as everyone knows, in practice a reform is often merely a step towards revolution. Autonomy enables a nation which is forcibly retained within the boundaries of a given state to establish itself completely as a nation, to gather, to ascertain and organise its forces, to select the most opportune moment for *declaring* . . . in the "Norwegian" spirit: "We, the autonomous Parliament of this or that nation, or of this or that territory, declare that the emperor of all the Russias has ceased to be king of Poland, etc." To this the "objection" is usually that such questions are decided by wars, and not by declarations. It is true that in an overwhelming majority of cases they are decided by wars (just as the question of the forms of government of big states are in an overwhelming majority of cases decided only by wars and revolutions). However, it would do no harm to reflect: are such "objections" to the political programme of a revolutionary party logical? Are we opposed to wars and revolution for what is just and beneficial for the proletariat, for democracy and socialism?

"But we cannot be in favour of a war between the great nations, in favour of slaughtering twenty million people for the problematic liberation of a small nation with a population of perhaps ten or twenty millions!" No, of course we cannot! But not because we throw out of our programme complete national equality, but because the interests of the democracy of *one* country must be subordinated to the interests of the democracy of *several* and of *all* countries. Suppose that between two great monarchies there is a small kingdom whose king is "bound" by ties of blood, and other ties, with the monarchs of both neighbouring countries. Let us further suppose that the declaration of a republic in the small country, and the expulsion of *its* king, would inevitably lead to war between the two neighbouring great nations for the purpose of restoring some monarch or other to the small country. There is no doubt that under these circumstances the whole of international Social-Democracy, as well as the really internationalist section of Social-Democracy in the small country, *would be opposed to substituting a republic for the monarchy* in that country. The substitution of a republic for a monarchy is not an absolute; it is but one of the democratic demands subordinate to the interests of democracy (and more so, naturally, to the interests of the socialist proletariat) as a whole. In all prob-

ability a case like this would not give rise to the slightest disagreement between Social-Democrats in any country; but if any Social-Democrat were to propose *on these grounds* that the slogan of a republic be deleted from the programme of international Social-Democracy, he would certainly be looked upon as insane. He would be told that the elementary logical difference between the *particular* and the *general* must not be forgotten.

This example brings us, from a somewhat different angle, to the question of the *internationalist* education of the working class. Can this education—about the necessity and enormous importance of which differences of opinion among the Zimmerwald Lefts are unthinkable—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 most intimate friendship and to the subsequent *amalgamation* of *all* nations, obviously proceeds by different roads in each concrete case—in the same way, let us say, as the direction to a point in the middle of this page is towards the left from one side, and towards the right from the other. If a Social-Democrat belonging to a great, oppressing, annexing nation, in advocating the amalgamation of nations in general, were to forget for one moment that “his” Nicholas II, “his” Wilhelm, George, Poincaré, etc., *also stands for amalgamation* with the small nations (by means of annexations)—Nicholas II being for “amalgamation” with Galicia, Wilhelm II for “amalgamation” with Belgium, etc.—such a Social-Democrat would prove to be a ridiculous doctrinaire in theory and an abettor of imperialism in practice.

The weight of emphasis in internationalist education for the workers in the oppressing countries must necessarily be concentrated upon preaching and getting them to demand the right of freedom of secession for the oppressed countries. Without this there is *no* internationalism. It is our right and duty to condemn every Social-Democrat of an oppressing nation who *fails* to conduct such propaganda, as an imperialist and a scoundrel. This is an absolute demand, even if the chance of secession being possible and “feasible” before the introduction of socialism is only one in a thousand.

It is our duty to educate the workers to be “indifferent” to national distinctions. There is no doubt about that. But not in the in-

difference of the *annexationists*. A member of an oppressing nation must be “indifferent” as to whether the small nations according to their sympathies belong to *his* state or to a *neighbouring* state or have one of their own: if he is not “indifferent” on this matter, he is *not* a social-democrat. In order to be an internationalist social-democrat, one must *not* think only of his own nation; he must place the interests of all nations, their liberty and equality, *above* the interest of his own nation. In “theory” everyone agrees with this, in practice, however, the indifference of the annexationists is being manifested. Herein lies the root of the evil.

On the other hand, a Social-Democrat belonging to a small nation must concentrate the weight of his agitation on the *second* word of our general formula: “voluntary *amalgamation*” of nations. Without violating his duties as an internationalist, he may be in favour of *either* the political independence of his nation *or* its inclusion in the neighbouring state XYZ, etc. But in all cases he must fight *against* small-nation narrow-mindedness, insularity and aloofness, he must fight for the recognition of the general and the whole, for subordinating the interests of the particular to the interests of the general.

Those who have not thought over the question thoroughly think there is a “contradiction” in Social-Democrats of oppressing nations demanding the “right of freedom of *secession*” while Social-Democrats of oppressed nations demand the “right to amalgamate.” A little reflection, however, will show that from the existing situation there is not, nor can there be, any *other* road, towards internationalism and amalgamation of nations.

Written in the autumn of 1916.

## ENGELS' LETTER TO KAUTSKY

(From the Article: *Discussion on Self-Determination Summed up*)

In his pamphlet *Socialism and Colonial Politics* (Berlin, 1907), Kautsky, who was then still a Marxist, reproduces a letter written to him by Engels, dated September 12, 1882, which is extremely interesting in connection with the question under discussion. The following is the principal part of that letter:

"... In my opinion, the colonies proper, i.e., the countries occupied by a European population, Canada, the Cape, Australia, will all become independent; on the other hand, the countries which are inhabited by a native population, which are simply subjugated, India, Algiers, the Dutch, Portuguese and Spanish possessions, must be taken over for the time being by the proletariat and led as rapidly as possible towards independence. How this process will develop is difficult to say. India will perhaps, indeed very probably, produce a revolution, and as the proletariat emancipating itself cannot conduct any colonial wars, this would have to be conceded; it would not pass off without all sorts of destruction, of course, but that sort of thing is inseparable from all revolutions. The same might also take place elsewhere, e.g., in Algiers and Egypt, and would certainly be the best thing for us. We shall have enough to do at home. Once Europe is organised, and North America, that will furnish such colossal power and such an example that the semi-civilised countries will follow in their wake of their own accord. Economic needs alone will be responsible for this. But as to what social and political phases these countries will then have to pass through before they likewise arrive at socialist organisation, we to-day can only advance rather idle hypotheses, I think. One thing alone is certain: *the victorious proletariat can force no blessings of any kind upon any foreign nation without undermining its own victory* by so doing. Which, of course, by no means excludes defensive wars of various kinds. . . ."

Engels does not in the least suppose that "the economic element" will by itself and directly remove all difficulties. An economic revolution will stimulate *all* peoples to *reach out* towards socialism; at the same time, however, revolutions—against the socialist state—and wars are also possible. Politics will inevitably adapt themselves to economics, but not immediately, not smoothly, simply, and not directly. Engels is "certain" of only one thoroughly internationalist principle, which he applies to *all* "foreign nations," i.e., not only to colonial peoples, namely: to impose happiness upon them would mean to undermine the victory of the proletariat.

The proletariat will not become holy and immune from error and weaknesses merely by virtue of the fact that it has carried out the social revolution. But the possible errors (and selfish interest—attempts to ride on another's back) will inevitably cause it to appreciate this truth.

We Left Zimmerwaldists are all convinced of what Kautsky, for example, was convinced of before his desertion in 1914 from Marxism to the defence of chauvinism, namely, that the socialist revolution is quite possible in the *very near* future—"overnight," as Kautsky himself once put it. National antipathies will not disappear so quickly: the hatred—perfectly legitimate—of the oppressed nation for its oppressor, will *continue* for a while; it will die down only *after* the final establishment of socialism and *after* the final establishment of completely democratic relations between nations. If we desire to be faithful to socialism we must educate the masses in internationalism now, and such education is impossible in an oppressing nation without the preaching of freedom of secession for the oppressed nations.

Published October 1916.

## A NAME FOR OUR PARTY WHICH WOULD BE SCIENTIFICALLY SOUND AND POLITICALLY CONDUCTIVE TO THE CLARIFICATION OF PROLETARIAN CONSCIOUSNESS

(From: *The Tasks of the Proletariat in our Revolution*)

I AM coming to the last point—the name of our Party. We must call ourselves the Communist Party—just as Marx and Engels called themselves Communists.

We must repeat that we are Marxists and we take as a basis the *Communist Manifesto*, which has been perverted and betrayed by Social-Democracy on two important points: 1) The workers have no country; “national defence” in an imperialist war is a betrayal of socialism; 2) Marx’s teaching about the state has been perverted by the Second International.

The title “Social-Democracy” is *scientifically* wrong, as Marx showed repeatedly, particularly in the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* in 1875, and as Engels restated in a more popular form, in 1894. Mankind can pass directly from capitalism only into socialism, i.e., into social ownership of the means of production and the distribution of products according to the work of the individual. Our Party looks further ahead: socialism is bound sooner or later to ripen into communism, whose banner bears the motto: “From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.”

That is my first reason.

The second: The second part of the title of our Party (Social-Democracy) is equally wrong scientifically. Democracy is only a form of *state*, while we, Marxists, are opposed to any and *every* state.

The leaders of the Second International (1889-1914), Messrs. Plekhanov, Kautsky and their like, vulgarised and distorted Marxism.

The difference between Marxism and anarchism is that Marxism admits the *necessity of the state* for the purpose of passing over from capitalism to socialism; but (and here is where we differ from Kautsky and Co.) *not that kind of state* which manifests itself in the usual parliamentary, bourgeois-democratic republic, but rather

something like the Paris Commune of 1871 and the Soviet of Workers’ Deputies of 1905 and 1917.

My third reason: *Life* and the revolution *have already* established here in a concrete way (although in a form which is still weak and embryonic) precisely this new type of “state” which is not a state in the proper sense of the word.

It is already a question of the action of the masses and not merely a theory of leaders.

Essentially the state is the power exercised over the masses by a group of armed men separated from the people.

Our new state, which is now in process of *being born*, is also a state, for we, too, need detachments of armed men; we, too, need the *strictest* order, and the *ruthless* crushing of all attempts at a tsarist as well as a Guchkov-bourgeois counter-revolution.

But our new state *in the course of formation* is already *not* a state in the proper sense of the word, for the detachments of armed men found in many parts of Russia are the *masses themselves*, the whole people, and not simply privileged individuals, practically unremovable, placed above and separated from the people.

We ought to look forward, not backward; we ought to look away from the usual bourgeois type of democracy which has been strengthening the domination of the bourgeoisie by means of the old, *monarchist* organs of government—the police, the army and the bureaucracy.

We must look forward to the advent of the newly born democracy, which is already ceasing to be a democracy, for democracy means the people’s rule, while, obviously, an armed people could not rule over itself.

The word democracy is not only scientifically wrong when applied to the Communist Party, but now since March 1917, it has simply become a *blinker* placed upon the eyes of the revolutionary people, *preventing* the latter from establishing freely, boldly, and on its own initiative something new: the Soviets of Workers,’ Soldiers,’ etc., Deputies, as the *sole power* in the “state” and as the harbinger of the “withering away” of the state *as such*.

My fourth reason: We must take into account the objective international position of socialism.

Its condition is no longer what it was in the period 1871-1914, when Marx and Engels consciously tolerated the incorrect, oppor-

tunist term "social-democracy." For *then*, right after the defeat of the Paris Commune, history had placed on the order of the day the slow work of organisation and enlightenment. There was nothing else to do. The Anarchists were then (as they are now) not only theoretically but also economically and politically fundamentally in the wrong. The Anarchists made a wrong estimate of the times, for they did not understand the world situation: the worker of England corrupted by imperialist profits; the Paris Commune destroyed; the bourgeois-national movement in Germany just emerged victorious (1871); and semi-feudal Russia still sleeping the sleep of centuries.

Marx and Engels gauged the hour accurately; they understood the international situation; they grasped the tasks of a *slow* approach toward the beginning of the social revolution.

We, in turn, must understand the tasks and the peculiarities of the new epoch. Let us not imitate the lamentable Marxists of whom Marx himself said: "I have sown dragons and I have gathered a harvest of fleas."<sup>1</sup>

The objective needs of capitalism which has grown into imperialism have brought forth the imperialist war. This war has brought mankind *to the brink of a precipice*, to the destruction of all civilisation, the ruin and brutalisation of countless millions of human beings.

There is *no* other way out, except a proletarian revolution.

And just when that revolution is beginning, when it is taking its first timid, weak, unconscious steps, still trusting the bourgeoisie, at that moment the majority (it is the truth, it is a fact) of the "Social-Democratic" leaders, of the "Social-Democratic" parliamentarians, of the "Social-Democratic" papers—and these are precisely *organs* for influencing the masses—the majority of them have *deserted* socialism, have *betrayed* socialism, have gone over to the side of "their" national bourgeoisie.

The masses are distracted, baffled, deceived by *these* leaders.

And should we aid and abet that deception by retaining the old and worn-out Party name, which is as decayed as the Second International?

Granted that "many" workers *understand* social-democracy honestly. It is time that we learn to distinguish between the objective and the subjective.

