

**KARL
MARX
FREDERICK
ENGELS**

**Collected
Works**



**Volume 24
Marx and Engels
1874 -1883**

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KARL MARX AND FREDERICK ENGELS

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Preface

Volume 24 of the *Collected Works* of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels covers the period between May 1874 and May 1883.

These years were an important stage in the development of the international working-class movement that began after the Paris Commune of 1871. The Paris Commune enriched the proletariat with the invaluable experience of class struggle, but at the same time demonstrated that the objective and subjective conditions for the transfer of power to the working people were not yet ripe and, above all, that there was a lack of independent mass proletarian parties armed with the theory of scientific socialism and capable of leading the working class in the struggle for the radical transformation of society. After the defeat of the Commune the working class was faced with the task of rallying its forces and preparing for new revolutionary battles, and the need to form proletarian parties in individual countries came to the fore. The period of the spread of Marxism began, a "period ... of the formation, growth and maturing of mass socialist parties with a proletarian class composition" (V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1980, pp. 295-96).

In the works in this volume Marx and Engels continue their analysis of the historical experience of the International Working Men's Association and the Paris Commune. They show that, in the new historical conditions, the organisational form of the International no longer corresponded to the aims of the proletariat's class struggle. Thanks to the International, the understanding of the idea of proletarian internationalism and the unity of the working class's aims and tasks had risen to a new level. "The social democratic working-men's parties," Marx wrote, "organised on

more or less national dimensions ... form as many international groups, no longer single sections thinly scattered through different countries and held together by an eccentric General Council, but the working masses themselves in continuous, active, direct intercourse, cemented by exchange of thought, mutual services, and common aspiration" (see this volume, p. 239). Marx and Engels skilfully related the tasks of the workers' parties in separate countries to the aims of the whole international working-class movement.

The formation of the socialist parties took place at a time of bitter ideological struggle waged by the representatives of the Marxist trend against alien class influences and petty-bourgeois views, fostered by the socially heterogeneous composition of the working class, and against reformist, opportunist and anarchist trends in the working-class movement itself. The fight for ideological unity on the basis of scientific socialism forms the main substance of Marx's and Engels' theoretical and practical activities as leaders of the international working-class movement in the period under review.

London, where Marx and Engels were living at that time, was still the ideological centre of the international working-class movement. Prominent figures in the workers' parties appealed to Marx and Engels, as acknowledged authorities, for help and advice. Their correspondence, their contributions to the working-class press, the publication of their new and republication of their old works, propagated the ideas of Marxism in the international working-class movement.

The experience of the Paris Commune called for a thoroughgoing elaboration of the problems of the state and revolution, the fundamental propositions of Marxism on the dictatorship of the proletariat and the role of the party, and the problem of what allies the proletariat should have in the fight for the radical transformation of society. Of prime importance was the task of providing an integral and systematic exposition of Marxism, defending its theoretical principles, revealing the universal character of its dialectical method, and teaching revolutionary socialists how to apply the theory creatively, how to work out scientific programmes and tactics for their parties and rebuff the opponents of Marxism.

The present volume includes a considerable number of works written by Marx and Engels specifically for the German pro-

letariat. This was explained by the fact that during the Franco-Prussian war (1870-71) the centre of the European workers' movement had been shifted from France to Germany (p. 211). As Engels wrote, "the German workers' position in the van of the European movement rests *essentially* on their genuinely international attitude during the war" (p. 68). Analysis of the achievements and mistakes of German Social-Democracy enabled Marx and Engels to examine the general problems of the theory and tactics of the whole international working-class movement. Indisputably, the most important of their works on this subject are Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme* and Engels' letter to Bebel of March 18-28, 1875, both responses to the draft programme for the Gotha Congress. This congress united the Social-Democratic Workers' Party of Germany (Eisenachers), the first mass party based on the principles of the First International and led by August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht, and the General Association of German Workers led by followers of Ferdinand Lassalle.

