

WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!

V.I. LENIN

**THE TEACHINGS
OF KARL MARX**

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Introduction

This pamphlet is a classical introduction to the teachings of Karl Marx. Written originally for the Granat Encyclopedia in 1914, it testifies brilliantly to the clarity and consistency of Lenin's mastery of Marxism. Within a limited space he has described, and indicated the main content of, the crucial discoveries by which Marx revolutionized the thinking of his age, and our own, and transformed the study of politics into a science.

A reading of this pamphlet helps considerably to a full understanding of the developments taking place in Canadian and world politics today. While it is but an introduction to the fundamentals of Marxism, study of its pages illuminates the social forces which are now finding expression in the changing course of history. The rise of new political parties in Canada and the developing possibilities for social progress each reflect the driving forces of which Marx was the discoverer and which can be fully understood only in the light of Marxism.

The writings of Marx, and his intimate friend and collaborator Frederick Engels, epitomize the best and most advanced thought of the modern

age. As Lenin points out in this pamphlet: Marx continued and completed the three chief ideological currents of the eighteenth century, namely; classical German philosophy, classical English political economy and French socialism combined with French revolutionary doctrines. By deep study, pursued with that unrelenting application which emphasized his genius, Marx traced those currents to their sources. He discovered the underlying connection between production relationships and legal and cultural forms. He showed that consciousness and thinking are the product of highly organized matter and reflect the material world. Social consciousness is, therefore, the result of social existence. Being a result of social existence, social consciousness inevitably reflects society in process of change and reacts upon the latter in turn. By that discovery Marx revealed the relationships between economic and ideological forces. He revealed, thereby, the reason why the sources of nearly all the slogans under which crusaders have fought throughout the ages must, in the last analysis, be sought in economic interests and aims.

The penetrating brilliance of Marx's analyses and the remarkable consistency of his political

and philosophic doctrine is explained by the fact that he studied society as a whole — and in motion. Philosophic materialism, dialectics, historical materialism, political economy, the class struggle, socialism and the tactics of the struggle for working class political power, were for Marx, as Lenin shows in this pamphlet, integral features of one grand world historical concept.

* * *

The starting point for Marx in his studies was the world — more accurately the universe — and the practical social activity of mankind. He found it a universe in motion; a universe in process of universal and unending change; a continuous process in which the relationship between cause and effect is itself a process in which “effects” become “causes” in turn; a process in which no result is really final because every result is subject to further change: to subsequent synthesis with other “results” in a new result which is qualitatively different.

In the welter of innumerable changes going on in nature Marx discerned the law of motion — the *dialectical law* which runs like a thread through the seeming chaos of events. Further-

more he discovered the identical law in operation in both the social development and the thinking of mankind. In short the much misrepresented dialectical laws which Marx discovered to be the law of motion of nature, society and human thought, are merely the most general and universally found characteristics of developing change.

Marx discovered that the institutions and ideas of any given society are a superstructure: the foundation upon which they are reared is to be found in the prevailing mode of production of that society, i.e. the economic relationships which characterize it. These are social relationships, not individual. Men are related to production as groups: workers, capitalists, merchants, landlords, etc. Thus, while economic relationships are the foundation of the social institutions within which they operate, it is clear that “economics” can properly be understood only when they are studied as a part of the political structure within which they operate. For example, in the social system in which we are living today, buying and selling, hiring and firing, investing and speculating, lending and borrowing, owning and renting, all require legalization of property relations in a code of laws enforced by police, courts and judiciary.

It is obvious, therefore, that economic activity goes on within a definite social and political setting. There is no such thing as a purely economic society. Economic theory is correct only when it explains or reflects the productive activities of the masses. Political economy can be fully understood only as an integral part of the whole complex of organized social life.

Engels illustrated the breadth and richness of the Marxist understanding of the foregoing in a letter to James Bloch in September, 1890. In the following passages which have become famous, he warned Bloch against the mechanical conception of Materialism which characterized the attitude of many self-styled Marxists at that time:

“According to the materialist conception of history the determining element in history is *ultimately* the production and reproduction in real life. More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. If therefore somebody twists this into the statement that the economic element is the *only* determining one, he transforms it into a meaningless, abstract and absurd phrase. The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure — political forms of the class

struggle and its consequences, constitutions established by the victorious class after a successful battle, etc. — forms of law — and then even the reflexes of all these actual struggles in the brains of the combatants: political, legal, philosophical theories, religious ideas and their further development into systems of dogma — also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases preponderate in determining their *form*. There is an interaction of all these elements, in which, amid all the endless *host* of accidents (i.e., of things and events whose inner connection is so remote or so impossible to prove that we regard it as absent and can neglect it), the economic movement finally asserts itself as necessary. Otherwise the application of the theory to any period of history one chose would be easier than the solution of a simple equation of the first degree”.¹

In real life no social system is “pure”. Every society includes features of older societies which have passed. Every society includes, also, although often in embryonic form, features of the

¹ Marx-Engels Correspondence — p. 475.

future social system. Marxism comprehends the difference between those features which represent the past or future system and the characteristic features of capitalist economy. Furthermore, Marxism comprehends all the different types of features in their changing relationship to each other and to society as a whole. Being the first of the world's great thinkers to make human practical activity in its relationship to the so-called "external world" the focal subject of his studies, it was Marx who founded the science of history, i.e. dialectical materialism.

* * *

Marx never suggested that his science provided ready-made answers to every question which arises in life. As Engels pointed out in one of his letters to Florence Kelley Wischnewetsky in 1886, "*Our theory is not a dogma but the exposition of a process of evolution and that process involves successive phases*".¹ That is exactly the essence of dialectical materialism. Marxian dialectic and historical materialism reveal the reign of law in the seemingly unrelated sequences of evolutionary and violent processes through which nature and

¹ Ibid. — p. 453.

society has developed. It reveals all history since primitive communist society as a historical process in which, stage by stage, with violent setbacks and interruptions, the concept of society and social well-being is inexorably being changed — becoming identified with the interests and the will of the great mass of the people.

Marx revealed the driving force in social development which brought the bourgeoisie to the leadership of the modern capitalist world. He demonstrated that the same historical driving force is now creating the necessity for the working class to assume new responsibilities as the custodian of the true interests of the nation.

* * *

The capitalist class came to power as the dominant class with the unification of the nations through the bourgeois revolutions. The modern nations were the offspring of the bourgeois revolutions. They did not leap into existence completely united and politically mature but developed through a lengthy evolutionary process of which the bourgeois revolutions were crucial stages.

The development of capitalism broke down

the barriers of feudal restrictions and created the possibility for amalgamation of the masses of the people of the various estates and provinces into a nation. Capitalist production burst through the narrow limits of city and local *particularism*, overwhelmed the barriers of local customs and undermined special privileges which obstructed the expanding profit system. The hereditary rights, claims and customs, which had accumulated through centuries of feudalism, were swept away by the growth of commodity production and exchange. With the assistance of the masses of the people, the bourgeoisie literally tore to shreds the crumbling structure of feudal social organization and cleared the way for national progress.

The national conception, the drive for unification of the people into a nation, developed everywhere along with the development of the national market. The central need of the rising capitalist class was a free market. Because the bourgeoisie needed a free market and all the legal and other forms and institutions that go with it, the development of the nation — particularly in periods of the bourgeois revolutions — was accompanied by the strong development of bourgeois democracy. The conscious national unity of the

people and national patriotism, are each intimately related to the development of the democratic rights and civil liberties which were established under the bourgeois regime.