<sup>1</sup> An expression which Marx borrowed from Heine.—Ed.

Subjectively, these social-democratic workers are the most loyal leaders of the proletarian masses.

Objectively, however, the world situation is such that the old name of our Party *makes it easier* to fool the masses and *retards* their onward march. Everywhere, in every paper, in every parliamentary group, the masses see *leaders*, i.e., people whose voice is heard the loudest, whose acts are very much more in evidence, and all of them are "also Social-Democrats," they are all "for unity" with the betrayers of socialism, the social-chauvinists, and they are all presenting for payment old bills issued by "Social-Democracy." . . .

And what are the arguments against? . . . "One may confuse us with the Anarchist-Communists." . . .

Why are we not afraid that people may confuse us with the Social-Nationalists, the Social-Liberals, the Radical-Socialists, the most advanced, the most adroit bourgeois party in the French republic in deceiving the masses? . . . "The masses have grown used to the name, the workers have learned 'to love' *their* Social-Democratic party." . . .

That is the only argument. Well, but this argument discards the teachings of Marxism, the revolutionary tasks of tomorrow, the objective position of world socialism, the shameful breakdown of the Second International, and the injury done to the practical cause by the pack of "also Social-Democrats" surrounding the proletarians.

This is the argument of routine somnolence, and inertia.

But we want to rebuild the world. We want to end the imperialist World War in which hundreds of millions of people are involved and interests representing billions upon billions of dollars are mixed up, a war which cannot be ended in a truly democratic way without the greatest proletarian revolution in history.

And here we are afraid of our own selves. We stick to our "dear" dirty shirt to which we are "accustomed." . . .

It is time to cast off the dirty shirt, it is time to put on a clean one.

April 10, 1917.

## MARX ON THE CLASS STRUGGLE AND THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT\*

(From: *State and Revolution*)

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. This letter contains, among other things, the following remarkable observation:

"And now as to myself, no credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society nor yet the struggle between them. Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle, and bourgeois economists, the economic anatomy of the classes. What I did that was new was to prove: 1) that the *existence of classes* is only bound up with *particular, historic phases in the development of production* (*historische Entwicklungskämpfe der Produktion*); 2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the *dictatorship of the proletariat*; 3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the *abolition of all classes and to a classless society*."

In these words, Marx succeeded in expressing with striking clearness, first, the chief and concrete difference between his teachings 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, again and again, springs an opportunist distortion of Marxism, a falsification of it so as to make it acceptable to the bourgeoisie. Because 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 even 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 confronted the working class with 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 paying lip service to it.

Present-day opportunism in the person of its chief representative, the former Marxist, K. Kautsky, comes wholly under Marx's description of the *bourgeois* position as quoted above, for this opportunism limits the field of recognition of the class struggle to the sphere of bourgeois relationships. (Within this sphere, inside this framework, no educated liberal will refuse to recognise the class struggle "in principle"!.) Opportunism *does not carry* the recognition of class struggle to the point, essential to the period of *transition* from capitalism to communism, to the period of *overthrowing* and completely abolishing the bourgeoisie. In reality, this period inevitably becomes a period of unusually violent class struggles which take the sharpest possible form and, therefore, the state during this period must inevitably 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 vary exceedingly, 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 abundance and variety of political forms, but the essence will inevitably be the same: *the dictatorship of the proletariat*.

Written in August-September 1917.

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## MARXISM AND INSURRECTION

LETTER TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC  
LABOUR PARTY (BOLSHEVIKI)

ONE of the most malicious and most widespread distortions of Marxism emanating from the leading "Socialist" parties is the opportunist lie that preparation for insurrection, and generally the consideration of insurrection as an art, is "Blanquism."

The leader of opportunism, Bernstein, has already acquired a sad notoriety by accusing Marxism of Blanquism, and the opportunists of to-day who cry "Blanquism!" do not refresh or "enrich" Bernstein's meagre "ideas" in any way.

To accuse Marxists of Blanquism because they consider insurrection an art! Can there be a more glaring distortion of the truth? No Marxist will deny that it was Marx who expressed himself in the most precise and categorical manner on this question having called insurrection precisely an *art*; he declared that one must *win* an initial victory and then go on from success to success, without interrupting the *offensive* against the enemy, profiting by his confusion, etc., etc.

In order to be successful, insurrection must not depend on a conspiracy or on a party, but on the advanced class. That is the first point. Insurrection must depend on the revolutionary rise of the people. That is the second point. Insurrection must rely on such a *turning point* in the history of the growing revolution, when the activity of the advanced ranks of the people is greatest, and the wavering among the enemy and among *the weak and indecisive friends of the revolution is strongest*. That is the third point. It is in these three conditions in the formulation of the question of insurrection that Marxism differs from Blanquism.

But where these conditions exist, it would be a betrayal of Marxism and of the revolution to refuse to consider insurrection as an art.

In order to show that the present moment is exactly the one when the Party is bound to recognise that insurrection has been placed by

the objective march of events on the order of the day and that insurrection is an art, it will, perhaps, be best to employ the comparative method, comparing the days of July 3 and 4, with the days of September.

On July 3 and 4 we might, without sinning against the truth, have formulated the question as follows: it would be more correct to seize power, for even if we did not we would all the same be accused by our enemies of sedition and treated as rebels. However, one could not possibly have concluded from this that power ought to have been seized at that time, since the objective conditions for the triumph of the insurrection were lacking.

1) We had not then on our side the class which represents the advanced guard of the revolution.

We had not then a majority among the workers and soldiers of the capitals. Now we have a majority in the soviets of both capitals. This majority was created *only* by the history of July and August, by the "wholesale repression" of the Bolsheviks and by the experience of the Kornilov mutiny.

2) There was no general revolutionary upsurge of the people at that time. Now after the Kornilov affair that upsurge is here. Events in the provinces, and the taking over of power by the soviets in a number of places are proof of this.

3) At that time there were no *waverings* of a serious political nature on a general scale among our enemies and among the irrevocable petty bourgeoisie; now the waverings are tremendous: our chief enemy, allied and world imperialism—for the "Allies" are at the head of world imperialism—is wavering at this moment between war till victory and a separate peace against Russia. Our petty-bourgeois democrats, who have obviously lost the majority among the people, have wavered tremendously, declining a *bloc*, i.e., a coalition with the Cadets.

4) That is why an insurrection on July 3 and 4 would have been a mistake; neither physically nor politically should we have been able to retain power.

Physically because, notwithstanding the fact that Petrograd was at certain moments in our hands, our workers and soldiers would not have been willing to *fight and die* for the possession of the town; they were not then so "fierce," they were not boiling over with such a furious hatred against the Kerenskys, *as well as* against the Tsere-

telis and the Chernovs; our people were not yet tempered by the persecutions directed with the help of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks against the Bolsheviks.

Politically we should not have been able to retain power on July 3 and 4, since *prior to the Kornilov affair*, the army and the provinces could and would have marched against Petrograd.

Now the picture is quite different.

We have on our side the majority of the *class*, which is the vanguard of the revolution, the vanguard of the people, which is able to carry the masses along with it.

We have on our side the *majority* of the people, for the resignation of Chernov is the clearest and plainest indication, and by far not the only one, that the peasants *will not get the land* from the Socialist-Revolutionary *bloc* (or even from the Socialist-Revolutionaries themselves). And herein lies the root cause of the general, popular character of the revolution.

We have on our side the advantageous position of our Party (which knows firmly its path) amidst the unprecedented waverings of *imperialism* as a whole as well as of the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary *bloc*.

We are *sure of victory* because the people are on the verge of despair, and we have shown them the real way out by demonstrating the value of our leadership in the "Kornilov days"; and further, by *proposing* a compromise to the members of the *bloc*, who *declined our offer*, but who none the less continue their endless waverings.

It would be the greatest error to believe that our proposal of a compromise is not *yet* rejected, that the "Democratic Conference" may *still* accept it. This compromise has been submitted by the *Party* to the other *parties*; it could not be submitted in any other way. The *parties* have rejected it. The Democratic Conference is only a *conference* and nothing more. It must not be forgotten that it does not represent the *majority* of the revolutionary people, the poorest and embittered peasantry. It is a conference of a *minority of the people*. This is an obvious truth that must not be lost sight of. We should be making the greatest mistake, we should be sinking into the most abject parliamentary cretinism if we behaved towards the Democratic Conference as we should towards parliament, for even *if* it proclaims itself a parliament, and a sovereign parliament of the

revolution to boot, it can all the same *decide nothing*, for the decision *does not rest with it*, but with the working class districts of Petrograd and Moscow.

All the objective conditions of a successful insurrection are present. We have on our side the advantages of a situation where *only* our victory in the insurrection will put an end to the waverings which have tired out the people and which are the most painful things imaginable; again, *only* our victory in the insurrection will *frustrate* the gamble with a separate peace against the revolution, it will frustrate it by means of an open proposal for peace which shall be more complete, more just, a peace which will be *to the advantage* of the revolution.

Finally, our Party alone, after gaining victory in the insurrection, *may* be able to save Petrograd. For if our offer of peace is rejected, and we do not even obtain an armistice, *we* shall then become "defencists," we shall put ourselves *at the head of the military parties*, we shall become the *most "military" party* of all, we shall conduct the war in a really revolutionary manner. We shall take away all the bread and all the boots from the capitalists. We shall leave them nothing but crumbs, we shall make them wear bast shoes. We shall send all the bread and all the boots to the front.

And then we shall be able to hold Petrograd.

Russia still has immense material and moral resources for a truly revolutionary war: there are ninety-nine chances out of a hundred that the Germans will grant us at least an armistice. Now, to obtain an armistice at this moment would mean to vanquish the *whole world*.

\* \* \*

Having convinced ourselves that the insurrection of the workers of Petrograd and Moscow is absolutely necessary to save the revolution and to save Russia from a "separate" partition by the imperialists of both coalitions, we must in the first place adapt our political tactics at the Conference to the conditions of the maturing insurrection, and in the second place prove that not only verbally do we accept the idea of Marx as to the necessity of considering insurrection as an art.

We must, at the Conference, immediately proceed to the consolidation of the Bolshevik fraction, without hunting for great numbers, without fearing to leave the waverers in the camp of the waver-

ers; they will be more useful to the cause of the revolution *there* than in the camp of the resolute and devoted fighters.

We must compose a short declaration of the Bolsheviks, emphasizing in the strongest possible manner the inappropriateness of long speeches, the inappropriateness of "speeches" in general, the necessity of immediate action to save the revolution, the absolute necessity of a complete break with the bourgeoisie, of the dismissal of all the members of the present government, a complete break with the Anglo-French imperialists who are preparing a "separate" partition of Russia, the necessity of the immediate transfer of full power to the *revolutionary democracy headed by the revolutionary proletariat*.

Our declaration must represent the briefest and sharpest formulation of this conclusion, connected with the draft planks of a programme: peace to the peoples; land to the peasants; confiscation of scandalous profits; restraining the capitalists from their scandalous work of wrecking industry.

The briefer the declaration, the more trenchant and the better will it be. Only two more most important points should be clearly indicated in this declaration; the people are tired of the waverings; the people are excruciated by the indecision of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks; we break definitely with these *parties*, because they have betrayed the revolution.

The other point: by proposing immediate peace without annexations, by breaking with the allied imperialists and with all the imperialists, we shall obtain at once either an armistice, or the adoption of the defensive point of view by the revolutionary proletariat, and the waging of a truly just, a truly revolutionary war by the revolutionary democracy under its leadership.

After reading this declaration, after calling for *decisions* instead of talk, for *action* instead of drafting resolutions, we must *delegate* all the members of our fraction to the *factories and barracks*: their place is there, there is the nerve centre, the source of salvation of the revolution, the motive power behind the Democratic Conference.

There, in ardent and impassioned speeches we must expound our programme and formulate the question thus: either *complete* acceptance of this programme by the Conference, or insurrection. There is no middle course. To wait is impossible. The revolution perishes. By putting the question thus and concentrating the whole

of our fraction in the factories and barracks, *we shall rightly choose the moment for the beginning of the insurrection*.

And in order to treat the insurrection in the Marxist way, in other words as an art, we must at the same time, without losing a minute, organise a *staff* for the insurrectionary detachments, distribute our forces, move the trustworthy regiments to the most important points, invest the Alexandra Theatre, occupy the Peter and Paul Fortress, arrest the general staff and the government, send against the Cadets and the "savage division" such *detachments* as are ready to sacrifice themselves rather than allow the enemy to penetrate into the centres of the city; we must mobilise the armed workers, summon them to the last desperate fight, occupy from the outset the central telegraph office and telephone exchange, instal *our* insurrectionary staff at the central telephone exchange, set up telephone connections with all the factories, all the regiments, all the points of armed conflict, etc.

All this, indeed, is by way of an example, only to serve as an *illustration* that at the present moment, one cannot possibly remain faithful to Marxism, faithful to the revolution, *unless one treats insurrection as an art*.

Written September 13, 14, 1917.