Marx and Engels had maintained that this union should have taken place only if the Lassallean leaders were ready "to abandon their sectarian slogans and their state aid, and to accept in its essentials the Eisenach Programme of 1869 or an improved edition of it adapted to the present day. Our party has *absolutely nothing to learn* from the Lassalleans in the theoretical sphere" (see Engels' letter to August Bebel of March 18-28, 1875; this volume, p. 67).

Marx and Engels saw the draft of the Gotha programme as an unacceptable ideological concession and surrender to Lassalleanism. They regarded as totally inadmissible the inclusion in the programme of the proposition that in relation to the working class all other classes were reactionary and of the "iron law of wages", which was founded on false theoretical premisses (pp. 68-69). They also condemned the programme's virtual rejection of "the principle that the workers' movement is an international one" (p. 68), the brushing aside of the problem of the trade unions, and much else. They argued cogently that these propositions, by dragging the party backwards in the theoretical sphere, would do grave harm to the German workers' movement. In his letter to Bebel, Engels stressed that "a *new* programme is after all a banner planted in public, and the outside world judges the party by it" (p. 72). The Gotha programme, he showed, was a step backwards in comparison with the Eisenach programme.

Critical analysis of the draft Gotha programme gave Marx a handle for expounding his views on the crucial theoretical

questions of scientific socialism on the basis of his previous socio-economic research and, above all, on *Capital*. The *Critique of the Gotha Programme* is mainly concerned with the Marxist theory of the state and socialist revolution. In contrast to the Gotha programme, in which the state was treated "as an independent entity" (p. 94), Marx revealed the class, exploitative nature of the bourgeois state. He also examined the role of the state after the victory of the socialist revolution and stressed that a relatively long period would inevitably be required to carry out the immense creative work of the revolutionary remoulding of society. "Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*" (p. 95).

In his *Critique of the Gotha Programme* Marx elaborated new aspects of the theory of the future communist society as a social formation developing according to its objective laws. It was here that he first set forth the proposition on the two phases of communist society, the two stages of the great transformative process embracing the sphere of production and production relations, the distribution of material goods, people's political and intellectual life, morality and the right. In the first phase, under socialism, we have to deal with a society "just as it *emerges* from capitalist society, which is thus in every respect, economically, morally and intellectually, still stamped with the birth-marks of the old society" (p. 85).

Marx criticised the Lassallean thesis of the programme that under socialism every worker would possess the total product of his labour, the "undiminished proceeds of labour" (p. 84). He pointed out that even after the abolition of private property in the means of production, before becoming available for individual consumption the total social product would have to reimburse the funds set aside for the replacement of the means of production, for its further expansion, and for public needs. The first phase of communism presupposes the equality of the members of society only in the sense of their equal relationship to the means of production that have become public property, their equal obligation to work, and their equal rights to various social goods and services. This form of distribution embodies the social justice of the socialist society: "The individual producer receives back from society—after the deductions have been made—exactly what he gives to it" (p. 86).

Only at the next stage, with its very high development of all the productive forces and of the productivity of social labour, would radical changes take place in people's material standard of living, in their labour conditions and consciousness. Marx draws a picture of communist society in which the individual, freed of the struggle for his daily bread and fear of the future, will be able to realise all the abilities of his personality, its harmonious development, and be able to shed the possessive instincts and nationalist prejudices inbred by centuries. "Only then," Marx wrote, "can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs!" (p. 87).

The *Critique of the Gotha Programme* was aimed not only against Lassalleism, against opportunist trends in the German working-class movement, but also against vulgar socialism as a whole. It exposed its inherent basic methodological defect—failure to understand the determining role of social production, the desire to shift the centre of gravity, both in criticism of the existing society and in projects for social transformation, into the sphere of distribution. "The vulgar socialists ... have taken over from the bourgeois economists the consideration and treatment of distribution as independent of the mode of production and hence the presentation of socialism as turning principally on distribution" (p. 88).