The process was not even, of course. Achievement of bourgeois democracy at home and the winning of a free market within the national boundaries did not necessarily convert the bourgeoisie to the principle of struggle for democracy and national freedom in other lands also. As Lenin has pointed out: "Each country developed with particular prominence, first one, and then another aspect or feature or group of qualities of capitalism and of the working class movement. The process of development was uneven".¹

An outstanding example of this was provided in Britain. Feudalism was defeated in Britain far in advance of its defeat in other countries but that did not induce the English bourgeoisie to fight for democracy elsewhere. To quote Lenin again: "When France was making her great bourgeois revolution and rousing the whole continent of Europe to a historical new life, England was at the head of the counter-revolutionary coalition, alt-

¹ Lenin Selected Works — vol. 10 — p. 32.

though she was capitalistically much more developed than France and the English working class movement of that epoch brilliantly anticipated much of subsequent Marxism".¹

Because the national bourgeoisie needed the largest possible home market within boundaries under its own control, there took place, along with the process of national unification, systematic efforts to extend the territories of the national state. National interests replaced local and sectional interests. Loyalty to the King replaced fealty to the feudal landlord. Because it represented direct economic advantage, the authority of the government of the nation quickly replaced the temporal authority which had hitherto been exercised by the Church.

It was by such a process that the rise of capitalism with its bourgeois democratic revolutions and establishment of parliamentary democracy transformed subjects into citizens and peoples into nations. *The bourgeoisie of each of the modern capitalist states won their first great victories at the head of the nation.*

* * *

¹ Ibid.

The bourgeoisie utilized the favourable position in which it found itself as a result of economic developments. From the hour of its victory it sought to set the stamp of its own interests and ideology upon the nation. By systematic emphasis, and ruthless elimination, the conception of "national interest" was made to represent primarily the interests of the property owning section of the nation. As a result of this, nationalism became an instrument for strengthening the class political power of the bourgeoisie and, in many cases, a weapon for dividing people and sharpening conflict between them rather than for their unification and mutual cooperation.

The capitalist class, in every country, strives to establish the idea that development in that particular country has followed special patterns, fundamentally different from the pattern of development in all other countries. For example, how often we are told that "We English-speaking people are different"; or the narrower Canadian version of the same claim which avers that Canadian politics and problems cannot be understood in terms that describe the process and problems of political development in Europe.

* * *

The fact is, of course, that the development of capitalism in Canada, and the role of the bourgeoisie, has coincided in all essentials with the general process of capitalist development and the historical role of the bourgeoisie of all countries.

The democratic elements of the nascent bourgeoisie came forward at the head of the nation in Lower Canada in the protracted struggle of the Representative Assembly against the dictatorial powers and practices of the British governors and their appointed Legislative Councils. In the course of this struggle Louis Joseph Papineau and his supporters stood forward as the champions, simultaneously, of the French-Canadian nation and the cause of democratic rights for its people. In Upper Canada the same forces came forward, during the same period, at the head of the people against colonial dictatorship and the misrule of appointed British governors and the "Family Compact" which surrounded them.

The Rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada were, in fact, the revolutionary culminations of the long struggle of the people against colonial oppression. The bourgeois-democratic character of the political aims of the leaders of that struggle for Canadian self-determination was illustrated

clearly by the words of William Lyon Mackenzie in 1834 when he urged upon the members of the Upper Canada Assembly: “the importance of two things: the necessity of getting control of the revenue raised in this country, and a control over the men sent here to govern us by placing them under the direction of responsible advisers.” Exactly the same measures were being urged by Papineau and his supporters in the Representative Assembly in Lower Canada — where they had pressed for them since 1816. It is interesting to note that it was for advocating such measures that Papineau and Mackenzie were branded as “Yankee Agents” by the reactionaries of that time.

The national-democratic revolution was defeated in both Upper and Lower Canada in 1837 but the central political aim of the revolution was achieved when, due to growing fear of the boisterously developing United States and the growing economic strength and political influence of the Canadian bourgeoisie, the imperial government granted the United Provinces responsible government in 1848.

* * *

Responsible government, gained as a result of

thirty years of struggle, quickly became the starting point of new struggles for new and wider opportunities on the part of the youthful rising Canadian bourgeoisie. The discovery of gold in California in 1849 stimulated the increase of prices, while the Crimean war increased the British demand for many products. Railway construction was developing in a big way in the United States. New industries and new banks were being established, settlement and business was expanding westward. These developments, and crisis in both economy and politics at home, soon confronted the Canadian bourgeoisie with two alternatives: either extend their own rule over the vast territory west of the great lakes and develop it, or run the risk of United States settlement spreading northward as it spread westward — hemming the British North American colonies into a relatively small area in the North East corner of the Continent.

The imperial government became aware of this danger also. Thus, when the most advanced sections of the Canadian bourgeoisie put forward a proposal to unite all the British North American colonies and give the new state jurisdiction over all territory north of the American border, they

were supported by the decisive voices in the imperial government.

By Confederation, in 1867, the Canadian bourgeoisie brought all the vast territory of the northern half of the continent under their own control, secured control of the home market and external trade policies. Within the limits established by their own interests and aims they achieved self-government and parliamentary democracy. They started, albeit in a distorted form, the process of the consolidation of the British North American colonies into a single two-nation state.

National unification has not been completed; on the contrary, sectionalism remains a problem reflecting deep conflict and antagonisms in Canada. Selfish monopoly capital and partisan politicians have maintained a systematic discrimination against French-Canada and the bourgeoisie has utilized nationalism as a weapon with which to divide the people. Furthermore Canada as a whole suffers because capitalist economy, operating in the constitutional framework established at Confederation, has fostered sectionalism in the process of concentrating wealth and finance-capitalist control to a degree probably without paral-

lel in any other country.

Confederation did start the process of national consolidation nevertheless, and, following Confederation, the bourgeoisie continued to stand at the head of the nation in persistent efforts to abolish colonial restrictions which the imperial government tried stubbornly to maintain.

At the time of Confederation the situation was serious. The total population of the country was only three and a half million and seven out of every nine people lived in the two provinces of Ontario and Quebec. The significance of Confederation — the potentialities of the vast lands stretching out to the Pacific, the scintillating possibilities of railway building, of settlement of the prairies, of industrial development — was fully understood by only a limited number of people even among the bourgeoisie. Among those who did understand it, however, it was realized that national policies would have to be based upon economic needs if a period of development and growth was to replace the existing economic stagnation. As Galt, one of the Fathers of Confederation, put it when introducing the last budget of the United Provinces in 1866: “Canada has come to the parting of the way...”

Realization of that fact was sharpened by developments in the United States. During the five years 1869-73 inclusive, railway mileage in the United States was almost doubled. As a result of American railway construction and European wars, British manufacturers were able to double the prices of iron and steel. Nineteen new banks were established in Canada during this period but in September, 1873, a cyclical crisis paralysed capitalist economy throughout the world. Crisis and depression forced the whole issue of markets, tariffs, trade relationships and possibilities for industrial development to a head and Canada launched out upon the "National Policy" in 1878. Under the "National Policy" tariffs were imposed against goods coming from Britain as well as against goods from other countries. In protecting its own material interests the bourgeoisie had taken another step towards consolidation of the Canadian state and the nation.

Marx has emphasized that mankind undertakes only those tasks which it is able to accomplish at the time. Similarly men make the history of nations out of the possibilities which already exist. In Canada, as in other capitalist countries, the possibilities for action to direct and facilitate

national development, i.e. to shape the nation's history, were available only to the bourgeoisie. At each significant stage of the development of Canada from a handful of weak, isolated, backward colonies to an economically integrated and developed capitalist state, the capitalist class, in seeking to advance its own class interests, stood at the head of the nation in the struggle for responsible government, bourgeois-democratic civil rights, and national sovereignty for Canada.

Meantime, in Canada as elsewhere throughout the early stages of the development of capitalism, the industrial workers, the most significant product of the capitalist system, remained literally on the outer political edge of events. They were without class political organization, and therefore without direct political influence or even a voice in national affairs. An illuminating illustration of their political status in society was provided by the regularity and blatancy with which politicians advised them to be grateful that the "nation", i.e. the capitalist class, provided them with employment.