## ADVICE FROM AN ONLOOKER

I WRITE these lines on October 8, with but little hope that they will reach the comrades at Petrograd by the 9th. It is possible they will arrive too late since the Congress of the Soviets of the North is fixed for October 10. Nevertheless, I shall try to offer my *Advice from an Onlooker* in the anticipation that the expected demonstration of the workers and soldiers of Petrograd and "district" will take place shortly, but has not taken place yet.

All power must pass to the soviets—that is clear. It must similarly be indisputable for all Bolsheviks that the revolutionary proletarian power (or the Bolshevik power, which is now absolutely the same thing) is assured of the most ardent sympathy and the unreserved support of the whole of the workers and exploited masses throughout the world in general, in the belligerent countries in particular, and above all among the Russian peasantry. These truths are too well known and have been proved too long ago to make it worth while dwelling on them.

On the other hand, it is necessary to dwell on something which is not quite clear to all comrades, *viz.*, that the transfer of power to the soviets now implies in practice armed insurrection. This, it would seem, was obvious; but not all have pondered or are pondering over it. To renounce armed insurrection now would mean renouncing the chief watchword of Bolshevism ("All Power to the Soviets"), and also all revolutionary working class internationalism in general.

But armed insurrection is a *special* form of political struggle, subject to special rules which must be attentively studied. Karl Marx expressed this thought with remarkable salience when he said that armed "*insurrection is an art quite as much as war.*"

The principal rules of this art, as laid down by Marx, are as follows:

1) *Never play with insurrection; but, when it is once begun, know firmly that it must be carried through to the end.*

## ADVICE FROM AN ONLOOKER

2) Concentrate, at the decisive place and time, *forces greatly superior* to those of the enemy; otherwise the latter, better prepared and better organised, will defeat and ruin the insurgents.

3) Once the insurrection has begun, it is necessary to act with the greatest *determination*, and, at all costs, on the *offensive*. "The defensive is the death of every armed insurrection."

4) Make sure of taking the enemy by surprise, and seize the moment when his troops are scattered.

5) Endeavour to win successes *each day*, even small ones (one might say "each hour" in the case of one town), and at all costs maintain "*moral ascendancy.*"

Marx summarised the lessons of all revolutions concerning armed insurrections, in the words of Danton, the greatest master of revolutionary policy yet known, "*de l'audace, de l'audace, encore de l'audace!*"<sup>1</sup>

Applied to Russia in October 1917, this means: a simultaneous offensive, as sudden and as rapid as possible, on Petrograd, from within and without, from the working class suburbs and from Finland, Reval and Kronstadt; the advance of *the whole* of the fleet; a concentration of forces which will overwhelmingly preponderate over the 15,000 to 20,000 (and perhaps more) of our "bourgeois guard" (Cadets), our "Vendean troops" (some of the Cossacks), etc. . . .

Combination of our three chief forces: the navy, the workers, and the army units to occupy without fail and hold *at all costs*: (a) the telephone; (b) the telegraph; (c) the railway stations; (d) above all, the bridges.

Picking out the *most resolute* of our elements (our "storm troops" and the *working youth* as well as the best sailors) for the formation of small detachments to occupy all the most important points and to *take part in* all decisive operations, for example:

To encircle and cut off Petrograd; to take possession of it by a combined attack of the navy, the workers, and the troops—a task which requires *art and triple audacity*.

The formation of detachments composed of the best workers, who, armed with rifles and bombs, will march upon and surround the

<sup>1</sup> Audacity, audacity and once again audacity. See F. Engels, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany*, Martin Lawrence, London. p. 100.—Ed.

"centres" of the enemy (Cadet officers' schools, telegraph and telephone offices, etc.). Their watchword should be:

*"Perish to the last man rather than let the enemy pass."*

Let us hope that, in case action is decided upon, the leaders will successfully apply the great precepts of Danton and of Marx.

The triumph of the Russian Revolution, as well as of the world revolution, depends on two or three days' struggle.

Written October 8, 1917.

## MARX ON THE TRANSITION FROM CAPITALISM TO COMMUNISM\*

(CHAPTER V, *State and Revolution*)

### *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 5, 1875, not printed until 1891 in the *Neue Zeit*, IX-1, and in a special Russian edition<sup>1</sup>). 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 Marx's letter to Bracke (May 5, 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 statehood 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 obvi-

<sup>1</sup> English translation in *Critique of the Gotha Programme*. Appendix I, pp. 62-64, International Publishers, New York.—Ed.

ously 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, 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* development of *future* communism.

On the basis of what *data* can the future development 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 development 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 capitalist society," he writes, "as it exists in all civilised countries, more or less free from mediæval alloy, more or less modified by the particular historical development of each country and more or less developed. On the contrary the 'contemporary state' changes at every frontier. It is different in the German Empire from what it is in Switzerland, it is different in England from what it is in the U.S.A. 'The contemporary state' is therefore a fiction.

"Nevertheless the different states of the various civilised countries, in spite of their varied diversity of form, all have this much in common, that they stand on the basis of modern bourgeois society, however much one may be more and another less capitalistically developed. They have therefore certain essential characteristics in common. In this sense it is possible to talk of the 'contemporary form of the state' in contrast to the future in which its present root, bourgeois society, will be destroyed.

"The question now arises: what change will the form of the state undergo in communist society? In other words, what social functions will remain then

still in existence analogous to the functions now performed by the state? This question can only be considered scientifically and no nearer approach to the problem can be made by a thousand-times repeated conjunction of the word 'people' and the word 'state' than by the hop of a flea."<sup>1</sup>

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 development, 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 distinct stage or epoch of *transition* from capitalism to communism.

## 2. TRANSITION FROM CAPITALISM TO COMMUNISM

"Between capitalist and communist society," Marx continues, "lies a period of revolutionary transformation from one to the other. There corresponds also to this a political transition period, during which the state can be nothing else than *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*."<sup>2</sup>

This conclusion Marx bases on an analysis of the role played by the proletariat in modern capitalist society, on the data concerning the development of this society, and on the irreconcilability of the 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 conceptions: "to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class" and "to establish 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.

<sup>1</sup> Critique of the Gotha Programme, p. 44.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.—Ed.

In capitalist society, under the conditions most favourable to its development, we have more or less complete democracy in a democratic republic. But this democracy is always hemmed in by the narrow framework of capitalist exploitation, and consequently always remains, 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 "they have no time to bother about democracy," "no time to bother about politics"; 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 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 this is the case with nine-tenths, if not ninety-nine hundredths, of the bourgeois publicists and politicians), 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 his analysis of the experience of the Commune, he said that the oppressed were allowed, once every few years, to decide which particular representative of the oppressing class will represent and repress them in parliament.

But from this capitalist democracy—inevitably narrow, clandestinely 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 onward, *i.e.*, towards communism, comes through the dictatorship of the proletariat, it cannot come 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, 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.*, when 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* owing to the simple fact that, freed from capitalist slavery, from the untold horrors, savagery, absurdities and infamies of capitalist exploitation, people will gradually *become accustomed* to the observation of the elementary rules of social life that have been known for centuries and repeated for thousands of years in all precepts of common life; they will become accustomed to observing them without force, without coercion, without subordination, without the *special apparatus* of coercion 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 the need for *suppression*.

Thus, in capitalist society, we have a democracy that is curtailed, miserable, 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—of 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, through which mankind moves on as slaves, serfs, and wage-slaves.

Again, during the *transition* from capitalism to communism, suppression is *still* necessary; but it is the suppression of a 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 a lower and a higher phase (degree, stage) of communist society.

## 3. FIRST PHASE OF COMMUNIST SOCIETY

In the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Marx refutes in detail the Lassallean 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 management expenses, for schools, hospitals, homes for the aged, and so on.

Instead of the hazy, obscure, general phrase of Lassalle—"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 is a communist society, not as if it had developed on a basis of its own, but on the contrary as it emerges from capitalist society, which is thus in every respect tainted economically, morally and intellectually with the hereditary diseases of the old society from whose womb it is emerging."<sup>1</sup>

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 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.

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 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.

"Given an equal capacity for labour," Marx concludes, "and thence an equal share in the funds for social consumption, the one will in practice receive more than the other, the one will be richer than the other and so forth. To avoid all these inconveniences, rights must be unequal instead of being equal."<sup>2</sup>

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 confuting 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 being 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, including "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 messieurs the bourgeois ideologists.

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 com-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.—Ed.

mon 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 rights" which *continue to rule* as long as the products are divided "according to work performed."

"But these deficiencies," Marx continues, "are unavoidable in the first phase of communist society when it is just emerging after prolonged birthpangs from capitalist society. Right can never be higher than the economic structure and the cultural development of society conditioned by it."<sup>1</sup>

And so, in the first phase of communist society (generally called socialism) "bourgeois law" 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 law" 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 law" 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 (actually 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 law*; indeed, the abolition of capitalism *does not immediately provide* the economic prerequisites for *this kind* of change.

And there is no other standard yet than that of "bourgeois law." 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

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.—Ed.

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 law" which sanctifies real 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, after the tyrannical subordination of individuals according to the distribution of labour and thereby also the distinction between manual and intellectual work have disappeared, after labour has become not merely a means to live but is in itself the first necessity of living, after the powers of production have also increased and all the springs of co-operative wealth are gushing more freely together with the all-round development of the individual, then and then only can the narrow bourgeois horizon of rights be left far behind, and society will inscribe on its banner: 'From each according to his capacity, to each according to his need.'"<sup>1</sup>

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 contrast between mental and physical labour has disappeared, that is to say, when one of the principal sources of modern *social* inequality has disappeared—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 contrast between mental and physical labour, of transforming work into the "first necessity of life"—this we do not and *cannot* know.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*—Ed.

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 capacity; 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 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 Socialists 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 the stores of social wealth, and of demanding the impossible without reflection, like the seminary students in Pomyalovsky's book.<sup>1</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> Pomyalovsky, a well-known writer of the sixties of last century, famous for his work *Sketches from the Bursa* (Divinity College) describing the brutal, anti-social regime and the rough bullying conduct of the students of these colleges.—Ed.

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 their *substituting* 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 philistine, and following the latter Messrs. Tsereteli and Chernov, talk of the unreasonable utopia, 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 conversions of the Kropotkins, the Graves, the Cornelissens, and the other "leading lights" of anarchism into social-chauvinists or anarcho-trenchmen, as Gay, one of the few anarchists still preserving honour and conscience, has put 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 world "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 theory of evolution, looking upon communism as something which evolves *out of* capitalism. Instead of artificial, "elaborate," scholastic definitions of and unprofitable disquisitions on the meaning of words (what socialism is, what communism is), Marx gives an analysis of what may be called the stages of 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* law." Bourgeois law in respect to the distribution of articles of *consumption*, inevitably presupposes, of course, the existence of the *bourgeois* state, for law is nothing without an apparatus capable of *enforcing* the observance of its norms.

Consequently, for a certain time not only bourgeois law but even the bourgeois state remains under communism, without the bourgeoisie!

This may look like a paradox, or simply dialectical mental acrobatics for which Marxism is often blamed by people who will not make the least effort to study its extremely 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 insert a scrap of "bourgeois" law 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 the organised, systematic application of violence against man. 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 the 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 "everyone" *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 capi-

talists and bureaucrats, to replace them, in the control of production and distribution, in the business of *accounting* 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 to-day, obeying the capitalists; they will work even better to-morrow, 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 auditing necessary for this have been *simplified* to the utmost by capitalism, 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.<sup>1</sup>

When the *majority* of the people begin everywhere independently 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 *them-*

<sup>1</sup> When most of the functions of the state are reduced to this accounting and auditing by the workers themselves, then it ceases to be a “political state,” and the “public functions become transformed from political functions into simple administrative functions.” (Cf. Chap. IV, § 2 on Engels’ polemic against the anarchists.)

*selves*, have taken this business into their own hands, have “established” control over the insignificant minority of capitalists, over the gentlemen 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 social production by themselves, 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 workers are men of practical life, not sentimental intellectuals, and they will scarcely allow anyone 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.

August-September 1917.

# PROPHETIC WORDS

THANK heaven no one believes in miracles nowadays. Miraculous prophecy is a fairy tale, but scientific prophecy is a fact. And in these days, when very often we may come across disgraceful despondency and even despair, it is useful to recall one scientific prophecy which has come true.

Frederick Engels happened to write in 1887 on the coming world war, in a preface to a pamphlet by Sigmund Borkheim, *German Jingo Patriots, Remember 1806-07* (*Zur Erinnerung für die deutschen Mordspatrioten 1806-07*). (This pamphlet is No. XXIV of the *Social-Democratic Library* published in Göttingen-Zürich in 1888.)

The following is Frederick Engels' view on the future world war, expressed more than thirty years ago.

"...No other war is now possible for Prussia-Germany than a world war. And this would be a world war on an unprecedented scale and of unparalleled force. From eight to ten million soldiers would be at each others' throats and would, at the same time, eat up the whole of Europe clean, to an extent never surpassed even by clouds of locusts. The devastation caused by the thirty years war would be compressed within a period of three or four years, and would spread over the entire continent; starvation, epidemics, general lapse into savagery of both the troops and the masses of the people, in consequence of the extreme want; hopeless confusion of our artificial mechanism in commerce, industry and credit ending in general bankruptcy, the crash of old states and their routine state wisdom—a crash with crowns rolling on the pavements by the dozen and no one to pick them up; the absolute impossibility to foresee how all this will end and who will come out victorious in the struggle, but one result is absolutely certain, and that is general exhaustion and the creation of conditions for the final victory of the working class.