The rapid growth of Social-Democracy's influence in Germany, its sweeping advance among the mass of the German workers, and the successes of the Socialist Workers' Party at the elections to the Reichstag (see pp. 250, 251), were a cause of grave concern to Bismarck. On October 19, 1878, using as a pretext two attempts on the life of William I, in which the Social-Democrats were in no way involved, the government passed a "Law against the Harmful and Dangerous Aspirations of Social-Democracy", which remained in force right up to 1890. This so-called Exceptional Law Against the Socialists, better known as the Anti-Socialist Law, virtually proscribed the Socialist Workers' Party of Germany.

In September 1878, even before the law was introduced, on the basis of the minutes of the Reichstag sitting at which the government Bill was debated, Marx outlined an exposé entitled "The Parliamentary Debate on the Anti-Socialist Law" in which he resolutely repudiates the reactionaries' attempts to accuse revolutionary Social-Democracy of terrorism and identify it with the anarchistic elements; he unmaskes the provocative police methods Bismarck's government resorted to in the Reichstag to cast a

vener of legality over its actions. "Indeed," Marx wrote, "the government is seeking to suppress *by force* a development it dislikes but cannot *lawfully* attack" (p. 249).

In this article Marx poses the question of the dialectical relationship between the peaceful and non-peaceful forms of the proletariat's struggle. He emphasises that in countries where the conditions are favourable the working class can count on the peaceful acquisition of power. But even in this case it must be aware that this peaceful path may be blocked by forces "interested in restoring the former state of affairs" (p. 248). The choice of path, peaceful or non-peaceful, is determined not by the subjective desires of the movement's leaders or their doctrines but by the line-up of class forces, the behaviour of the ruling class, the form in which it resists the maturing social changes. "An historical development," Marx writes, "can remain 'peaceful' only for so long as its progress is not forcibly obstructed by those wielding social power at the time" (*ibid.*).

At a difficult time for the German Social-Democrats, Marx and Engels helped them to find new forms of activity, to evolve a correct tactical line. A special role was played by the "Circular Letter to August Bebel, Wilhelm Liebknecht, Wilhelm Bracke and others", written by Marx and Engels in September 1879. This is one of the key documents of Marxism against opportunism in the working-class movement. Marx and Engels sharply criticised the opportunist programme of the party's reformist wing (the so-called Manifesto of the Zurich Trio—Karl Höchberg, Eduard Bernstein and Karl Schramm). These are, the Circular Letter said, "the representatives of the petty bourgeoisie, terrified lest the proletariat, impelled by its revolutionary situation, should 'go too far'. Instead of resolute political opposition—general conciliation; instead of a struggle against government and bourgeoisie—an attempt to win them over and talk them round; instead of defiant resistance to maltreatment from above—humble subjection and the admission that the punishment was deserved" (p. 267).

In a situation when Marxism had begun to spread widely in the mass working-class movement, its ideological opponents no longer dared openly to declare themselves its adversaries. Instead they tried to revise Marxism from within, by peddling an eclectic hotch-potch of vulgar materialist, idealistic and pseudo-socialist views as scientific socialism. The Circular Letter was designed to scotch this danger. It exposes the class and ideological roots of opportunism and proves the need to clear the ground of them. Marx and Engels noted that this phenomenon was due to the

influence of the petty bourgeoisie on the proletariat, the penetration of non-proletarian ideology into the working-class movement. Repudiation of the class struggle against the bourgeoisie was being preached under the flag of Marxism. "On paper," the Circular Letter stated, "it is recognised because there is no denying it any longer, but in practice it is glossed over, suppressed, emasculated" (p. 267). The authors of the letter urged the German Social-Democrats to dissociate themselves from the "adulterating element" in the workers' party (p. 269) and to strengthen its class character. "For almost 40 years," Marx and Engels wrote, "we have emphasised that the class struggle is the immediate motive force of history and, in particular, that the class struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat is the great lever of modern social revolution; hence we cannot possibly co-operate with men who seek to eliminate that class struggle from the movement" (p. 269).