* * *

The historical contribution that capitalism

made to human progress was in its tremendous development of the productive forces. In this it played a vital and progressive role. Capitalism resulted in tremendous technical, economic and political progress. It had no sooner unified the home market in the individual capitalist countries than it reached out to unify the world market as a whole. The law of labour productivity was stronger than distance, language, customs and traditions, stronger in the long run even than tariff barriers.

But capitalism became finance-capitalist imperialism. In country after country numerically small but immensely powerful sections of the capitalist class became dominant as a result of the concentration of economic power. The bourgeoisie, which had won its first victories as a class at the head of the nation, was turned by its dominant section increasingly toward policies which were contrary to the real interests of the overwhelming majority of the people — the real nation.

To Lenin it was clear in 1916 that we were at the highest stage of capitalism and that monopoly capitalism was already “capitalism in transition”. This was possible to Lenin because, for Marxists,

political economy is more than a study of the method and mechanics of production and distribution of wealth. In the development of his political science Marx had penetrated deep beyond the appearance of the economic categories of rent, wages, prices, values, profits, interest etc. He had searched out the characteristic features which distinguished capitalist economy from the economy of all other social systems, i.e. commodity production, surplus value, the monopoly of the means of production by a numerically small class in society, wage labour, the laws of capitalist accumulation, the changing relationship of constant capital to variable capital and the dynamic tendency thereof, capitalist monopoly and the capitalist crisis. In performing his monumental task Marx had laid bare the actual relationship beneath all the varying forms of activity in capitalist society and had revealed the laws of its development. By that Marx transformed political economy from a subject of academic study into an instrument of political struggle and a guide to action. He discovered the deepening contradiction between continually evolving technique and economic needs on one hand, and fixed, outdated, political and legal forms and institutions on the

other. In revealing that contradiction he foretold also the historical tasks which must confront the modern industrial working class, and he showed that performance of those tasks will stimulate and facilitate its political organization and its advance toward a leading role in the nation.

* * *

That was why Marxists were able to recognize the historical character of the Russian Revolution and, once the new Soviet state was firmly established, the profoundly significant role that it was bound to play in world political development. History has vindicated Marxism brilliantly in this respect. During the twenty-six years since November 7th, 1917, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has grown steadily stronger; it stands today as the decisive state of the socialist world.

The tremendous achievements of the USSR, in domestic and foreign policy and on the field of battle in this war for world freedom, is a mighty vindication of policies based upon Marxist science. Events are demonstrating day by day that the policies followed by the USSR have been policies based upon the real interests of its people and reflect the real interests of the masses of the peo-

ple everywhere. The historic tasks and terrible alternatives that will confront mankind when complete military victory has been achieved make it more urgent than ever that working men and women should study the history of the Soviet Union and the development of its state policies in the light of the teachings of Karl Marx.

* * *

The relationship of the working class within the nation has changed, is still changing, and nowhere is this more true than in Canada. By its own class action the working class has won a place for itself, as a class, in the nation's affairs. By the building of the trade unions and the development of independent working-class political action the working class, along with its allies the progressive farmers and urban middle class people, is exercising an influence in the shaping of national policies and upon the relationships of our nation with other nations.

The working-class and its allies, the farmers and urban middle class people, now constitute the overwhelming majority of Canadians. The working class is by far the most important single class in the nation. It is the task of the working

people now to seek to unite all socialist forces: to unite the labour movement, fight for farmer-labour unity and to join hands with the other progressive forces.

In its own development, in its activities to defend the true interest of the nation, the working class and its allies will steadily strengthen and develop the socialist forces which are destined eventually to make the loftiest dreams of man into reality here in our own rich and lovely land. Through the struggle for unity in the fight for human progress we shall achieve Socialism and through Socialism we shall realize true humanity. *That is the essence of the teachings of Karl Marx.*

TIM BUCK

APRIL, 1944

Karl Marx

Karl Marx was born May 5, 1818, in the city of Trier, in the Rhine province of Prussia. His father was a lawyer — a Jew, who in 1824 adopted Protestantism. The family was well-to-do, cultured, but not revolutionary. After graduating from the *Gymnasium* in Trier, Marx entered first the University at Bonn, later Berlin University, where he studied jurisprudence, but devoted most of his time to history and philosophy. At the conclusion of his university course in 1841, he submitted his doctoral dissertation on Epicurus' philosophy. Marx at that time was still an adherent of Hegel's idealism. In Berlin he belonged to the circle of "Left Hegelians" (Bruno Bauer and others) who sought to draw atheistic and revolutionary conclusions from Hegel's philosophy.

After graduating from the University, Marx moved to Bonn in the expectation of becoming a professor. However, the reactionary policy of the government — that in 1832 had deprived Ludwig Feuerbach of his chair and in 1836 again refused to allow him to teach, while in 1842 it forbade the young professor, Bruno Bauer, to give

lectures at the University — forced Marx to abandon the idea of pursuing an academic career. The development of the ideas of Left Hegelianism in Germany was very rapid at that time. Ludwig Feuerbach in particular, after 1836, began to criticize theology and to turn to materialism, which by 1841 had gained the upper hand in his conceptions (*The Essence of Christianity*): in 1843 his *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.” At that time the radical bourgeois of the Rhine province, who had certain points of contact with the Left Hegelians, founded, in Cologne, an opposition paper, the *Rheinische Zeitung* (*Rhenish Gazette*), which began to appear on January 1, 1842. Marx and Bruno Bauer were invited to be the chief contributors, and in October, 1842, Marx became the paper’s editor-in-chief and moved from Bonn to Cologne. As the revolutionary-democratic tendency of the paper under Marx’s editorship became more and more pronounced, the government first subjected the paper to double and tri-

ple censorship, then ordered its complete suppression by April 1, 1843. At this time Marx was compelled to resign his post as editor, but his resignation did not save the paper, which was forced to suspend publication in March, 1843. Of Marx's larger articles that were published in the *Rheinische Zeitung*, Engels notes an article on the situation of the peasant wine-growers in the Moselle Valley. Marx's newspaper work revealed to him that he was not sufficiently acquainted with political economy, and he set out to study it diligently.

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

ing 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 revolutionist, advocating “merciless criticism of everything in existence”, particularly “criticism of the weapons”, and appealing to the *masses* and to the *proletariat*.

In September, 1844, Friedrich Engels, who from then on was Marx’s closest friend, came for a few days to Paris. Both of them took a very active part in the seething life of the revolutionary groups of Paris (where Proudhon’s doctrine was then of particular importance; later Marx decisively parted ways with that doctrine in his *Poverty of Philosophy*, 1847). Waging a sharp struggle against the various doctrines of petty-bourgeois Socialism, they worked out the theory and tactics of revolutionary *proletarian Socialism*, otherwise known as Communism (Marxism). For this phase of Marx’s activities, see Marx’s works of 1844-1848. In 1845, at the insistence of the Prussian government, Marx was banished from Paris as a dangerous revolutionist. From Paris he moved to Brussels. In the spring of 1847 Marx and Engels joined a secret propaganda society

bearing the name *Bund der Kommunisten* (*Communist League*), at whose second congress they took a prominent part (London, November, 1847), and at whose behest they composed the famous *Manifesto of the Communist Party* which appeared in February, 1848. With the clarity and brilliance of genius, this work outlines a new conception of the world; it represents consistent materialism extended also to the realm of social life; it proclaims dialectics as the most comprehensive and profound doctrine of development; it advances the theory of the class struggle and of the world-historic revolutionary role of the proletariat as the creator of a new Communist society.