"Such is the prospect if the system based on a race for armaments continues to the bitter end and finally bears its inevitable fruits. Kings and statesmen, this is where your wisdom has landed old Europe. And if nothing else remains for you to do but to start the last great war-dance—we do not mind (*uns kann es recht sein*). Perhaps the war will even throw us back for a time, perhaps it will take away from us some of the positions we have won. But once you unbridle the forces, which you will be powerless to cope with, then, however matters go, you will be ruined at the end of the tragedy, and the victory of the proletariat will either have already been won, or will in any case have become inevitable.

"Frederick Engels."

"London, December 15, 1887."

What a prophecy of genius! And how infinitely rich in ideas every phrase of this precise, clear, brief and scientific class analysis. How

much could have been drawn upon from here by those who are shamefully lacking in faith, and are lapsing into despondency and despair, if . . . if men accustomed to act the flunkey before the bourgeoisie, or who have allowed themselves to be frightened by it, could but think or would be capable of thinking.

Some of Engels' predictions turned out differently: and no wonder—the world and capitalism could not but change in the thirty years of impetuous imperialist development. But what is more wonderful than all is that so much that has been foretold by Engels is proceeding "according to the book." It is because Engels gave an irreproachably exact class analysis, and the classes and their inter-relations have remained as they were.

"Perhaps the war will . . . throw us back for a time. . . ." Matters proceeded precisely on these lines, only still further and still worse: a part of the social-chauvinists who were "thrown back" as well as their spineless "semi-opponents," the Kautskyists, began to extol the backward movement, and have turned traitors to and betrayers of socialism.

"Perhaps the war . . . will take away from us some of the positions we have won. . . ." A whole number of the "legal" positions have been taken away from the working class. But as against this the working class has become hardened by trial and is receiving cruel but useful lessons of illegal organisation, illegal struggle and preparation of its forces for revolutionary attack.

"...crowns rolling . . . by the dozen. . . ." Several crowns have already fallen and one of them is worth a dozen of others; the crown of the autocrat of all the Russias—Nicholas Romanov.

"...Absolute impossibility to foresee how all this will end. . . ." After four years of war this absolute impossibility has become still more absolute, if one may so express oneself.

"...hopeless confusion of our artificial mechanism in commerce, industry and credit. . . ." At the end of the fourth year of war this has taken full effect in the case of Russia, one of the biggest and most backward states, drawn into the war by the capitalists. But the growing starvation in Germany and Austria, the shortage of clothing and raw material, the wearing out of the means of production—does not all this show the tremendous pace at which other countries too are approaching the same state of things?

Engels only depicts the consequences which are brought about by



an "external" war; he does not touch upon internal, *i.e.*, civil war, which accompanied every one of the great revolutions in history, and without which the transition from capitalism to socialism is unthinkable to any serious Marxist. And while an external war may still drag on for a certain time, without causing "hopeless confusion" in the "artificial mechanism" of capitalism—it is obvious that civil war is quite unthinkable without such consequences.

What stupidity, what lack of backbone—not to speak of mercenary service to the bourgeoisie—is displayed by those, who, continuing to call themselves "socialists," such as our *Novaya Zhizn*-ists,<sup>1</sup> Mensheviks, Right wing Socialist-Revolutionaries, etc., maliciously point to the manifestation of this "hopeless confusion," blaming for all this the revolutionary proletariat, the Soviet power, the "utopia" of the transition to socialism. "Confusion," or to use the splendid Russian expression *razrukha*<sup>2</sup> has been brought about by the war. There can be no heavy war without disruption. There can be no civil war, the inevitable condition and concomitant of a socialist revolution, without disruption. To renounce revolution and socialism "on account" of disruption only means to display a lack of principles and, in practice, to pass over to the side of the bourgeoisie.

"... Starvation, epidemics, general lapse into savagery of both the troops and the masses of the people in consequence of the extreme want. . . ."

How simply and clearly Engels draws this indisputable conclusion, obvious to anyone, who is in the least capable of reflecting upon the objective consequences of the many years of heavy and painful war. And how strikingly foolish are those numerous "Social-Democrats" and lamentable "Socialists" who do not want or are not able to ponder over this most simple consideration.

Can one imagine a war lasting for many years without both the troops and the masses of the people growing savage? Of course not. Such results of a long war are absolutely inevitable for a stretch of several years, if not for a whole generation. And our "men in mufflers," the whimperers from the bourgeois *intelligentsia*, calling

<sup>1</sup> Adherents of the newspaper *Novaya Zhizn* (*New Life*) published in Petrograd in 1917, an organ of the so-called Social-Democrat-Internationalists. The latter consisted of a number of Mensheviks as well as some Bolsheviks, who took up a vacillating attitude between the Provisional Government and the Bolsheviks and finally came out in sharp opposition to the October Revolution.—*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> Disruption, disorganisation.—*Ed.*

themselves "Social-Democrats" and "Socialists," keep in tune with the bourgeoisie, blaming the revolution for the manifestations of savagery or the inevitably cruel measures of struggle against particularly hard cases of savagery, although it is as clear as noonday that this savagery has been created by the imperialist war and that no revolution can emancipate itself from *such* consequences of war without a long struggle, without a series of cruel repressions.

They (our sweet writers of the *Novaya Zhizn*, *Vperyod* [*Forward*], or *Dyelo Naroda* [*The People's Cause*]) are ready to admit "theoretically" a revolution of the proletariat and other oppressed classes, provided the revolution drops from heaven, and is not born and bred on earth, soaked with the blood of four years of imperialist slaughter of the peoples, among millions upon millions of men and women, worn out, broken and turned savage in this butchery.

They have heard and have "theoretically" recognised that a revolution ought to be compared with childbirth, but when it came to business, they disgracefully funk and turned the whimpering of their wretched little souls into a rehash of the malicious outbursts of the bourgeoisie against the uprising of the proletariat. Let us take the descriptions of childbirth in literature—those descriptions, where the authors aim at a truthful representation of all the burden, all the pains and all the horrors of this travail, as for instance in Emile Zola's *La Joie de Vivre* [*The Joy of Living*] or *Notes of a Doctor* by Veresayev. The birth of a human being is accompanied by such a strain as transforms woman into a half-dead lump of flesh, tortured, rent, blood-stained and maddened with pain. But could such an "individual" as sees *only* this side in love, in its consequence, in the transformation of a woman into a mother be called a human being? Who would renounce love and procreation on *that* ground?

Childbirth may be light or heavy. Marx and Engels, the founders of scientific socialism, have always spoken of the *long birthpangs* inevitably accompanying the transition from capitalism to socialism. And Engels analysing the consequences of a world war outlines, simply and clearly, the indisputable and obvious fact that a revolution following upon and connected with a war (and moreover, we will add on our part, a revolution which broke out during the war and is forced to develop and maintain itself during and amidst a world war), that such a revolution is a *particularly heavy* case of childbirth.

In the clear consciousness of this fact, Engels speaks with parti-

cular cautiousness of the birth of socialism from a capitalist society perishing in a world war.

"But one result" (of a world war), he says, "is absolutely certain and that is general exhaustion and the creation of conditions for the final victory of the working class."

This idea is expressed still more clearly at the end of the preface under review!

"You" (the capitalists and landlords, kings and statesmen of the bourgeoisie) "will be ruined at the end of the tragedy, and the victory of the proletariat will either have already been won, or will in any case have become inevitable."

Difficult childbirth cases multiply the dangers of fatal illness or of a fatal issue. But while birth may be fatal for individuals, a new society, the issue of an old order, cannot perish, only its birth may be more painful, more prolonged, and its growth and development more slow.

The end of the war has not yet arrived. General exhaustion has already set in. The two *direct* alternate results predicted by Engels (either a definite victory of the working class, or the creation of conditions which make it inevitable, *despite all difficulties*), are now, in the middle of 1918, accomplished facts.

In one of the less developed capitalist countries, the victory of the working class *is already won*. In the others, at the cost of unparalleled efforts and unheard of pains, conditions are being created which make this victory "inevitable anyhow."

Let the "socialist" whimperers croak, let the bourgeoisie rage and rave. Only people who shut their eyes so as not to see, and close their ears so as not to hear, can fail to notice that the birth-pangs of the old capitalist society, pregnant with socialism, have begun. Our country, which, by the march of events has been placed for a time in the van of the socialist revolution, is undergoing the particularly heavy pains of the first period of the initial act of childbirth. We have every ground to look with complete fortitude and absolute confidence to the future, which is preparing for us new allies and new victories of the socialist revolution in a number of more advanced countries. We have a right to be proud and to consider ourselves fortunate that we were fated to be the first to bring down in one part of the globe that wild beast, capitalism, which drenched the earth with blood, reduced humanity to a state of starvation and savagery, and which will most surely and within a short time perish, no matter how monstrous and brutal the ragings of its death-agony.

June 29, 1918.

## THE ATTITUDE OF THE WORKERS' PARTY TOWARDS RELIGION

SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY builds its whole philosophy on the basis of scientific socialism, *i.e.*, Marxism. The philosophic basis of Marxism, as Marx and Engels repeatedly declared, is dialectical materialism. This dialectical materialism fully accepts the historical traditions of the materialism of the eighteenth century in France, and of Feuerbach (first half of the nineteenth century) in Germany—which is absolutely atheistic, and definitely hostile to all religion. Let us remember that the whole of Engels' *Anti-Dühring*, which Marx read in manuscript, accuses the "materialist and atheist," Dühring, of not being a consistent materialist, and of leaving loopholes for religion and religious philosophy. Let us remember that Engels, in his essay on Ludwig Feuerbach, reproaches Feuerbach for fighting against religion not in order to destroy it, but in order to revive it, to create a new "exalted" religion, etc.

"Religion is the opium of the people"—this saying of Marx is the corner-stone of the whole philosophy of Marxism with regard to religion. Marxism always regarded all modern religions and churches, and every kind of religious organisation as instruments of that bourgeois reaction whose aim is to defend exploitation and stupefy the working class.

At the same time, however, Engels repeatedly condemned those who, desiring to be "more extreme" or "more revolutionary" than Social-Democracy, tried to introduce into the programme of the workers' party the explicit avowal of atheism, in the sense of declaring war on religion.

In 1874, commenting on the famous manifesto of the Blanquists, fugitives of the Commune, then emigrants in London, Engels treated their noisy proclamation of war on religion as foolishness, and stated that such a declaration of war was the best means of reviving interest in religion, and of hindering its dying out. Engels blamed the Blanquists for failing to understand that only the mass working

class struggle, drawing the widest sections of the proletariat into all forms of conscious and revolutionary social work, will, as a matter of fact, free the oppressed masses from the yoke of religion; while to proclaim that war on religion is the political task of the workers' party, was anarchist phraseology. And in 1877, in *Anti-Dühring*, Engels, while ruthlessly attacking the slightest concession made by the philosopher Dühring to idealism and religion, condemns no less resolutely Dühring's pseudo-revolutionary notion that religion should be *prohibited* in socialist society.

To declare such war on religion, says Engels, means to "out-Bismarck Bismarck himself," i.e., to repeat the stupidity of the Bismarckian struggle against clericalism (the famous "Struggle for Culture," *Kulturkampf*, i.e., the struggle Bismarck waged in 1870 against the German Catholic Party, the party of the "Centre," by police persecution of Catholicism). By this struggle Bismarck only *strengthened* the militant clericalism of the Catholics, and injured the work of real culture, because he brought religious divisions instead of political ones to the forefront and thus diverted the attention of some sections of the working class and of the democracy from the urgent tasks of class and revolutionary struggle to a most superficial and mendacious bourgeois anti-clericalism.

Engels accused the would-be ultra-revolutionary Dühring of desiring to repeat Bismarck's absurdity in another form. He demanded that the workers' party should work patiently at those tasks of organising and educating the proletariat, which would lead to religion dying out, and that they should not rush into the adventure of a political war upon religion.

This point of view was thoroughly assimilated by German Social-Democracy, which advocated, for example, freedom for the Jesuits, their admission into Germany, and the cessation of the struggle against any particular religion by police methods. "Religion is a private matter"; this famous point in the Erfurt Programme (1891) consolidated these political tactics of Social-Democracy.

These tactics, however, have nowadays become a matter of mere routine; they have given rise to a new distortion of Marxism in the opposite direction, in the direction of opportunism.

This point in the Erfurt Programme has come to be interpreted as meaning that we, Social-Democrats, that our Party, *consider* religion to be a private matter and that it is a private matter for us.

as Social-Democrats, for us as a party. Without undertaking a direct polemic against this opportunist point of view, Engels in the 'nineties deemed it necessary to oppose it resolutely, not in a polemical, but in a positive way; that is to say, Engels issued a statement in which he expressly emphasised that Social-Democrats regarded religion as a private matter *in relation to the state*, but by no means in relation to themselves, to Marxism, or to the workers' party.<sup>1</sup>

This is the formal history of the statements made by Marx and Engels on the question of religion. To those who are careless in their treatment of Marxism, who cannot or do not want to think, this history is a mass of meaningless contradictions and waverings of Marxism; some hodge-podge, they think, of "consistent" atheism and "concessions" to religion, and "unprincipled" wavering between a r-r-revolutionary struggle against God, and a cowardly desire to "ingratiate" oneself with religious workers, a fear to scare them, etc., etc. The literature of anarchist phrasemongers is replete with attacks of this kind upon Marxism.