As Marx and Engels stressed, with the Anti-Socialist Law in operation the position of the party organ became especially important. It should "crowd on sail" (p. 262), educating the proletarian masses in the spirit of revolutionary class struggle, defending the interests of the working class. The working-class party could play its vanguard role only if it clearly understood the revolutionary aims of the proletarian movement, and remained unshakeably loyal to them.

Under a regime of police terror the party must learn to combine legal and illegal forms of struggle, to use the parliamentary platform, to work out a consistently class-oriented stand for the Social-Democratic group in the Reichstag, and to maintain strict party discipline. Marx and Engels warned the party of the danger of the "parliamentary disease" (p. 261). Triumphs in parliamentary elections, as Engels wrote in his article "The Anti-Socialist Law in Germany.—The Situation in Russia", had "made some people believe that it was no longer necessary to do anything else in order to obtain the final victory of the proletariat" (p. 251).

The articles Marx and Engels contributed to the workers' press did much to spread the ideas of proletarian internationalism and the revolutionary theory of class struggle, and to strengthen the ideological platform of the Social-Democratic parties which were being set up. They also enhanced their prestige as the acknowledged leaders of the international working-class movement and strengthened their personal ties with the leaders of various parties. In these years, as Marx's health declined, this journalistic work fell more and more on Engels.

Especially important were Engels' contributions to the German workers' newspapers, the organs of the German Social-Democratic Party, *Der Volksstaat*, *Vorwärts*, *Die Neue Welt*, and from 1881 to *Der Sozialdemokrat*, and others. Expressing a standpoint he shared with Marx, Engels actively opposed all attempts to identify Social-Democracy with the anarchist trends existing in one or another guise in the German and international working-class movement. Both men set out to explode the false thesis that the very doctrine of scientific socialism prompted people to commit excesses and terrorist acts and inclined them towards voluntarist decisions. In *Refugee Literature*, which opens the present volume, Engels made a detailed study of the programme drawn up by Blanquists forced to emigrate after the Commune. He took apart their thesis that a revolution could be made by an insignificant minority "according to a plan worked out in advance", and that it could begin "at any time" (p. 14). Emphasising that one could not "play at revolution", he countered the Blanquists' misconceived thesis on the ruling out of compromises. Engels wrote with irony: "They imagine that, as soon as *they* have only the good will to jump over intermediate stations and compromises, everything is assured" (p. 17). In his own name and that of Marx he was equally firm in condemning the sectarian-anarchist trends that had emerged among the German Social-Democrats since the introduction of the Anti-Socialist Law, and that were most patently expressed in the statements of Johann Most and the London émigré paper, *Freiheit*, which Most had founded (pp. 478-79).

In his works "Semi-Official War-Cries", *Prussian Schnapps in the German Reichstag* and "The Vicar of Bray", Engels showed the reactionary aggressive character of Bismarck's empire, the socio-economic roots of the political influence wielded by the Prussian "Schnapps-Junkers" and Prussian militarism (see p. 124). Engels' series of articles on Wilhelm Wolff, the closest friend and associate of Marx and Engels, Marx's epilogue to the second edition of *Revelations Concerning the Communist Trial in Cologne*, and the speeches by Marx and Engels on February 7, 1876 at the German Workers' Educational Society in London, acquainted the new generation of workers with the history and revolutionary traditions of Germany's proletarian movement.