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

lution 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-proletarian Socialism in general forced Marx to wage a continuous and merciless struggle, sometimes to repel the most savage and monstrous personal attacks (*Herr Vogt* [*Mr. Vogt*]).¹ Standing aloof from the emigrant circles, Marx developed his materialist doctrine in a number of historical works, giving most of his

¹ Karl Vogt (1817-1895), a German democrat against whom Marx waged a merciless polemic, exposing his connection with Napoleon III. — Ed.

time to the study of political economy. This science was revolutionized by Marx (see below “Marx’s Teaching”) in his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859) and *Capital* (Vol. I, 1867).

The period of the revival of democratic movements at the end of the fifties and the beginning of the sixties again called Marx to political activity. On September 28, 1864, the International Workingmen’s Association was founded in London — the famous First International. Marx was the soul of this organization, the author of its first “appeal” and of a host of its resolutions, declarations, manifestoes. Uniting the labour movement of the various countries, striving to direct into the channel of united activities the various forms of the non-proletarian, pre-Marxian Socialism (Mazzini, Proudhon, Bakunin, liberal trade unionism in England, Lassallean Right vacillations in Germany, etc.); fighting against the theories of all these sects and schools, Marx hammered out the common tactics of the proletarian struggle of the working class — one and the same in the various countries. After the fall of the Paris Commune (1871) — which Marx analysed, as a man of *action*, a revolutionist, with so much penetra-

tion, pertinence and brilliance in his work *The Civil War in France*, 1871¹ — and after the International had been split by the Bakuninists, it became impossible for that organization 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.² The First International had accomplished its historic role, giving way to an epoch of an infinitely accelerated growth of the labour movement in all the countries of the world, precisely the epoch when this movement grew in *breadth* and *scope*, when *mass* Socialist labour parties were created on the basis of individual national states.

Strenuous work in the International and still more strenuous theoretical activities undermined Marx's health completely. He continued his work on political economy and the completion of *Cap-*

¹ The title later given to the Address written at the request of the General Council of the International Workingmen's Association, and delivered by Marx on May 30, 1871, immediately after the fall of the Paris Commune. — Ed.

² The International was formally dissolved at its last congress in Philadelphia on July 15, 1876. — Ed.

ital, 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 Delmuth, 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 civilized countries of the world, make it necessary that we present a brief outline of his world conception in general before proceeding to the chief contents of Marxism, namely, the economic doctrine of Marx.

PHILOSOPHIC MATERIALISM

Beginning with the years 1844-1845, when his views were definitely formed, Marx was a materialist, and especially a follower of Feuerbach;

even in later times, he saw Feuerbach's weak side only in this, that his materialism was not sufficiently consistent and comprehensive. For Marx, Feuerbach's world-historic and "epoch-making" significance consisted in his having decisively broken away from the idealism of Hegel, and in his proclamation of materialism, which even in the eighteenth century, especially in France, had become "a struggle not only against the existing political institutions, and against... religion and theology, but also... against every form of metaphysics" (as "intoxicated speculation" in contradistinction to "sober philosophy").

"For Hegel" — wrote Marx, in the preface to the second edition of the first volume of *Capital* — "the thought process (which he actually transforms into an independent subject, giving to it the name of "idea") is the demiurge [creator] of the real... In my view, on the other hand, the ideal is nothing other than the material when it has been transposed and translated inside the human head." [*Capital*, Vol. I.]

In full conformity with Marx's materialist philosophy, and expounding it, Engels wrote in

Anti-Duebring (which Marx read in the manuscript):

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

Again: “Hegel was an idealist; that is to say, for him the thoughts in his head were not more or less abstract reflections [in the original: *Abbilder*, images, copies; sometimes Engels speaks of “imprints”] of real things and processes; but, on

the contrary, things and their evolution were, for Hegel, only reflections in reality of the Idea that existed somewhere even prior to the world.”

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

“The great basic question of all, and especially of recent, philosophy, is the question of the relationship between thought and existence, between spirit and nature... Which is prior to the other: spirit or nature? Philosophers are divided into two great camps, according to the way in which they have answered this question. Those who declare that spirit existed before nature, and who, in the last analysis, therefore, assume in one way or another that the world was created... have formed the idealist camp. The others, who regard nature as primary, belong to the various schools of materialism.”¹

¹ Ludwig Feuerbach, New York Edition, 1935, p. 30.

Any other use (in a philosophic sense) of the terms idealism and materialism is only confusing. Marx decidedly rejected not only idealism, always connected in one way or another with religion, but also the views of Hume and Kant, that are especially widespread in our day, as well as agnosticism, criticism, positivism in various forms; he considered such philosophy as a “reactionary” concession to idealism, at best as a “shamefaced manner of admitting materialism through the back door while denying it before the world.” (On this question see, besides the above-mentioned works of Engels and Marx, a letter of Marx to Engels, dated December 12, 1866, in which Marx, taking cognizance of an utterance of the well-known naturalist, T. Huxley, who “in a more materialistic spirit than he has manifested in recent years” declared that “as long as we actually observe and think, we cannot get away from materialism,” reproaches him for once more leaving a new “back door” open to agnosticism and Humeism.) It is especially important that we should note Marx’s opinion concerning the relation between freedom and necessity: “Freedom is

the recognition of necessity. Necessity is blind only in so far as it is not understood” (Engels, *Anti-Duehring*). This means acknowledgment of the objective reign of law in nature and of the dialectical transformation of necessity into freedom (at the same time, an acknowledgment of the transformation of the unknown but knowable “thing-in-itself” into the “thing-for-us,” of the “essence of things” into “phenomena”). Marx and Engels pointed out the following major shortcomings of the “old” materialism, including Feuerbach’s (and *a fortiori*, the “vulgar” materialism of Buechner, Vogt and Moleschott): (1) it was “predominantly mechanical,” not taking into account the latest developments of chemistry and biology (in our day it would be necessary to add the electric theory of matter); (2) it was non-historical, non-dialectical (was metaphysical, in the sense of being anti-dialectical), and did not apply the standpoint of evolution consistently and all-sidedly; (3) it regarded “human nature” abstractly, and not as a “synthesis” of (definite, concrete-historical) “social relationships” — and thus only “interpreted” the world, whereas it was a question of “changing” it, that is, it did not grasp the significance of “practical revolutionary activ-

ity.”

DIALECTICS

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

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

ring).

Again, Engels writes:

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

“In the eyes of dialectic philosophy, nothing is established for all time, nothing is absolute or sacred. On everything and in everything it sees the stamp of inevitable decline; nothing can resist it save the unceasing process of formation and destruction, the unend-

ing ascent from the lower to the higher — a process of which that philosophy itself is only a simple reflection within the thinking brain.” (*Ludwig Feuerbach*).

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

This revolutionary side of Hegel’s philosophy was adopted and developed by Marx. Dialectical materialism “does not need any philosophy towering above the other sciences.”¹ Of former philosophies there remain “the science of thinking and its laws — formal logic and dialectics.”² Dialectics, as the term is used by Marx in conformity with Hegel, includes what is now called the theory of cognition, or epistemology, or gnoseology, a science that must contemplate its subject matter in the same way — historically, studying and generalizing the origin and development of cognition, the transition from *non*-consciousness to consciousness. In our times, the idea of development, of evolution, has almost fully penetrated social consciousness, but it has done so in other

¹ Anti-Duehring. — Ed.