But anyone who is at all able to take Marxism seriously, to ponder over its philosophical principles and the experience of international Social-Democracy, will readily see that Marxist tactics in regard to religion are thoroughly consistent and were profoundly thought out by Marx and Engels, and further, that what the dilettantes or ignoramuses regard as wavering is but a direct and inevitable deduction from dialectical materialism. It would be a great mistake to think that the seeming "moderation" of Marxism in relation to religion can be explained by so-called "tactical" considerations, by the desire "not to frighten off" the religious workers, etc. On the contrary, the political line of Marxism on this question is inseparably bound up with its philosophical principles.

Marxism is materialism. As such it is as relentlessly hostile to religion as the materialism of the Encyclopædists of the eighteenth century or as the materialism of Feuerbach. This is beyond doubt. But the dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels goes beyond the Encyclopædists and Feuerbach; it applies the materialist philosophy to the field of history, to the field of social science. We must combat religion—this is the A B C of *all* materialism, and consequently of Marxism. But Marxism is not materialism which stops at the A B C.

<sup>1</sup> Lenin refers to Engels' introduction to Marx's *Civil War in France*

Marxism goes further. It says: We must *know how* to combat religion, and in order to do this we must explain from the materialistic point of view the mainspring of faith and religion holding sway over the masses.

The fight against religion must not be limited nor reduced to abstract-ideological preaching. This struggle must be linked up with the concrete work of the class movement; its aim must be to eliminate the social roots of religion. Why does religion retain its hold over the backward sections of the urban proletariat, over the broad sections of the semi-proletariat and also over the masses of the peasantry? Because of the ignorance of the people!—answer the progressive bourgeoisie, the radical or bourgeois materialists. Hence—Down with religion! Long live atheism! The dissemination of atheist views is our chief task.

The Marxist says: No, this is not true. Such a conception is but the expression of superficial, narrow, bourgeois cultural work. It is shallow, and explains the roots of religion, not in a materialist, but in an idealist fashion.

In modern capitalist countries the basis of religion is primarily *social*. The deepest root of modern religion is embedded in the social oppression of the working masses, and in their apparently complete helplessness before the blind forces of capitalism, which every day and every hour inflicts a thousand times more horrible suffering and torture upon rank and file working people than are caused by exceptional events such as war, earthquakes, etc. "Fear created the gods." Fear of the blind forces of capital—blind because its action cannot be foreseen by the masses—a force which at every step in life threatens the worker and the small owner with "sudden," "unexpected," "accidental" destruction and ruin, bringing in their train beggary, pauperism, prostitution, and deaths from starvation—this is *the root* of modern religion which, first of all, and above all, the materialist must keep in mind, if he does not wish to stay in the infant school of materialism.

No enlightening literature will eradicate religion from those masses who are crushed by the grinding toil of capitalism and subjected to the blind, destructive forces of capitalism, until these masses, themselves, learn to fight this *root cause* of religion in a united, disciplined, planned and conscious manner—until they learn to fight *the rule of capital* in all its forms.

Does this mean that educational books against religion are harmful or superfluous? No. Nothing of the kind. It means that the propagation of atheism by Social-Democracy must be *subordinated* to its basic task—the development of the class struggle of the exploited *masses* with the exploiters.

Those who have not gone to the roots of dialectical materialism, *i.e.*, of the philosophy of Marx and Engels, may not be able to understand this proposition (or at least be unable to understand it at first). How then? Subordinate ideological propaganda, the *propagation* of well-known ideas? Subordinate the struggle with the thousand-year-old enemy of culture and progress, (*i.e.*, religion) to the class struggle, *i.e.*, to the struggle for definite practical objects in the economic and political field?

This is one of the many current objections raised against Marxism which reveal a thorough lack of understanding of Marxist dialectics. The contradiction which so embarrasses those who raise these objections is the contradiction of life itself, it is a dialectical and not a verbal or an invented contradiction.

To draw a hard and fast line between the theoretical propagation of atheism, between breaking down the religious beliefs of certain sections of the proletariat, and the effect, the development, the general implications of the class struggle of these sections, is to reason non-dialectically; to transform a variable, relative boundary into an absolute one. It is a forcible tearing asunder of that which is indissolubly connected in real life. For example, the proletariat of a given district in a given branch of industry can be divided, let us say, into a vanguard of fairly class conscious Social-Democrats (who are, it stands to reason, atheists), and the rather backward mass which, still having ties with the villages and the peasantry, still believes in God, goes to church, or is even directly influenced by the priest, who, let us assume, organises a Christian Workers' Union. Let us suppose, further, that the economic struggle in such a locality has resulted in a strike. A Marxist must place the success of the strike movement above all else, must definitely oppose the division of the workers in this struggle into atheists and Christians, must fight resolutely against such a division.

In such circumstances the preaching of atheism may happen to be both superfluous and harmful—not from the philistine consideration of not frightening away the backward elements, or of losing votes

at elections, etc., but from the point of view of the actual progress of the class struggle, which, in the conditions of modern capitalist society, will convert Christian workers to social-democracy and to atheism a hundred times more effectively than any bald atheist sermons. The preacher of atheism at such a time and in such circumstances would only be playing *into the hands* of the church and the priests, who would desire nothing more than to have the workers participating in the strike movement divided according to their religious beliefs.

The anarchist, who preaches war against God at all costs, actually helps the priests and the bourgeoisie (*in fact* the anarchists always do help the bourgeoisie). The Marxist must be a materialist, *i.e.*, an enemy of religion. But he must be a *dialectical* materialist, *i.e.*, one who fights religion not in the abstract, not by means of abstract, purely theoretical, never-changing sermons, but concretely, on the basis of the class struggle *actually* proceeding—a struggle which is educating the masses better than anything else could do. The Marxist must be able to judge the concrete situation as a whole. He must always be able to determine the boundary between anarchism and opportunism (this boundary is relative, mobile and ever-changing; but it exists), not to fall either into the abstract, wordy and in fact futile “revolutionism” of the anarchist, or into the philistinism and opportunism of the petty-bourgeois, or liberal intellectual, who fears the fight against religion, forgets this task, reconciles himself to a belief in God; who is guided, not by the interests of the class struggle, but by petty, mean calculations such as: not to offend, not to repel, not to frighten; and who is governed by the wise rule: “live and let live,” etc., etc.

It is from this point of view that we must decide all particular questions concerning the attitude of Social-Democrats to religion. For example, the question often arises, is a priest eligible for membership in the Social-Democratic Party? Usually, this question is answered in the affirmative without any reservation and the experience of European Social-Democratic Parties is cited. But this experience was the result not only of the application of the Marxist doctrine to the workers’ movement, but of the peculiar historical circumstances in Western Europe. These conditions being absent in Russia (we will say more about these conditions later) an unqualified affirmative in this case is incorrect. We must not say once and for all that under

no circumstances can priests be allowed to join the Social-Democratic Party; but neither should we categorically affirm the opposite.

If a priest comes to us for common political work—if he conscientiously performs Party work, and does not oppose the Party programme we can accept him into the ranks of Social-Democracy, for the contradictions between the spirit and principles of our programme and the religious convictions of the priest could, in these circumstances, be regarded as a matter in which he contradicts himself, as one which concerns him alone. A political party cannot examine its members to see if there are any contradictions between their views and the Party programme. Of course, such a case would be a rare exception, even in Western Europe; it is hardly possible in Russia. But if, for example, a priest joined the Social-Democratic Party, and made it his chief and almost exclusive business to propagate religious views, then, of course, the Party would have to expel him.

We must not only admit into the Social-Democratic Party all those workers who still retain faith in God, we must redouble our efforts to recruit them. We are absolutely opposed to the slightest affront to these workers’ religious convictions. We recruit them in order to educate them in the spirit of our programme, and not in order to carry on an active struggle against it. We allow freedom of opinion *inside* the Party, but within certain limits, determined by freedom of grouping. We are not obliged to march shoulder to shoulder with those who advocate views that have been repudiated by the majority of the Party.

Another example: Is it right, under all circumstances, to censure members of the Social-Democratic Party for declaring that “socialism is my religion,” and for advocating views which correspond to such a declaration? No! This is undoubtedly a retreat from Marxism (and consequently from socialism), but the significance of such a retreat, its specific gravity, so to say, may be different under different conditions. It is one thing if an agitator or someone addressing workers speaks in this way in order to make himself better understood, as an introduction to his subject, in order to present his views in terminology to which the backward masses are more accustomed. It is quite another thing when a writer begins to preach “God-creating” or God-creating socialism (in the spirit, for example, of our Lunacharsky and Co.). To pronounce censure in the first case would be

mere quibbling, or even misplaced restriction of the freedom of the propagandist, of the freedom of "pedagogical" style; in the second case, censure by the Party is necessary and obligatory. For some the statement "socialism is my religion" is a step *from* religion to socialism, for others it is a step *from* socialism to religion.

Let us pass on now to the conditions which in the West gave rise to the opportunist interpretation of the thesis "religion is a private matter." Certainly, this is due to the operation of those general causes which gave rise to opportunism generally, such as the sacrifice of the fundamental interests of the workers' movement for momentary advantages. The party of the proletariat demands *that the government* shall declare religion a private matter, but in no case does it regard the question of the fight with the opium of the people—the fight with religious superstition, etc.—as a private matter. The opportunists so distort the question as to make it appear that the *Social-Democratic Party regards* religion as a private matter!

Apart from the usual opportunist distortion (which was not explained at all in the discussion which our Duma fraction had on the speeches to be made on religion) there are the specific, historical conditions which give rise to the modern and, if one can so express oneself, the excessive indifference among European Social-Democrats to the question of religion. These conditions are of a twofold nature.

First, the fight with religion is the historical task of the revolutionary bourgeoisie, and in the West this task was, to a considerable extent, achieved (or was being achieved) by the bourgeois democracy in the epoch of *their* revolutions or attacks upon feudalism and mediævalism. Both in France and in Germany there is a tradition of bourgeois war on religion, a war which was *begun* long before socialism (the Encyclopædists, Feuerbach). In Russia, because of the conditions of our bourgeois-democratic revolution, this task falls almost wholly on the shoulders of the working class. Petty-bourgeois (*Narodniki*) democracy did not do too much for us in this respect (as the new Black Hundred Cadets or Cadet Black Hundreds of *Vekhi* think it did), but *much too little* in comparison with what was done in Europe.

On the other hand, the traditions of the bourgeois war on religion have given rise in Europe to a specifically bourgeois distortion of this struggle by anarchism. The latter, as the Marxists have explained long

since and many a time, takes its stand on the basis of the bourgeois world outlook, in spite of all the "fury" of their attacks upon the bourgeoisie. The anarchists and Blanquists in the Latin countries, Johann Most and Co. in Germany (incidentally, Most was a pupil of Dühring), and the anarchists of the 'eighties in Austria, carried revolutionary phraseology in the struggle against religion to a *ne plus ultra*.<sup>1</sup> It is not surprising that the European Social-Democrats go to the other extreme. This is natural, and to some degree legitimate; but, it does not behove us, Russian Social-Democrats, to forget the specific historical conditions of the West.

Secondly, in the West, *after* the national bourgeois revolutions had drawn to a close, *after* the introduction of more or less complete freedom of conscience, the question of the democratic struggle with religion had been forced into the background by the struggle which bourgeois democracy waged against socialism; the bourgeois governments therefore *deliberately* tried to draw the attention of the masses away from socialism by organising a quasi-liberal "drive" against clericalism. Such was the character of the *Kulturkampf* in Germany and of the fight of the bourgeois republicans in France against clericalism. The spread of a spirit of "indifference" to the fight with religion, now prevalent among Social-Democrats in the West, was preceded by bourgeois anti-clericalism, the purpose of which was to divert the attention of the masses of the workers from socialism.

And this is quite understandable and legitimate because Social-Democrats had to oppose bourgeois and Bismarckian anti-clericalism, with the tactics of *subordinating* the struggle with religion to the struggle for socialism.

Conditions in Russia are quite different. The proletariat is the leader of our bourgeois-democratic revolution. Its Party must be the ideological leader in the struggle against every vestige of mediævalism, including the old official religion, and against every attempt to renovate it or give it a new, a different base, etc. Therefore, if Engels corrected in a comparatively gentle manner the opportunism of the German Social-Democrats who, in the place of the workers' party's *demand* that the *state* shall declare religion a private matter, substituted the *declaration* that religion was a private matter for Social-Democrats and the Social-Democratic Party—he would

<sup>1</sup> To the utmost.—Ed.

have rebuked the Russian opportunists who imitate this German distortion a *hundred times* more sharply.