Besides the articles about Wilhelm Wolff, Engels' essay *The Mark*, which showed the evolution of agrarian relations in Germany from the ancient community (the mark) up to the 1870s, was of great importance for determining the tactics of the Social-Democratic Workers' Party with regard to the German

peasantry. Engels here traced the main stages in the transformation of the peasants from free members of the communities into serfs, and exposed the true nature of the half-hearted reforms introduced in Germany in the first half of the nineteenth century (see pp. 454-55). He stressed that the small-scale peasant farming had become "a method of production more and more antiquated, less and less capable of yielding a livelihood" (p. 455). For the peasantry the future lay in reviving the mark, "not in its old, outdated form, but in a rejuvenated form", that would enable the peasants to use the advantages of large-scale farming and modern machinery, but "without capitalists by the community itself" (p. 456). In this the peasants would find their natural allies in the workers and the proletarian party (*ibid.*).

Marx and Engels contributed to the French socialist newspaper, *L'Égalité*, founded in 1877 on the initiative of Jules Guesde. In March 1880 it printed two articles by Engels entitled "The Socialism of Mr. Bismarck", attacking social demagoguery of the Bonapartist variety. With specific examples from Bismarck's policies, Engels demonstrated the illusory nature of the ideas of state socialism current among some of the French socialists, their belief that the bourgeois state could carry through social reforms affecting the bedrock of bourgeois relations.

The theoretical section of the programme of the French Workers' Party formulated by Marx at the request of the French socialists ("Preamble to the Programme of the French Workers' Party") was of particular significance. The party was founded in October 1879 at a constituent congress in Marseilles. This preamble, published not only in *L'Égalité*, but in a number of other papers, contained, as Marx put it in a letter to Friedrich Adolf Sorge on November 5, 1880, "a definition of the Communist aim" (see present edition, Vol. 46). The preamble regarded the emancipation of the proletariat as "that of all human beings without distinction of sex or race". In setting the workers the task of taking over the means of production and bringing them into collective ownership Marx stressed that "this collective appropriation can only spring from the revolutionary action of the producing class—or proletariat—organised as an independent political party" (p. 340).

The development of theory in the French socialist movement was deeply influenced by a work written by Engels at the request

of Paul Lafargue, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, which Marx described as an "introduction to scientific socialism" (p. 339). First published in the French magazine *La Revue socialiste*, it was issued in the same year 1880 as a separate edition. Written with a notable clarity of style, this pamphlet, which Engels based on three chapters from *Anti-Dühring*, became available to a wide circle of working-class readers. In Engels' lifetime the pamphlet appeared in authorised German and English editions, was translated into many other European languages and played an important part in propagating the ideas of Marxism throughout the international labour movement.

In this work Engels set out to arm the vanguard of the proletarian movement with an understanding of the relationship between utopian and scientific socialism. This was a counterstroke to the attempts that were being made to obliterate the difference between them and to present Marx's teaching as a variety of the socialist utopias. Acknowledging the historical role of utopian socialism, Engels treated it as one of the theoretical sources of Marxist theory. He gave a systematic account of the genesis of scientific socialism, which, as he pointed out, had emerged as a logical phenomenon, conditioned by the whole course of history. Called into being by the need to explain the proletariat's revolutionary struggle, to build a scientific theory for the movement, Marxism was the result of a synthesis of the achievements of previous science and culture. "Like every new theory," wrote Engels, "modern socialism had, at first, to connect itself with the intellectual stock-in-trade ready to its hand, however deeply its roots lay in the material economic facts" (p. 285).

From the overall achievements of Marxist thought Engels singled out two of Marx's great discoveries, which played a decisive role in converting socialism from a utopia into a science—the materialist conception of history, which reveals the laws of social development and proves the inevitability of the socialist revolution; and the theory of surplus value, which lays bare the essence of capitalist exploitation.

The emergence of Marxism, Engels noted, which had opened up a new stage in the history of human thought, also revolutionised socialist thinking. In contrast to the speculative constructs propounded by the utopian socialists, scientific socialism based its conclusions on a profound theoretical analysis of reality, on getting to the bottom of social phenomena, on revealing the objective laws of social life. This was why scientific socialism could provide a genuine theoretical foundation for the workers' rev-

olutionary struggle, an ideological weapon for the socialist transformation of society. With its appearance on the scene, Engels wrote, this struggle was placed on a realistic basis. It was scientific socialism which had identified the historical mission of the proletariat as the force destined, in alliance with all the working people, to bring about the socialist revolution, and which had overcome the gap between socialist theory and the working-class movement and armed the proletarian masses with a knowledge of the prospects of their struggle, with scientific forecast of the future society.