² Ibid. — Ed.

ways, not through Hegel's philosophy. Still, the same idea, as formulated by Marx and Engels on the basis of Hegel's philosophy, is much more comprehensive, much more abundant in content than the current theory of evolution. A development that repeats, as it were, the stages already passed, but repeats them in a different way, on a higher plane ("negation of negation"); a development, so to speak, in spirals, not in a straight line; a development in leaps and bounds, catastrophes, revolutions; "intervals of gradualness"; transformation of quantity into quality; inner impulses for development, imparted by the contradiction, the conflict of different forces and tendencies reacting on a given body or inside a given phenomenon or within a given society; interdependence, and the closest, indissoluble connection between *all* sides of every phenomenon (history disclosing ever new sides), a connection that provides the one world-process of motion proceeding according to law — such are some of the features of dialectics as a doctrine of evolution more full of meaning than the current one. (See letter of Marx to Engels, dated January 8, 1868, in which he ridicules Stein's "wooden trichotomies," which it is absurd to confuse with materialist dialectics.)

MATERIALIST CONCEPTION OF HISTORY

Realizing the inconsistency, the incompleteness, and the one-sidedness of the old materialism, Marx became convinced that it was necessary “to harmonize the science of society with the materialist basis, and to reconstruct it in accordance with this basis.”¹ If, speaking generally, materialism explains consciousness as the outcome of existence, and not conversely, then, applied to the social life of mankind, materialism must explain *social* consciousness as the outcome of *social* existence. “Technology,” writes Marx in the first volume of *Capital*, “reveals man’s dealings with nature, discloses the direct productive activities of his life, thus throwing light upon social relations and the resultant mental conceptions.” In the preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* Marx gives an integral formulation of the fundamental principles of materialism as applied to human society and its history, in the following words:

“In the social production of the means of

¹ Ludwig Feuerbach. — Ed.

life, human beings enter into definite and necessary relations which are independent of their will — production relations which correspond to a definite stage of the development of their productive forces. The totality of these production relations constitutes the economic structure of society, the real basis upon which a legal and political superstructure arises and to which definite forms of social consciousness correspond. The mode of production of the material means of life determines, in general, the social, political, and intellectual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of human beings that determines their existence, but, conversely, it is their social existence that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing production relationships, or, what is but a legal expression for the same thing, with the property relationships within which they have hitherto moved. From forms of development of the productive forces, these relationships turn into their fetters. A period of social revolution then begins. With the change in the economic foundation,

the whole gigantic superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations we must always distinguish between the material changes in the economic conditions of production, changes which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic, or philosophic, in short, ideological forms, in which human beings become conscious of this conflict and fight it out to an issue.

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

of labour being determined by the means of production.”]

The discovery of the materialist conception of history, or, more correctly, the consistent extension of materialism to the domain of social phenomena, obviated the two chief defects in earlier historical theories. For, in the first place, those theories, at best, examined only the ideological motives of the historical activity of human beings without investigating the origin of these ideological motives, or grasping the objective conformity to law in the development of the system of social relationships, or discerning the roots of these social relationships in the degree of development of material production. In the second place, the earlier historical theories ignored the activities of the *masses*, whereas historical materialism first made it possible to study with scientific accuracy the social conditions of the life of the masses and the changes in these conditions. At best, pre-Marxist “sociology” and historiography gave an accumulation of raw facts collected at random, and a description of separate sides of the historic process. Examining the *totality* of all the opposing tendencies, reducing them to precisely definable conditions in the mode of life and the method of pro-

duction of the various *classes* of society, discarding subjectivism and free will in the choice of various “leading” ideas or in their interpretation, showing how all the ideas and all the various tendencies, without exception, have their roots in the condition of the material forces of production, Marxism pointed the way to a comprehensive, an all-embracing study of the rise, development, and decay of socio-economic structures. People make their own history; but what determines their motives, that is, the motives of people in the mass; what gives rise to the clash of conflicting ideas and endeavours; what is the sum total of all these clashes among the whole mass of human societies; what are the objective conditions for the production of the material means of life that form the basis of all the historical activity of man; what is the law of the development of these conditions — to all these matters Marx directed attention, pointing out the way to a scientific study of history as a unified and true-to-law process despite its being extremely variegated and contradictory.

CLASS STRUGGLE

That in any given society the strivings of some of the members conflict with the strivings of oth-

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

“The history of all human society, past and present [wrote Marx in 1848, in the *Communist Manifesto*; except the history of the primitive community, Engels added], has been the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, baron and serf, guild-burgess and journeyman — in a word, oppressor and oppressed — stood in sharp opposition each to the other. They car-

ried on perpetual warfare, sometimes masked, sometimes open and acknowledged; a warfare that invariably ended either in a revolutionary change in the whole structure of society or else in the common ruin of the contending classes... Modern bourgeois society, rising out of the ruins of feudal society, did not make an end of class antagonisms. It merely set up new classes in place of the old; new conditions of oppression; new embodiments of struggle. Our own age, the bourgeois age, is distinguished by this — that it has simplified class antagonisms. More and more, society is splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great and directly contraposed classes: bourgeoisie and proletariat.”

Since the time of the great French Revolution, the class struggle as the actual motive force of events has been most clearly manifest in all European history. During the Restoration period in France, there were already a number of historians (Thierry, Guizot, Mignet, Thiers) who, generalizing events, could not but recognize in the class struggle the key to the understanding of all the history of France. In the modern age — the epoch of the complete victory of the bourgeoisie, of rep-

representative institutions, of extended (if not universal) suffrage, of cheap daily newspapers widely circulated among the masses, etc., of powerful and ever-expanding organizations of workers and employers, etc. — the class struggle (though sometimes in a highly one-sided, “peaceful,” “constitutional” form), has shown itself still more obviously to be the mainspring of events. The following passage from Marx’s *Communist Manifesto* will show us what Marx demanded of social sciences as regards an objective analysis of the situation of every class in modern society as well as an analysis of the conditions of development of every class.

“Among all the classes that confront the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is really revolutionary. Other classes decay and perish with the rise of large-scale industry, but the proletariat is the most characteristic product of that industry. The lower middle class — small manufacturers, small traders, handicraftsmen, peasant proprietors — one and all fight the bourgeoisie in the hope of safeguarding their existence as sections of the middle class. They are, therefore, not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay, more, they are reac-

tionary, for they are trying to make the wheels of history turn backwards. If they ever become revolutionary, it is only because they are afraid of slipping down into the ranks of the proletariat; they are not defending their present interests, but their future interests; they are forsaking their own standpoint, in order to adopt that of the proletariat.”

In a number of historical works Marx gave brilliant and profound examples of materialist historiography, an analysis of the position of *each* separate class, and sometimes of that of various groups or strata within a class, showing plainly why and how “every class struggle is a political struggle.” The above quoted passage is an illustration of what a complex network of social relations and *transitional stages* between one class and another, between the past and the future, Marx analyses in order to arrive at the resultant of the whole historical development.

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

MARX’S ECONOMIC DOCTRINE

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

VALUE

A commodity is, firstly, something that satisfies a human need; and, secondly, it is something that is exchanged for something else. The utility of a thing gives it *use-value*. Exchange-value (or simply, value) presents itself first of all as the proportion, the ratio, in which a certain number of use-values of one kind are exchanged for a certain number of use-values of another kind. Daily experience shows us that by millions upon millions of such exchanges, all and sundry use-values, in themselves very different and not comparable one with another, are equated to one another. Now, what is common in these various things which are

constantly weighed one against another in a definite system of social relationships? That which is common to them is that they are *products of labour*. In exchanging products, people equate to one another most diverse kinds of labour. The production of commodities is a system of social relationships in which different producers produce various products (the social division of labour), and in which all these products are equated to one another in exchange. Consequently, the element common to all commodities is not concrete labour in a definite branch of production, not labour of one particular kind, but *abstract* human labour — human labour in general. All the labour power of a given society, represented in the sum total of values of all commodities, is one and the same human labour power. Millions upon millions of acts of exchange prove this. Consequently, each particular commodity represents only a certain part of *socially necessary* labour time. The magnitude of the value is determined by the amount of socially necessary labour, or by the labour time that is socially requisite for the production of the given commodity, of the given use-value. “...Exchanging labour products of different kinds one for another, they equate the values of

the exchanged products; and in doing so they equate the different kinds of labour expended in production, treating them as homogeneous human labour. They do not know that they are doing this, but they do it.”¹ 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.² We can only understand what value is when we consider it from the point of view of a system of social production relationships in one particular historical type of society; and, moreover, of relationships which present themselves in a mass form, the phenomenon of exchange repeating itself millions upon millions of times. “As values, all commodities are only definite quantities of congealed labour time.”³ 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

¹ Capital, Vol. I. — Ed.