Our fraction acted quite correctly when it declared from the Duma tribune that religion is the opium of the people, and in this way it created a precedent which should serve as a basis for all speeches delivered by Russian Social-Democrats on the question of religion. Should they have gone further and developed in greater detail their atheistic arguments? We think not. This might have incurred the danger of exaggerating the fight of the proletarian political party with religion; it might have led to the obligation of the line of demarcation separating the bourgeois from the socialist fight with religion. The first thing the Social-Democratic fraction in the Black Hundred Duma had to do was done with honour.

The second, and perhaps the most important thing that had to be done from the Social-Democratic standpoint was to explain the class role of the church and the clergy in supporting the Black Hundred government and the bourgeoisie in their fight against the working class. This also was done with honour. Of course, very much more might be said on this subject, and the Social-Democrats in their coming speeches will know how to amplify Surkov's speech; but still his speech was excellent, and it is the direct duty of our Party to see that it is circulated by all Party organisations.

Thirdly, it was necessary to explain fully the true meaning of the postulate, so often distorted by the German opportunists, that "religion is a private matter." Unfortunately, Surkov omitted to do that. This is a pity; the more so that in the preceding activity of the fraction a mistake had been committed already in this very question by Comrade Bellousov, a mistake noted at the time by the *Proletari*. The discussions in the fraction show that the dispute about atheism has overshadowed the question as to the proper exposition of the notorious demand of declaring religion a private matter. We shall not accuse Comrade Surkov alone for this error committed by the entire fraction. Moreover, we shall admit straightforwardly that here the Party, too, was at fault, because it did not sufficiently explain this question, it did not sufficiently prepare the mind of the Social-Democrats for the significance of Engels' remark directed at the German opportunists. The discussions in the fraction prove that it was all due precisely to the confused understanding of the question, but there was not by any means a lack of desire to be guided by the teachings

of Marx, and we are sure that this error will be corrected in the subsequent speeches of the fraction.

On the whole and in general, we repeat that Comrade Surkov's speech was excellent and it must be circulated by all organisations. The fraction has proved by its discussion of this speech that it fulfils its Social-Democratic duties quite faithfully. It remains to be desired that correspondence on the discussion inside the fraction should appear more often in the Party press so as to bring the fraction and the Party closer together, to acquaint the Party with the difficult work done inside the fraction, and to establish ideological unity in the work of the Party and the fraction.

May 26, 1909.



# "PARTIES" IN PHILOSOPHY \*

(From the Book: *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*)

THE genius of Marx and Engels lay precisely in the fact that during a very long period, *for nearly half a century*, they developed materialism, piloted one fundamental tendency in philosophy, wasted no time on solutions of gnoseological problems already solved, but consistently carried, and showed *how* to carry materialism into the domain of the social science, mercilessly brushing aside, as litter, nonsense, and hombastic pretentious balderdash, the countless attempts to "discover" a "new" alignment in philosophy, to invent a "new" tendency, etc. The verbal character of such attempts, the scholastic play with new philosophic "isms," the obfuscation of the essence of the question by ornate subterfuges, the inability to comprehend and clearly present the struggle of the two principal gnoseological tendencies—these were the things against which Marx and Engels fought throughout the whole period of their activity.

We said, "for nearly half a century." Indeed, as far back as 1843 when Marx had just become Marx, *i.e.*, the founder of socialism as a science, the founder of *modern materialism* (immeasurably richer in content and incomparably more consistent than all previous forms of materialism)—he had already drawn the basic lines in philosophy with astounding clarity. K. Grün quotes a letter of October 30, 1843, to Feuerbach, in which Marx invited Feuerbach to write an article in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* against Schelling. This Schelling, writes Marx, is a shallow braggart with his pretensions to embrace and surpass all previous philosophic tendencies.

"To the French romanticists and mystics Schelling says: 'I—the union of philosophy and theology'; to the French materialists he says: 'I—the union of body and ideas'; to the French sceptics: 'I—the destroyer of dogmatism!'"<sup>1</sup>

Marx realised even at that time, that the "sceptics," whether they were termed Humists or Kantists (or Machists in the twentieth

<sup>1</sup> Karl Grün: *Ludwig Feuerbach in seinem Briefwechsel und Nachlass, sowie in seiner philosophischen Charakterentwicklung*, Leipzig, 1874, Vol. I, p. 361.

century), object to the "dogmatism" of materialism and idealism, and, without letting himself be drawn into one of the thousands of miserable and petty systems, he was able, through Feuerbach, to take directly the materialist stand against idealism. Thirty years later, in the afterword to the second edition of the first volume of *Capital*, Marx just as clearly and completely contrasts his *materialism* with Hegelian *idealism*, the most consistent and advanced idealism. He contemptuously rejects Comtian "positivism" and declares the modern philosophers to be miserable *epigoni* who imagine that they have destroyed Hegel, when in reality they have reverted to the repetition of the pre-Hegelian errors of Kant and Hume. Also in the letter to Kugelmann of June 27, 1870, Marx treats Büchner, Lange, Dühring, Fechner, etc., contemptuously for the reason that, being unable to understand Hegelian dialectics, they despised it.<sup>1</sup>

And finally, take Marx's separate philosophic remarks in *Capital* and other works, and you will see the same *unchanged* basic motive—an insistence upon *materialism* and a contemptuous derision of every obscurity, every confusion and every deviation towards *idealism*. All Marx's philosophic remarks revolve around these two principal distinctions. From the viewpoint of professorial philosophy it is in this "narrowness" and "one-sidedness" that their defect lies. But indeed, the greatest service of Marx, who continually *advanced* along a very definite philosophic road, consists in this unwillingness to take account of the mongrel projects to reconcile materialism and idealism.

Fully in the spirit of Marx and in close collaboration with him, Engels in all his philosophic works briefly and clearly contrasts the materialist and idealist alignments in *all* questions, without taking seriously, either in 1878, or in 1888, or in 1891, the endless endeavours to "transcend" the "one-sidedness" of materialism and idealism, or to proclaim some *new* tendency, some kind of "positivism," "realism" or any other professorial charlatanism. The struggle with Dühring was led by Engels *wholly* under the slogan of a consistent pursuit of materialism. He accused the materialist Dühring for his verbal clogging of the real issue, for his phraseology, for his mode of argument smacking of compromise with and desertion to ideal-

<sup>1</sup> Of the positivist Beesley, Marx speaks as follows in the letter of December 13, 1870: "Professor Beesley is a Comtist and as such is bound to have all kinds of crotchets." Compare with this Engels' estimate of the positivists of Huxley's type in 1891.

ism. Either a materialism consistent to the end, or the falsehood and confusion of idealism—that is the alternative presented in *every paragraph* of *Anti-Dühring*; only people whose minds have been corrupted by the reactionary professorial philosophers can fail to notice it. And until 1894, when the last preface had been written to the last revised and completed edition of *Anti-Dühring*, Engels, who had been constantly following up recent philosophy and the recent developments in natural science, continued with his old determination to insist on his lucid and firm position, clearing away the rubbish of latter-day systems and toy systems.

That Engels followed the developments of recent philosophy, can be seen from his *Feuerbach*. In the preface of 1888, there is mention even of such a fact as the revival of classic German philosophy in England and Scandinavia. As to the dominating tendencies of Neo-Kantianism and Humism, there is nothing in Engels' own writings but utter contempt for them (both in the preface and in the text of the book). It is quite obvious that Engels, in noticing the repetition by the *fashionable* German and English philosophers of the old pre-Hegelian errors of Kantianism and Humism, expected a certain amount of good (in England and Scandinavia) even from the *turn to Hegel*. He expected that the great idealist and dialectician would help to discern petty idealist and metaphysical delusions.

Without going into an examination of the great number of nuances of Neo-Kantianism in Germany and of Humism in England, Engels at the very *start* refutes their fundamental digression from materialism. He declares the *entire tendency* of these schools to be "*scientifically a step backward*." And how does he characterise the indubitably "positivistic" (from the viewpoint of the current terminology) and indubitably "realistic" tendencies of these Neo-Kantists and Humists, among whom, for instance, it was impossible for him not to have known Huxley? That "positivism" and that "realism," which has been and is captivating an endless number of muddle-heads, was declared by Engels to be *at best a philistine method to smuggle in the same materialism* which they continued to denounce and renounce publicly! It suffices to meditate a little upon *this kind* of attitude toward Huxley, the outstanding naturalist, and the incomparably more realistic realist and positivistic positivist than Mach, Avenarius and Co. in order to conceive with what contempt Engels would have greeted the new fad of "up-to-date positivism"

or "up-to-date realism," etc., taken up by a handful of Marxists.

From the beginning to the end Marx and Engels were upholding the Party standpoint in philosophy; in each and every "new" tendency they were able to discern deviations from materialism and concessions to idealism and fideism. Therefore, Huxley was estimated by them *exclusively* from the point of view of materialistic consistency. Therefore they took Feuerbach to task for his failure to pursue materialism to the end, for his renunciation of materialism because of the errors of individual materialists, for his struggle against religion in order to renew the old or concoct a new religion. for his failure in the domain of sociology to rid himself of idealist phraseology and become a materialist. . . .

Written in the second half of 1908.

## ON DIALECTICS

THE division of the One and the knowledge of its contradictory Parts (see the quotations from Philo on Heraclitus in the beginning of Part III, *Lehre vom Erkennen*, in Lassalle's *Die Philosophie Heracleitos des Dunklen* [*The Philosophy of Heraclitus the Dark*]), is the essence (one of the "essential" aspects of Being, its fundamental, if not the fundamental characteristic) of dialectics. This is exactly how Hegel puts the question. (Aristotle in his *Metaphysics* is always *grappling* with it and continually engages in a *struggle* with Heraclitus respecting the ideas of Heraclitus.)

The correctness of this aspect of the content of dialectics must be tested by the history of science. This aspect of dialectics customarily receives insufficient attention (e.g., by Plekhanov): the identity of opposites is taken as the sum total of *examples* (for example, "a seed," "primitive communism." The same in Engels. But this is "in the interest of popularisation . . .") and not as the *law of knowledge* (as well as the law of the objective world).

In mathematics: + and —. The differential and the integral.

In mechanics: Action and reaction.

In physics: Positive and negative electricity.

In chemistry: The combination and dissociation of atoms.

In the social sciences: The class struggle.

The identity of opposites (more accurately, perhaps, their "unity," although the difference between the expressions "identity" and "unity" is not very essential here; in a certain sense both are correct) is the recognition (discovery) of the contradictory, *mutually exclusive* and opposed tendencies in *all* the phenomena and processes of nature (including those of mind and society). The condition of the knowledge of all processes of the world in their "*self-movement*," in their spontaneous development, in their living form, is the knowledge of the unity of their opposites. Development is "struggle" of opposites. The two fundamental (or is it the two possible, or the two historically observed?) conceptions of development (evolution) are: devel-

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opment as decrease and increase, as repetition; and development as a unity of opposites (the division of the One into mutually exclusive opposites and their reciprocal correlation).

In the first conception the movement *itself*, its *driving* force, its origin, its motive, are left in the shade (or this origin is transferred to the *outside*—God, the subject, etc.). In the second conception chief attention is concentrated precisely on the knowledge of the *origin* of "*self*" movement.

The first conception is dead, poor and dry; the second is vital. Only this second conception offers the key to the "self-movement" of everything in existence; it alone offers the key to "leaps," to the "interruption of gradualness," to the "transformation into the opposite," to the destruction of the old and the appearance of the new.

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

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

Marx in his *Capital* at first analyses the simplest, the most ordinary, fundamental and commonplace thing, a *relation* that has a mass aspect and is to be observed billions of times in bourgeois (commodity) society: the exchange of commodities. In that simple phenomenon (in that "cell" of bourgeois society) the analysis reveals *all* the contradictions (respectively the embryos of *all* contradictions) of modern society. The subsequent exposition shows the development (*both* growth and movement) of these contradictions and of that society in the  $\Sigma^1$  of its parts, from beginning to end.

Such must also be the method of exposition (respectively—study) of dialectics in general (for the dialectics of bourgeois society is only a particular illustration for Marx of dialectics in general.) To begin with the simplest, most ordinary, and commonplace notion, with any proposition you please: "The leaves of the tree are green;

<sup>1</sup> Greek letter used in mathematics to indicate the term sum.

John is a man; a poodle is a dog, etc...." Even here (as Hegel's genius noted) we have an instance of *dialectics*: the *particular* is the *general*. (Cf. Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, translated by Schwegler, Vol. II, S 40, Book 3, Chapter IV, 8—9. "Denn natürlich kann man nicht der Meinung sein, dass es ein Haus gebe ausser den sichtbaren Häusern." "ὁ γὰρ ἂν δείκνυεν εἶναι τινα οἰκίαν παρὰ τὰς τινὰς οἰκίας." <sup>1</sup>)

Consequently opposites (the particular as opposed to the general) are identical: the particular exists only in that connection which leads to the general. The general exists only in the particular and through the particular. Every particular is (in one way or another) general. Everything general is (a fragment, or an aspect, or an essence of) the particular. Everything general comprises all particular objects merely approximately. Every particular enters the general incompletely, and so forth, and so on. Every particular is bound by thousands of threads and nuances with other *kinds* of particulars (objects, phenomena, processes), etc. There are *here already* elements and embryos of the conception of *necessity*, of objective connection in nature, etc. The accidental and the necessary, the appearance and the essence already exist here. For in saying, "John is a man, the poodle is a dog, *this* is a leaf of a tree, etc.," we *disregard* a series of characteristics as *accidental*: we separate the essential from the apparent, and put one against the other.