Developing the theory of socialist revolution, Engels made the point that the fundamental contradiction of capitalism—the contradiction between the social nature of production and the private character of appropriation—could be resolved only by a proletarian revolution. The proletariat, having taken power, would first of all turn the means of production into public property. Engels believed the organisation of socialist production on the basis of socialised property was the decisive condition for the building of the future society. Socialist society, he predicted, would be the first to be capable of regulating social production by conscious application of the objective laws of its development. The role of social consciousness would thus grow in importance. Society would be able to guide its economic activity according to plan and control the key social processes. "To accomplish this act of universal emancipation," Engels wrote, "is the historical mission of the modern proletariat" (p. 325).

At the close of the 1870s symptoms of change began to appear in the British labour movement. The economic crisis of 1877-78 hit the great mass of the workers very hard and narrowed the economic ground for reformist illusions, thereby stimulating interest in social questions. Engels regarded this moment as favourable for a statement of his views in the British trade union newspaper, *The Labour Standard*, and between the beginning of May and the beginning of August 1881 he wrote a total of 11 articles for it. In them he expounded in popular form the main propositions of scientific socialism and Marxist political economy, explaining to British workers the mechanism of capitalist exploitation. Referring in the title of one of the articles to the popular trade union slogan "A Fair Day's Wages for a Fair Day's Work", Engels proved that by its very nature capitalism ruled out fairness. He tried to emphasise the idea that the basic demand of the

proletarian struggle should be the slogan: "Possession of the means of work—raw material, factories, machinery—by the working people themselves!" (p. 378).

In his articles for *The Labour Standard* Engels showed that the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat was historically inevitable. It was bound to become a political struggle, the struggle for power (see p. 386). Engels gave theoretical substance to the significance of the workers' economic struggle and showed the role of the trade unions as its organisers. At the same time he pointed out that their activities could not rid the worker of capitalist slavery (p. 385). For the proletariat to achieve success, he emphasised, the working class must be organised as a class, there must be an independent political party of the proletariat. Engels devoted a special article to this important question—"A Working Men's Party". "In England," he wrote, "a real democratic party is impossible unless it be a working men's party... No democratic party in England, as well as elsewhere, will be effectively successful unless it has a distinct working-class character" (pp. 405-06). The lack of an independent proletarian party, Engels noted, had left England's working class content to form, as it were, "the tail of the 'Great Liberal Party'" for nearly a quarter of a century (p. 404). These articles by Engels exerted a definite influence on the young generation in the British socialist movement. James Macdonald, later to be one of the representatives of the Marxist wing of the British socialists, said what really attracted him to socialism were Engels' articles in *The Labour Standard* (*How I Became a Socialist*, London, [1896,] pp. 61-62).

Several articles written by Engels in 1877-78 for the Italian socialist paper *La Plebe* ("British Agricultural Labourers Want to Participate in the Political Life of Their Country", "On the Socialist Movement in Germany, France, the United States and Russia", and others) have been included in this volume. Here he told the Italian workers about the experience and successes of the proletariat's struggle in various countries, wrote about the movement of the agricultural labourers in England, which at that time was of particular interest to the Italian socialists. Engels developed the idea of an alliance between the working class and the peasantry, and concentrated special attention on the importance of drawing the broad masses of the agricultural proletariat into the revolutionary struggle.