² Ibid. — Ed.

³ Critique of Political Economy. — Ed.

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

“Money... presupposes a definite level of commodity exchange. The various forms of money (simple commodity equivalent or means of circulation, or means of payment,

treasure, or international money) indicate, according to the different extent to which this or that function is put into application, and according to the comparative predominance of one or other of them, very different grades of the social process of production.” [*Capital*, Vol. I.]

SURPLUS VALUE

At a particular stage in the development of commodity production, money becomes transformed into capital. The formula of commodity circulation was C-M-C (commodity-money-commodity); the sale of one commodity for the purpose of buying another. But the general formula of capital, on the contrary, is M-C-M (money-commodity-money); purchase for the purpose of selling — at a profit. The designation “surplus value” is given by Marx to the increase over the original value of money that is put into circulation. The fact of this “growth” of money in capitalist society is well known. Indeed, it is this “growth” which transforms money into *capital*, as a special, historically defined, social relationship of production. Surplus value cannot arise out of the circulation of commodities, for this represents

nothing more than the exchange of equivalents; it cannot arise out of an advance in prices, for the mutual losses and gains of buyers and sellers would equalize one another; and we are concerned here, not with what happens to individuals, but with a mass or average or social phenomenon. (In order that he may be able to receive surplus value, “Moneybags must.... find in the market a commodity whose use-value has the peculiar quality of being a source of value”¹ — 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

¹ Capital, Vol. I. — Ed.

back the cost of his own maintenance; and in the course of the next six hours (“surplus” labour time), he produces a “surplus” product for which the capitalist does not pay him — surplus product or surplus value. In capital, therefore, from the viewpoint of the process of production, we have to distinguish between two parts: first, constant capital, expended for the means of production (machinery, tools, raw materials, etc.), the value of this being (all at once or part by part) transferred, unchanged, to the finished product; and, secondly, variable capital, expended for labour power. The value of this latter capital is not constant, but grows in the labour process, creating surplus value. To express the degree of exploitation of labour power by capital, we must therefore compare the surplus value, not with the whole capital, but only with the variable capital. Thus, in the example just given, the rate of surplus value, as Marx calls this relationship, will be 6:6, *i.e.*, 100%.

There are two historical prerequisites to the genesis of capital; first, accumulation of a considerable sum of money in the hands of individuals living under conditions in which there is a comparatively high development of commodity pro-

duction. Second, the existence of workers who are “free” in a double sense of the term: free from any constraint or restriction as regards the sale of their labour power; free from any bondage to the soil or to the means of production in general — *i.e.*, of propertyless workers, of “proletarians” who cannot maintain their existence except by the sale of their labour power.

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

Analysing the production of relative surplus value, Marx investigates the three fundamental historical stages of the process whereby capitalism

has increased the productivity of labour; (1) simple co-operation; (2) division of labour, and manufacture; (3) machinery and large-scale industry. How profoundly Marx has here revealed the basic and typical features of capitalist development is shown by the fact that investigations of the so-called “kustar” industry¹ of Russia furnish abundant material for the illustration of the first two of these stages. The revolutionizing 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 by earlier classical political economy (from Adam Smith on), which assumed that all the surplus value which was

¹ Small-scale home industry of a predominantly handicraft nature. — Ed.

transformed into capital became variable capital. In actual fact, it is divided into *means of production* plus variable capital. The more rapid growth of constant capital as compared with variable capital in the sum total of capital is of immense importance in the process of development of capitalism and in that of the transformation of capitalism into Socialism.

The accumulation of capital, accelerating the replacement of workers by machinery, creating wealth at the one pole and poverty at the other, gives birth to the so-called “reserve army of labour,” to a “relative overabundance” of workers or to “capitalist overpopulation.” This assumes the most diversified forms, and gives capital the possibility of expanding production at an exceptionally rapid rate. This possibility, in conjunction with enhanced facilities for credit and with the accumulation of capital in the means of production, furnishes, among other things, the key to the understanding of the *crises* of overproduction that occur periodically in capitalist countries — first about every ten years, on an average, but subsequently in a more continuous form and with a less definite periodicity. From accumulation of capital upon a capitalist foundation we must dis-

tinguish the so-called “primitive accumulation”: the forcible severance of the worker from the means of production, the driving of the peasants off the land, the stealing of the communal lands, the system of colonies and national debts, of protective tariffs, and the like. “Primitive accumulation” creates, at one pole, the “free” proletarian: at the other, the owner of money, the capitalist.

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

“The expropriation of the immediate producers is effected with ruthless vandalism, and under the stimulus of the most infamous, the basest, the meanest, and the most odious of passions. Self-earned private property [of the peasant and the handicraftsman], the private property that may be looked upon as grounded on a coalescence of the isolated, individual, and independent worker with his working conditions, is supplemented by capitalist private property, which is maintained by the exploitation of others’ labour, but of labour which in a formal sense is free... What has now to be expropriated is no longer the labourer working on his own account, but the

capitalist who exploits many labourers. This expropriation is brought about by the operation of the immanent laws of capitalist production, by the centralization of capital. One capitalist lays a number of his fellow capitalists low. Hand in hand with this centralization, concomitantly with the expropriation of many capitalists by a few, the co-operative form of the labour process develops to an ever-increasing degree; therewith we find a growing tendency towards the purposive application of science to the improvement of technique; the land is more methodically cultivated; the instruments of labour tend to assume forms which are only utilizable by combined effort; the means of production are economized through being turned to account only by joint, by social labour; all the peoples of the world are enmeshed in the net of the world market, and therefore the capitalist régime tends more and more to assume an international character. While there is thus a progressive diminution in the number of the capitalist magnates (who usurp and monopolize all the advantages of this transformative process), there occurs a corresponding in-

crease in the mass of poverty, oppression, enslavement, degeneration, and exploitation; but at the same time there is a steady intensification of the wrath of the working class — a class which grows ever more numerous, and is disciplined, unified and organized by the very mechanism of the capitalist method of production. Capitalist monopoly becomes a fetter upon the method of production which has flourished with it and under it. The centralization of the means of production and the socialization of labour reach a point where they prove incompatible with their capitalist husk. This bursts asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated.” [*Capital*, Vol. I.]

Of great importance and quite new is Marx’s analysis, in the second volume of *Capital*, of the reproduction of social capital, taken as a whole. Here, too, Marx is dealing, not with an individual phenomenon, but with a mass phenomenon; not with a fractional part of the economy of society, but with economy as a whole. Having corrected the above-mentioned mistake of the classical economists, Marx divides the whole of social production into two great sections: production of the

means of production, and production of articles for consumption. Using figures for an example, he makes a detailed examination of the circulation of all social capital taken as a whole — both when it is reproduced in its previous proportions and when accumulation takes place. The third volume of *Capital* solves the problem of how the average rate of profit is formed on the basis of the law of value. An immense advance in economic science is this, that Marx conducts his analysis from the point of view of mass economic phenomena, of the aggregate of social economy, and not from the point of view of individual cases or upon the purely superficial aspects of competition — a limitation of view so often met with in vulgar political economy and in the contemporary “theory of marginal utility.” First, Marx analyses the origin of surplus value, and then he goes on to consider its division into profit, interest and ground-rent. Profit is the ratio between the surplus value and the capital invested in an undertaking. Capital with a “high organic composition” (*i.e.*, with a preponderance of constant capital over variable capital to an extent above the social average) yields a below-average rate of profit; capital with a “low organic composition” yields

an above-average rate of profit. Competition among the capitalists, who are free to transfer their capital from one branch of production to another, reduces the rate of profit in both cases to the average. The sum total of the values of all the commodities in a given society coincides with the sum total of the prices of all the commodities; but in separate undertakings, and in separate branches of production, as a result of competition, commodities are sold, not in accordance with their values, but in accordance with the *prices of production*, which are equal to the expended capital plus the average profit.