Thus in *any* proposition one can (and must) reveal as in a "cell" the embryo of *all* the elements of dialectics, showing thereby that dialectics is in general characteristic of all human knowledge.

Now, natural science reveals to us (and here again it must be demonstrated on *any* simple example) objective nature in its same qualities, the transformation of the particular into the general, of the accidental into the necessary, transitions, transfusions and the reciprocal connection of opposites. Dialectics is the theory of knowledge (of Hegel and) of Marxism. It was this "aspect" of the matter (it is not an "aspect" but the *essence* of the matter) to which Plekhanov, let alone other Marxists, paid no attention.

\* \* \*

Knowledge is represented in the form of a series of circles by Hegel (see his *Logik*) as well as by Paul Volkmann (see his *Erkenntnis-theoretische Grundzüge der Naturwissenschaften*), the mod-

<sup>1</sup> "For it is naturally impossible to think that there exists a house in general over and above visible houses."

ern "gnoseologist" of natural science, the eclectic and enemy of Hegelianism (which he failed to understand).

The "circles" in philosophy: (Is chronology in respect of *persons* imperative? No!)

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

Renaissance: Descartes versus Cassendi (Spinoza?).

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

Hegel-Feuerbach-Marx.

Dialectics as *vital*, many-sided knowledge (with a continually increasing number of aspects), with an infinite number of gradings in the various approaches and approximations to reality (with a philosophical system which develops into a whole out of each of these various shades)—this is an immeasurably rich content as compared with "metaphysical" materialism, whose fundamental *trouble* lies in its inability to apply dialectics to the *Bildertheorie*,<sup>1</sup> to the process and development of knowledge.

Philosophical idealism is nonsense *only* from the standpoint of a crude, simple and metaphysical materialism. On the contrary, from the standpoint of *dialectical* materialism, philosophical idealism is a *one-sided*, exaggerated, *überschwengliches*<sup>2</sup> (Dietzgen) development of one of the little characteristics, of the aspects, or limits of knowledge into a deified absolute, into something that is *severed* from matter, from nature.

N. B.  
this apho-  
rism

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

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

<sup>1</sup> Image theory.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> Unbounded, infinite.—Ed.

Rectilinearity and one-sidedness, stiffness and rigidity, subjectivism and subjective blindness—*voilà*—these are the gnoseological roots of idealism. Clericalism (*i.e.*, philosophical idealism) naturally possesses *gnoseological* roots, it is not groundless; it is undoubtedly a *sterile flower*, yet one growing on the living tree of prolific, true, powerful, omnipotent, objective and absolute human knowledge.

Written in 1914.

### ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MILITANT MATERIALISM

COMRADE TROTSKY has already said all that is essential about the magazine *Under the Banner of Marxism*, No. 1-2, and said it splendidly. I should like to dwell upon a few questions, which define more closely the content and programme of work announced by the editors of the magazine in their introductory declaration in No. 1-2.

It is stated in that declaration that not all of those gathered round the magazine *Under the Banner of Marxism* are Communists, but that all of them are consistent materialists. I think that this alliance between Communists and non-Communists is absolutely necessary and rightly defines the tasks of the magazine. One of the biggest and most dangerous mistakes of Communists (and generally of the revolutionaries who have successfully carried through the initial stages of the great revolution) is the idea that a revolution can be made with the hands of revolutionaries alone. On the contrary, the success of every serious revolutionary work depends on the understanding and translation into action of the idea that revolutionaries are capable of playing their part only as the vanguard of the class that is really advanced and full of vitality. The vanguard fulfils its task as vanguard only when it does not isolate itself from the masses it leads, and really leads the whole mass forward. There can be no successful work of communist construction unless there is an alliance with non-Communists in the various spheres of activity.

This refers also to the defence of materialism and Marxism, undertaken by the magazine *Under the Banner of Marxism*. Fortunately there is a solid materialistic tradition among the chief currents of advanced social thought in Russia. To say nothing of G. V. Plekhanov, it is enough to name Chernyshevsky from whom the modern *Narodniki* (People's Socialists, Socialist Revolutionaries, etc.) have frequently retreated in their quest for fashionable reactionary, philosophic doctrines, succumbing to the tinsel of the would-be "last word" in European science and being incapable of discerning behind this tinsel some kind of servility to the bourgeoisie, to bourgeois prejudice and reaction.

In any case, we still have in Russia some materialists from the non-Communist camp—and shall undoubtedly continue to meet with them for a long time to come. Now it is our absolute duty to enlist all adherents of consistent and militant materialism for joint work in the struggle with philosophic reaction and the philosophic prejudices of so-called “educated society.” Dietzgen senior (who must not be confused with his writer son, who was as much of a failure as he was full of pretence) has correctly, neatly and clearly hit off the fundamental point of view of Marxism on the philosophic tendencies, dominating in bourgeois countries and enjoying the attention of their scientists and publicists, when he said that the professors of philosophy in modern society are indeed in the majority of cases nothing but “graduated flunkys of clericalism.”

Our Russian intellectuals, who love to consider themselves advanced, indeed, as their brethren in all other countries do, are very much averse to shifting the question to the plane of the estimate contained in the words of Dietzgen. But they are averse to it because they cannot bear the truth. One need only meditate a little to what an extent modern educated people depend on the ruling bourgeoisie in the sphere of government, general economics, social life, and all other spheres—to understand the absolute truth of Dietzgen’s sharp characteristic. One need but recall the vast majority of fashionable philosophic tendencies which so often arise in European countries, beginning even with those connected with the discovery of radium, and ending with those which endeavour to fasten themselves upon Einstein, and one will gain an idea of the connection between the class interests and class position of the bourgeoisie, between the support it offers to all forms of religion and the ideas of the fashionable philosophic tendencies.

It follows from the foregoing that a magazine which desires to be an organ of militant materialism must be a militant organ: firstly, in the sense of unflinching exposure and persecution of all modern “graduated flunkys of clericalism,” whether they appear as representatives of official science or as free-lances, calling themselves “democratic Left or ideological socialist” publicists. Secondly, the magazine must be an organ of militant atheism. We have departments or at least state institutions which deal with this work. But this work is done in an extremely dull and unsatisfactory manner, feeling, as it seems, the pressure of the general conditions of our truly Russian

(even though it be Soviet) bureaucracy. It is, therefore, highly essential that in addition to the work of the respective state institutions, and in order to improve and liven it up, a magazine setting before itself the task of becoming an organ of militant materialism should carry on untiringly an atheistic propaganda and struggle. The appropriate literature in all languages should be closely followed and everything that is at all valuable in it should be translated or at least reviewed.

Engels has long ago advised the leaders of the modern proletariat to translate for mass distribution among the people the militant atheist literature of the end of the eighteenth century. To our shame, be it said, up to the present, we have failed to do it (one of the numerous proofs that it is easier to win power than to be capable of using it rightly). Our sluggishness, inactivity and incapacity are sometimes excused by all sorts of “lofty” considerations, such as that the old atheistic literature of the eighteenth century is antiquated, unscientific, naïve, etc. There is nothing worse than such ostensibly scientific spohisms which disguise either pedantry or a complete failure to grasp Marxism. There is, of course, not a little that is unscientific and naïve in the atheist works of the eighteenth century revolutionaries. But no one prevents the publishers from abridging them and providing them with brief afterwords indicating the progress made by mankind since the eighteenth century in scientific criticism of religion, indicating also the latest respective works, etc. It would be the biggest and worst mistake which a Marxist could make to think that the millions upon millions of people (particularly the peasants and artisans), who have been condemned by the whole of modern society to darkness, ignorance and prejudice, can emancipate themselves from this darkness solely along the straight line of purely Marxist education. These masses must be given the most diverse atheist propaganda stuff, they must be made acquainted with the facts from the most different spheres of life, they must be approached one way or another so as to get them interested, rouse them from their religious torpor and stir them up from the most different angles and by the most different methods, etc.

The clever, vivacious and talented journalism of the old atheists of the eighteenth century, which wittily and openly attacks the dominating clergy will very often prove to be a thousand times more

suitable to rouse people from religious torpor, than the dull and dry repetitions of Marxism with an almost complete lack of skilfully selected facts to serve as an illustration, which predominates in our literature and which (it is no use hiding our sins) frequently distorts Marxism. All the more or less important works of Marx and Engels have been translated. There are therefore absolutely no grounds to fear that the old atheism and old materialism may remain unsupplemented by the corrections introduced by Marx and Engels. The most important thing—and this is most frequently overlooked by our would-be Marxian Communists, who in fact mutilate Marxism—is an ability to awaken in the masses, who are still quite undeveloped, an interest, a conscious attitude towards religious questions and a conscious criticism of religion.

On the other hand, look at the representatives of modern scientific criticism of religion. These representatives of the educated bourgeoisie nearly always supplement their own refutations of religious prejudices with such arguments as at once expose them as the ideological slaves of the bourgeoisie, as the “graduated flunkies of clericalism.”

Two examples. Professor R. U. Whipper published in 1918 a little booklet, *The Origin of Christianity* (The Pharos Publishing House, Moscow). Retailing the chief results of modern science, the author does not only refrain from fighting the prejudices and deceptions, which are the weapons of the church, as a political organisation; he not only evades these questions, but simply makes a ridiculous and most reactionary pretence of rising above both—the idealistic and materialistic “extremes.” This is toadying to the dominating bourgeoisie which spends hundreds of millions of rubles, from the profits it squeezes out of the toilers, for the support of religion throughout the world.

The well-known German scientist, Arthur Drews, in his book, *The Christ Myth*, refutes the religious prejudices and legends, by proving that no Christ had ever existed; however, at the end of the book he declares himself in favour of religion, only a religion duly renovated, purified, provided with cunning devices, and capable of making a stand against “the naturalistic torrent which grows stronger and stronger every day.” (P. 238, fourth German edition, 1910.) We have here an outright and conscious reactionary who openly helps the exploiters to substitute the old and decayed religious prejudices by new ones, still more odious and still more despicable.

This does not mean that Drews should not have been translated. This means that Communists and all consistent materialists, while in a certain measure effecting their alliance with the progressive part of the bourgeoisie, should unflinchingly expose it when it falls into reactionary ways. This means that to frown upon an alliance with the representatives of the bourgeoisie of the eighteenth century, i.e., the period when it was revolutionary, would imply a betrayal of Marxism and materialism, since an “alliance” with the Drews in one form or another, in one measure or another, is obligatory for us in our struggle against the dominating religious obscurantists.

The magazine, *Under the Banner of Marxism*, which desires to be an organ of militant materialism, must devote a lot of space to atheist propaganda, to reviews of appropriate literature and to the correction of the vast shortcomings in our government work in this field. It is particularly important to utilise those books and pamphlets which contain many concrete facts and comparisons, showing the connection between the class interests and class organisations of the modern bourgeoisie and the organisations of religious institutions and religious propaganda.

Of extreme importance is all the material relating to the United States of America, where the official and state connection between religion and capital is less in evidence. On the other hand, however, it becomes clearer to us that so-called “modern democracy” (which the Mensheviks, the Socialist-Revolutionaries, and partly the anarchists, etc., unreasonably worship so much) represents nothing but the freedom to preach what is advantageous to the bourgeoisie, namely the most reactionary ideas, religion, obscurantism, defence of the exploiters, etc.

I cherish the hope that the magazine which desires to be an organ of militant materialism will provide our reading public with reviews of atheist literature showing for which circle of readers one or the other of the works would be suitable and in what respect; it should also indicate what literature has been published here (only decent translations should be taken into consideration and of these there are not so many) and what should be published further.

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Besides the alliance with the consistent materialists, who do not belong to the Communist Party, of no less and, perhaps, even of greater importance for work which militant materialism is called

upon to do, is an alliance with the representatives of modern natural science who incline towards materialism and are not afraid to defend and propagate it against the fashionable philosophic oscillations towards idealism and scepticism which are prevalent in so-called "educated society."

The article of A. Timiriasev on Einstein's theory of relativity, published in *Under the Banner of Marxism* No. 1-2, permits us to hope that the magazine will succeed in effecting this second alliance also. Greater attention must be devoted to it. It must be remembered that it is precisely the sharp change in the development of modern natural science that very often gives rise to reactionary philosophic schools and minor schools, tendencies and minor tendencies. Therefore to follow the questions raised by the latest revolution in natural science and to draw the naturalists into this work of the philosophic magazine—is a problem without the solution of which militant materialism will be neither militant nor materialism. Timiriasev had to make the observation in the first number of the magazine that while Einstein, according to Timiriasev, makes no attacks on the foundations of materialism, his (Einstein's) theory has already been seized upon by the huge mass of representatives of the bourgeois *intelligentsia* of all countries. But this applies not to Einstein alone but to a whole number, if not to the majority, of the great reformers of natural science, beginning with the end of the nineteenth century.

And in order that our attitude to such a phenomenon may not be an unconscious one, we must understand that without a solid philosophic grounding, no natural science and no materialism can hold its own in the struggle against the onrush of bourgeois ideas and against the restoration of the bourgeois conception of the universe. To hold its own in this struggle and to carry it through to the end with complete success, a naturalist must be a modern materialist, a conscious adherent of the materialism which is represented by Marx, i.e., he must be a dialectical materialist. To attain this aim, the contributors to the magazine *Under the Banner of Marxism* must organise a systematic study of Hegel's dialectics from a materialist point of view, i.e., the dialectics which Marx has applied practically in his *Capital* and in his historical and political works. And Marx has applied it with such success that now, when the new classes are awakening to life and struggle in the East (Japan, India and China)—i.e., those tens of millions of humanity, which form the greater

part of the world population and which with their historical passivity and their historical torpor were up to now the cause of stagnation and decay in many advanced European states—when the new peoples and new classes are awakening to life, every day tends more and more to confirm Marxism.

This work of study, interpretation and propaganda of Hegelian dialectics is, of course, extremely difficult and the first attempts in this respect will, undoubtedly, involve errors. But only he who does nothing never errs. Taking Marx's method of applying Hegel's dialectics, materialistically conceived, as a base, we can and should elaborate this dialectics from all aspects; print in the journal excerpts from the principal works of Hegel, interpret them materialistically, commenting on them by examples of Marx's application of dialectics as well as by examples of dialectics in the field of economic and political relations, which recent history, especially contemporary imperialist war and revolution, provides in unusually large numbers. The group of editors and contributors of the magazine *Under the Banner of Marxism* should, in my opinion, be a kind of "Society of Materialist Friends of Hegelian Dialectics." Modern naturalists will find (if they know how to seek and if we will learn to help them) in Hegel's dialectics, materialistically interpreted, a series of answers to those philosophic questions which are raised by the revolution in natural science and which make the intellectual admirers of the bourgeois fashion "stumble" into reaction.

Unless it sets such a task before itself and systematically fulfils it, materialism cannot be a militant materialism. To use an expression of Shchedrin, it will not fight as much as it will be fought. Without this, great naturalists will, as often as hitherto, be helpless in their philosophic conclusions and generalisations; because natural science progresses so rapidly and is undergoing such a profound revolutionary change in all domains that it will be absolutely impossible for it to dispense with philosophic conclusions.

Finally, I will cite an example not related to philosophy, but relating in any case to the sphere of social questions, to which the magazine *Under the Banner of Marxism* also intends to devote its attention.

It is an example of the way in which contemporary would-be science serves in effect as a conductor of the grossest and most odious reactionary views.



The *Economist*, No. 1 (1922), published by the Eleventh Department of the Russian Technical Association was recently sent to me. The young Communist who sent me this journal (he probably had no time to acquaint himself with its contents) rashly gave an exceedingly sympathetic opinion of it. In reality the journal is—I know not to what extent it is conscious of it—an organ of the contemporary advocates of serfdom disguised, of course, under a mantle of science, of democracy, etc.

A certain Mr. P. A. Sorokin publishes in this journal extensive so-called “sociological” essays on *The Influence of War*. The scientific article scintillates with scientific references to the “sociological” works of the author and his numerous teachers and colleagues abroad. This is what his science looks like:

The following appears on page 83:

“For every 10,000 marriages in Petrograd, there are now 92.2 divorces—a phantastic figure—and out of 100 annulled marriages, 51.1 lasted less than one year and of these 11 per cent lasted less than one month, 22 per cent less than two months, 41 per cent less than three to six months and only 26 per cent for over six months. The tale these figures tell is that modern legal marriage is a form which covers what is essentially illicit sexual relations making it possible for the lovers of ‘peaches’ ‘legally’ to satisfy their ‘appetites.’” (*Economist*, No. 1, page 83.)

There is no doubt that both this gentleman and the Russian Technical Society, which publishes this journal and inserts this kind of argument, count themselves among the adherents of democracy and will consider themselves greatly insulted when they will be called what they are, namely advocates of serfdom, reactionaries and “graduated flunkies of clericalism.”

The slightest acquaintance with the legislation of bourgeois countries on marriage, divorce and illegitimate children, as well as with the actual position of the matter in this respect, will show to anyone interested in this question that modern bourgeois democracy, even in all of the most democratic bourgeois republics, exhibits a feudal attitude both in respect of women as well as of children born out of wedlock.

This does not, of course, prevent the Mensheviks, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and a part of the Anarchists and all the respective parties in the West from continuing to shout about democracy and how it is violated by the Bolsheviks. In reality it is precisely the Bolshevik Revolution which is the only consistently democratic revolu-

tion in relation to such questions as marriage, divorce and the position of children born out of wedlock. And this is a question which affects in a most direct manner the interests of the greater half of the population in any country. The Bolshevik Revolution was the only one, which, notwithstanding the vast number of revolutions that have preceded it and have styled themselves democratic bourgeois ones, waged for the first time a determined struggle in this respect both against reaction and serfdom as well as against the usual hypocrisy of the ruling and propertied classes.

If the figure of 92 divorces for 10,000 marriages seems to Mr. Sorokin a phantastic one, one can only assume that either the author lived and was brought up in some monastery entirely walled off from life, although hardly anyone will believe in the existence of such a monastery, or that the author distorts the truth to please reaction and the bourgeoisie. Anyone who is in the least acquainted with the social conditions in bourgeois countries knows that the actual number of factual divorces (not, of course, those sanctioned by church and law) is everywhere infinitely larger. The only difference between Russia and other countries in this respect is that its laws do not sanctify hypocrisy or the lawless position of the woman and her child, but openly and in the name of the government declare systematic war against all hypocrisy, against all debarring of rights.

The Marxist magazine will have to wage war also against these modern “educated” advocates of serfdom. Probably not a few of them even receive money from the government and are in government service for educating the youth, though they are no more fit for this purpose than deliberate seducers are for the post of superintendents in educational establishments for the young.

The working class in Russia proved capable of seizing power but it has not yet learnt how to utilise it, otherwise it would have long since very politely dispatched such teachers and members of scientific associations to the countries of bourgeois “democracy.” The real place for such advocates of serfdom is there.

It will learn, however, if it will but have the desire to learn.

March 12, 1922.

## ON OUR REVOLUTION

(Re Sukhanov's Notes)

## I

I HAVE lately been looking through Sukhanov's Notes on the Revolution. What specially strikes one is the pedantry of all our petty-bourgeois democrats, as well as of all the heroes of the Second International. Apart from the fact that they are unusually chicken-hearted and that even the best of them feed themselves on petty reservations when it is a question of the slightest deviation from the German model, apart from this trait common to all petty-bourgeois democrats and abundantly displayed by them throughout the whole course of the revolution—what strikes one is their slavish imitation of the past.

They all call themselves Marxists, but their comprehension of Marxism is pedantic to an impossible degree. They have completely failed to grasp what is decisive in Marxism; namely, its revolutionary dialectics. Even the direct indications of Marx that a maximum of elasticity is required in times of revolution, are absolutely incomprehensible to them and even remain unnoticed by them as, for instance, the indications of Marx in his correspondence relating. I think, to 1856, when he expressed the hope for a union of a peasant war in Germany, which might create a revolutionary situation, with the working class movement; they avoid and prowl round this direct indication like a cat round a hot plate of porridge.

They show themselves in all their conduct as timid reformists who are afraid to recede from the bourgeoisie, let alone breaking with it, while at the same time, they disguise their cowardice by the most reckless phrasemongering and boasting. But even from a purely theoretical point of view, what strikes one in them is their complete failure to understand the following Marxist consideration. They have seen, so far, a definite path of development of capitalism and bourgeois democracy in Western Europe, and so, cannot imagine that that path can be considered as a model only *mutatis mutandis*,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> With the appropriate changes.—Ed.

except with certain corrections (quite insignificant from the point of view of world history).

*First*, a revolution linked up with the first world imperialist war. In such a revolution certain new features, or features that have undergone a change precisely on account of the war could not but make their appearance, since never in the world was there such a war in such a situation. We see that even now the bourgeoisie of the richest countries cannot establish "normal" bourgeois relations after this war, but our reformists, petty bourgeois masquerading as revolutionaries, considered and consider that normal bourgeois relations are the limit (impossible to surpass) and their idea of this "norm" is stereotyped and narrow to the extreme.

*Second*, they are perfect strangers to the idea that the reign of law in development throughout the whole world history does not exclude, but, on the contrary, presumes particular stages of development presenting peculiarities either in the form or in the order of development. It never even occurs to them, for instance, that Russia stands on the border-line of civilised countries and those which were for the first time definitely drawn into civilisation by this war—the countries of the whole East and the non-European countries—that therefore Russia could and was bound to display certain peculiarities, which lie, of course, along the general line of world development, but which distinguish its revolution from the previous ones in the West European countries and which introduce some innovation when passing to Eastern countries.

Infinitely trite is, for instance, the argument which they have learned by heart during the development of West European Social-Democracy, that we are not ripe for socialism, that we have not, as various "scientific" gentlemen among them express themselves, the objective economic conditions requisite for socialism. And it never occurs to any of them to ask himself: But could not a people meeting with a revolutionary situation, which has been created in the first imperialist war—could it not, under the influence of the hopelessness of its position, throw itself into a struggle which might open up at least some chances of winning for itself the not altogether usual conditions necessary for the further growth of civilisation?

"Russia has not attained the degree of development of the productive forces which makes socialism possible." All the heroes of the Second International including, of course, Sukhanov, treat this pro-

position as holy writ. They repeat this indisputable proposition in a thousand ways and imagine that it is decisive for an estimate of our revolution.

Well, and what if the peculiar situation has placed Russia in the world imperialist war in which all the more or less influential West European countries were involved; and has placed its development, which is proceeding on the border-line of the revolutions that were beginning, and had partially already begun in the East, in conditions that offered us the possibility of realising the very union of a "peasant war" with the labour movement of which no less a "Marxist" than Marx himself wrote in 1856, as of one of the possible perspectives in relation to Prussia?

What if the absolute hopelessness of the position, while increasing tenfold the forces of the workers and peasants, has opened up for us the possibility of passing on to the creation of the fundamental requisites of civilisation in a way different from that of the other West European states? Has the general line of development of world history changed as a result of this? Have the fundamental relations of the basic classes in each state, which are being and have been drawn into the general progress of world history, changed as a result of this?

If a definite level of culture is necessary for the establishment of socialism (although no one can say what this definite "level of culture" is), then why should it be impossible for us to begin first of all by attaining in a revolutionary way the prerequisites for this definite level, and *afterwards*, on the basis of the workers' and peasants' power and the Soviet system, proceed to overtake the other peoples?

## II

You say that a state of civilisation is required for the establishment of socialism. Very well. But why could we not first of all create such prerequisites for a state of civilisation in our country as the banishment of the landlords and of the Russian capitalists and then start moving towards socialism? Wherein is it written that such variations in the usual historical order are inadmissible or impossible?

I recollect that Napoleon wrote: "*On s'engage et puis on voit.*" Translated freely this means: "We must first of all join in a serious fight and then we shall see." We did join in a serious fight first of

all in November [October] 1917 and afterwards we saw such details of development (from the point of view of world history these are undoubtedly details) as the Brest-Litovsk Peace, or the New Economic Policy, etc., and at the present time there is already no doubt that we have in the main gained the victory.

Our Sukhanovs, to say nothing of the Social-Democrats who stand more to the Right, are not even aware that revolutions cannot, in general, be made otherwise. Our European philistines are not even aware that the coming revolutions in Eastern countries which have a vastly greater population and are distinguished by a vastly greater diversity of social conditions, will undoubtedly present them with still greater peculiarities than the Russian Revolution.

It goes without saying that the text-book written according to Kautsky was a very useful thing in its day. Still it is surely time to give up the idea that this text-book foresaw all the forms of development of further world history. The time has come, when it should be stated that those who think thus are simply fools.

January 17, 1923.

## MARXISM IN RUSSIA \*

(A fragment from: *"Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder*)

BOLSHEVISM came into being in 1903 on the most firm foundation of Marxian theory. And the soundness of this revolutionary theory, and of no other, was proved not only by the experience of all countries during the entire nineteenth century, but particularly by the ramblings, vacillations, mistakes and disappointments of revolutionary thought in Russia. For half a century—approximately between the forties and nineties of the preceding century—advanced thought in Russia, under the unparalleled yoke of the wildest and most reactionary tsarism, sought eagerly for a correct revolutionary theory, watching each and every "last word" in Europe and America in this field with astounding diligence and thoroughness. Russia has attained Marxism, the only revolutionary theory, by dint of fifty years of most painful travail and sacrifice, of the greatest revolutionary heroism, of the incredible energy and devotion in seeking and educating, and of practical experience, disappointment, checking and comparison with European experience. Thanks to the emigration forced by tsarism, revolutionary Russia, in the second half of the nineteenth century, came into possession of rich international connections, and was so well informed of the world forms and theories of the revolutionary movement, as no other country ever was.

Written April-May 1920.