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

mass phenomenon, with individual and mutually compensating deviations to one side and the other.

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

tween 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 *Theories of Surplus Value*, in which the criticism of Rodbertus' theory deserves particular attention) the error of Ricardo, who considered that differential rent is only obtained when there is a continual transition from better to worse lands. Advances in agricultural technique, the growth of towns, and so on, may, on the contrary, act inversely, may transfer land from one category into the other; and the famous "law of diminishing returns," charging nature with the insufficiencies, limitations and contradictions of capitalism, is a great mistake. Moreover, the equalization 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 equalization 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 nationalization of the land, by making all the land state property. Nationalization 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 nationalization, which, however, frightens away the majority of the bourgeoisie, for it touches upon another monopoly that is highly important and “touchy” in our days — the monopoly of the means of production in general. (In a letter to Engels, dated August 2, 1862, Marx gives a remarkably popular, concise, and clear exposition of his theory of average rate of profit and of absolute

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

"The transformation of rent in kind into money rent is not only necessarily accompanied, but even anticipated by the formation

of a class of propertyless day labourers, who hire themselves out for wages. During the period of their rise, when this new class appears but sporadically, the custom necessarily develops among the better situated tributary farmers of exploiting agricultural labourers for their own account, just as the wealthier serfs in feudal times used to employ serfs for their own benefit. In this way they gradually acquire the ability to accumulate a certain amount of wealth and to transform themselves even into future capitalists. The old self-employing possessors of the land thus gave rise among themselves to a nursery for capitalist tenants, whose development is conditioned upon the general development of capitalist production outside of the rural districts." [*Capital*, Vol. III.]

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

The impoverishment and the ruin of the agricultural population lead, in their turn, to the formation of a reserve army of labour for capital. In every capitalist country, “part of the rural population is continually on the move, in course of transference to join the urban proletariat, the manufacturing proletariat... (In this connection, the term “manufacture” is used to include all non-agricultural industry.) This source of a relative surplus population is, therefore, continually flowing... The agricultural labourer, therefore, has his wages kept down to the minimum, and always has one foot in the swamp of pauperism” (*Capital*, Vol. I). The peasant’s private ownership of the land he tills constitutes the basis of small-scale production and causes the latter to flourish and attain its classical form. But such petty production is only compatible with a narrow and primitive type of production, with a narrow and primitive framework of society. Under capitalism, the exploitation of the peasant “differs from the exploitation of the industrial proletariat only in point of form. The exploiter is the same: capital. The individual capitalists exploit the individual peasants through mortgages and usury, and the capitalist class exploits the peasant class

through state taxation” (*Class Struggles in France*). “Peasant agriculture, the smallholding system, is merely an expedient whereby the capitalist is enabled to extract profit, interest, and rent from the land, while leaving the peasant proprietor to pay himself his own wages as best he may.” As a rule, the peasant hands over to the capitalist society, *i.e.*, to the capitalist class, part of the wages of his own labour, sinking “down to the level of the Irish tenant — all this on the pretext of being the owner of private property.” (*Ibid*). Why is it that “the price of cereals is lower in countries with a predominance of small farmers than in countries with a capitalist method of production?” (*Capital*, Vol. III). The answer is that the peasant presents part of his surplus product as a free gift to society (*i.e.*, to the capitalist class). “This lower price [of bread and other agricultural products] is also a result of the poverty of the producers and by no means of the productivity of their labour” (*Capital*, Vol. III). Peasant proprietorship, the smallholding system, which is the normal form of petty production, degenerates, withers, perishes under capitalism.

“Small peasants’ property excludes by its very nature the development of the social

powers of production of labour, the social forms of labour, the social concentration of capital, cattle-raising on a large scale, and a progressive application of science. Usury and a system of taxation must impoverish it everywhere. The expenditure of capital in the price of the land withdraws this capital from cultivation. An infinite dissipation of means of production and an isolation of the producers themselves go with it. [Co-operatives, *i.e.*, associations of small peasants, while playing an unusually progressive bourgeois role, only weaken this tendency without eliminating it; one must not forget besides, that these co-operatives do much for the well-to-do peasants and very little, almost nothing, for the mass of the poor peasants, also that the associations themselves become exploiters of wage labour.] Also an enormous waste of human energy. A progressive deterioration of the conditions of production and a raising of the price of means of production is a necessary law of small peasants' property." [*Capital*, Vol. III.]

In agriculture as in industry, capitalism improves the production process only at the price of

the “martyrdom of the producers.”

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

SOCIALISM

From the foregoing it is manifest that Marx deduces the inevitability of the transformation of capitalist society into Socialist society wholly and exclusively from the economic law of the move-

ment of contemporary society. The chief material foundation of the inevitability of the coming of Socialism is the socialization of labour in its myriad forms, advancing ever more rapidly, and conspicuously so, throughout the half century that has elapsed since the death of Marx — being especially plain in the growth of large-scale production, of capitalist cartels, syndicates, and trusts; but also in the gigantic increase in the dimensions and the power of finance capital. The intellectual and moral driving force of this transformation is the proletariat, the physical carrier trained by capitalism itself. The contest of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie, assuming various forms which grow continually richer in content, inevitably becomes a political struggle aiming at the conquest of political power by the proletariat (“the dictatorship of the proletariat”). The socialization 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 perfected labour — such will be the direct conse-

quences of this transformation. Capitalism breaks all ties between agriculture and industry; but at the same time, in the course of its highest development, it prepares new elements for the establishment of a connection between the two, uniting industry and agriculture upon the basis of the conscious use of science and the combination of collective labour, the redistribution of population (putting an end at one and the same time to rural seclusion and unsociability and savagery, and to the unnatural concentration of enormous masses of population in huge cities). A new kind of family life, changes in the position of women and in the upbringing of the younger generation, are being prepared by the highest forms of modern capitalism; the labour of women and children, the break-up of the patriarchal family by capitalism, necessarily assume in contemporary society the most terrible, disastrous, and repulsive forms. Nevertheless,

“...large-scale industry, by assigning to women and to young persons and children of both sexes a decisive role in the socially organized process of production, and a role which has to be fulfilled outside the home, is building the new economic foundation for a higher

form of the family and of the relations between the sexes. I need hardly say that it is just as stupid to regard the Christo-Teutonic form of the family as absolute, as it is to take the same view of the classical Roman form or of the classical Greek form, or of the Oriental form — which, by the by, constitute an historically interconnected development series. It is plain, moreover, that the composition of the combined labour personnel out of individuals of both sexes and various ages — although in its spontaneously developed and brutal capitalist form (wherein the worker exists for the process of production instead of the process of production existing for the worker) it is a pestilential source of corruption and slavery — under suitable conditions cannot fail to be transformed into a source of human progress.” [*Capital, Vol. I.*]

In the factory system are to be found “the germs of the education of the future... This will be an education which, in the case of every child over a certain age, will combine productive labour with instruction and physical culture, not only as a means for increasing social production, but as the only way of producing fully developed human

beings” (*ibid.*, p. 522). Upon the same historical foundation, not with the sole idea of throwing light on the past, but with the idea of boldly foreseeing the future and boldly working to bring about its realization, the Socialism of Marx propounds the problems of nationality and the state. The nation is a necessary product, an inevitable form, in the bourgeois epoch of social development. The working class cannot grow strong, cannot mature, cannot consolidate its forces, except by “establishing itself as the nation,” except by being “national” (“though by no means in the bourgeois sense of the term”).¹ But the development of capitalism tends more and more to break down the partitions that separate the nations one from another, does away with national isolation, substitutes class antagonisms for national antagonisms. In the more developed capitalist countries, therefore, it is perfectly true that “the workers have no fatherland,” and that “united action” of the workers, in the civilized countries at least, “is one of the first conditions requisite for the emancipation of the workers” (*Communist Manifesto*). The state, which is organized oppression, came

¹ Communist Manifesto. — Ed.

into being inevitably at a certain stage in the development of society, when this society had split into irreconcilable classes, and when it could not exist without an “authority” supposed to be standing above society and to some extent separated from it. Arising out of class contradictions, the state becomes

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

This condition of affairs persists even in the democratic republic, the freest and most progressive kind of bourgeois state; there is merely a

change of form (the government becoming linked up with the stock exchange, and the officialdom and the press being corrupted by direct or indirect means). Socialism, putting an end to classes, will thereby put an end to the state.

“The first act (writes Engels in *Anti-Duehring*) whereby the state really becomes the representative of society as a whole, namely, the expropriation of the means of production for the benefit of society as a whole, will likewise be its last independent act as a state. The interference of the state authority in social relationships will become superfluous, and will be discontinued in one domain after another. The government over persons will be transformed into the administration of things and the management of the process of production. The state will not be ‘abolished’; it will ‘die out.’”

“The society that is to reorganize production on the basis of a free and equal association of the producers, will transfer the machinery of state where it will then belong: into the museum of antiquities, by the side of the spinning-wheel and the bronze axe.” [Engels,

The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State.]

If, finally, we wish to understand the attitude of Marxian Socialism towards the small peasantry, which will continue to exist in the period of the expropriation of the expropriators, we must turn to a declaration by Engels expressing Marx's views. In an article on "The Peasant Problem in France and Germany," which appeared in the *Neue Zeit*, he says:

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

TACTICS OF THE CLASS STRUGGLE OF THE PROLETARIAT

Having discovered as early as 1844-1845 that one of the chief defects of the earlier materialism was its failure to understand the conditions or recognize the importance of practical revolutionary activity, Marx, during all his life, alongside of theoretical work, gave unremitting attention to the tactical problems of the class struggle of the proletariat. An immense amount of material bearing upon this is contained in all the works of Marx and in the four volumes of his correspondence with Engels (*Briefwechsel*), published in 1913. This material is still far from having been collected, organized, studied and elaborated. This is why we shall have to confine ourselves to the most general and brief remarks, emphasizing 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 sum total of all the mutual relationships of all the classes of a given society with-

out exception, and consequently an account of the objective stage of development of this society as well as an account of the mutual relationship between it and other societies, can serve as the basis for the correct tactics of the class that forms the vanguard. All classes and all countries are at the same time looked upon not statically, but dynamically; *i.e.*, not as motionless, but as in motion (the laws of their motion being determined by the economic conditions of existence of each class). The motion, in its turn, is looked upon not only from the point of view of the past, but also from the point of view of the future; and, moreover, not in accordance with the vulgar conception of the “evolutionists,” who see only slow changes — but dialectically: “In such great developments, twenty years are but as one day — and then may come days which are the concentrated essence of twenty years,” wrote Marx to Engels (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. III, p. 127). At each stage of development, at each moment, proletarian tactics must take account of these objectively unavoidable dialectics of human history, utilizing, on the one hand, the phases of political stagnation, when things are moving at a snail’s pace along the road of the so-called “peaceful” development, to in-

crease the class consciousness, strength, and fighting capacity of the most advanced class; on the other hand, conducting this work in the direction of the “final aims” of the movement of this class, cultivating in it the faculty for the practical performance of great tasks in great days that are the “concentrated essence of twenty years.” Two of Marx’s arguments are of especial importance in this connection: one of these is in the *Poverty of Philosophy*, and relates to the industrial struggle and to the industrial organizations of the proletariat; the other is in the *Communist Manifesto*, and relates to the proletariat’s political tasks. The former runs as follows:

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

veritable civil war — are united and developed all the elements necessary for a future battle. One arrived at that point, association takes a political character.”

Here we have the programme and the tactics of the economic struggle and the trade union movement for several decades to come, for the whole long period in which the workers are preparing for “a future battle.” We must place side by side with this a number of Marx’s references, in his correspondence with Engels, to the example of the British labour movement; here Marx shows how, industry being in a flourishing condition, attempts are made “to buy the workers,” to distract them from the struggle; how, generally speaking, prolonged prosperity “demoralizes the workers”; 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”; how the “revolutionary energy” of the British proletariat oozes away; how it will be necessary to wait for a considerable time “before the British workers can rid themselves of seeming bourgeois contamination”; how the British movement “lacks the

mettle of the old Chartists”; how the English workers are developing leaders of “a type that is half way between the radical bourgeoisie and the worker”; how, due to British monopoly, and as long as that monopoly lasts, “the British worker will not budge.” 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: “Communists fight on behalf of the immediate aims and interests of the working class, but in their present movement they are also defending the future of that movement.” That was why in 1848 Marx supported the Polish party of the “agrarian revolution” — “the party which initiated the Cracow insurrection in the year 1846.” In Germany during 1848 and 1849 he supported the radical revolutionary democracy, nor subsequently did he retract what he had then said about tactics. He looked upon the German bourgeoisie as “inclined from the very beginning to betray the people” (only an alliance with the

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

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

About twenty years afterwards, writing to Engels under the date of February 11, 1865, Marx said that the cause of the failure of the Revolution of 1848 was that the bourgeoisie had preferred peace with slavery to the mere prospect of having

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

exclusively in the name of the industrial proletariat, while forgetting to say even a word about the patriarchal 'whipping rod exploitation' of the rural proletariat by the big feudal nobility." During the period from 1864 to 1870, in which the epoch of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Germany was being completed, in which the exploiting classes of Prussia and Austria were fighting for this or that method of completing the revolution *from above*, Marx not only condemned Lassalle for coquetting with Bismarck, but also corrected Wilhelm Liebknecht who had lapsed into "Austrophilism" and defended particularism. Marx insisted upon revolutionary tactics that would fight against both Bismarck and "Austrophilism" with equal ruthlessness, tactics which would not only suit the "conqueror," the Prussian junker, but would forthwith renew the struggle with him *upon the very basis* created by the Prussian military successes. In the famous Address issued by the International Workingmen's Association, dated September 9, 1870, Marx warned the French proletariat against an untimely uprising; but when, in 1871, the uprising actually took place, Marx hailed the revolutionary initiative of the masses with the utmost enthusiasm, saying

that they were “storming the heavens” (Letter of Marx to Kugelmann). In this situation, as in so many others, the defeat of a revolutionary onslaught was, from the Marxian standpoint of dialectical materialism, from the point of view of the general course and *the outcome* of the proletarian struggle, a lesser evil than would have been a retreat from a position hitherto occupied, a surrender without striking a blow, as such a surrender would have demoralized the proletariat and undermined its readiness for struggle. Fully recognizing the importance of using legal means of struggle during periods of political stagnation, and when bourgeois legality prevails, Marx, in 1877 and 1878, when the Exception Law against the Socialists had been passed in Germany, strongly condemned the “revolutionary phrasemaking” of Most; but he attacked no less and perhaps even more sharply, the opportunism that, for a time, prevailed in the official Social-Democratic Party, which failed to manifest a spontaneous readiness to resist, to be firm, a revolutionary spirit, a readiness to resort to illegal struggle in reply to the Exception Law.