In the 1870s and early 1880s Marx and Engels kept a close watch on the economic and social development of the USA, noting the unprecedented concentration of capital, the growth of big companies controlling the activity of major branches of industry and trade and owning huge amounts of property in land, finance and the railways. In Engels' articles "The French Commercial Treaty", "American Food and the Land Question" and others, and also in the Preface that Marx and Engels wrote for the second Russian edition of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, the attention of European workers is focussed on Britain's loss of its industrial monopoly and the inevitability of the United States' predominance in the world market (see pp. 392-93). Marx and Engels analyse these processes from the standpoint of the prospects for the labour movement in Europe and the struggle waged by the American proletariat. For the American socialist weekly *The Labor Standard* Engels wrote a series of articles on the labour movement in Europe, entitled "The Workingmen of Europe in 1877", in which he popularised the ideas of proletarian internationalism.

The interest Americans displayed in Marx as an individual and his ideas is illustrated by two documents included in the Appendices to this volume—the accounts of his interviews with a correspondent from *The Chicago Tribune* and with John Swinton, the editor of *The Sun*, an influential progressive bourgeois paper. These documents gave readers not only the main biographical facts about Marx and the history of the International, but also expounded his point of view on the problems of the labour movement in the USA. Rejecting the allegation that socialist ideas were "alien" to the United States, Marx stressed that "Socialism has sprung up in that country without the aid of foreigners, and was merely caused by the concentration of capital and the changed relations between the workmen and their employers" (p. 573). Developing ideas on the historically law-governed character and driving forces of revolution, Marx emphasised: "No revolution can be made by a party, *but by a nation*" (p. 576).

In these years Marx and Engels devoted much attention to the economic and social situation in Russia and the development of the Russian revolutionary movement. They studied the economy, agrarian system and social relations in Russia after the peasant reform of 1861 and read extensively Russian scientific literature and fiction. They were personally acquainted with many Russian

revolutionaries, scientists and journalists. A prominent place was given to the study of Russian culture and language, which, in the words of Engels, is "a language that, both for its own sake, as one of the richest and most powerful living languages, and on account of the literature thereby made accessible, richly deserves study" (pp. 27-28). Marx and Engels valued Nikolai Chernyshevsky and Nikolai Dobrolyubov as profound revolutionary-democratic thinkers and writers. Engels called them "two socialist Lessings" (p. 23).

In a country where the working class had not yet become an organised force and was as yet incapable of leading a nation-wide struggle, the Russian revolutionary movement was represented by the Narodniks (Populists). While eager to help the Russian revolutionaries, Marx and Engels criticised their idealistic notions, their failure to grasp the link between legal, political institutions and the interests of definite classes of society. In the third and fourth articles of his series *Refugee Literature*, Engels took the side of one of the prominent ideologists of Narodism, Pyotr Lavrov, in his polemic with another Narodnik, Pyotr Tkachov, on the tasks of revolutionary propaganda in Russia. Engels resolutely objected to irresponsible "impetuous rodomontades" about an immediate uprising (p. 36) without taking into account the objective conditions and preliminary revolutionary propaganda, and to the voluntarist statements by Tkachov that "the revolutionary ... must assume the right to summon the people to revolt ... without waiting until the course of historical events announces the moment" (p. 35).

In the last article of his *Refugee Literature* ("On Social Relations in Russia"), and in a letter to the editors of *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* and in drafts of his reply to a letter from Vera Zasulich, Engels and Marx respectively made a profound analysis of the socio-economic relations in Russia after the peasant reform of 1861. They regarded it as a milestone in the history of Russia, the beginning of a new stage in the country's development (see p. 199, etc.). The abolition of serfdom in Russia in 1861 was connected with the mounting discontent of the peasants and the growth of peasant movement. Marx and Engels noted the decisive factors in the build-up of the revolutionary situation in Russia in the 1870s: the robbing of the peasantry as a result of the 1861 reform, the growth of the mass peasant movement and the protest of "the enlightened strata of the nation" (p. 50). Engels foresaw the revolutionary situation in Russia at the end of the 1870s and the beginning of the 1880s. Already in 1875 he had expressed the firm conviction that revolution in that country was "far closer than it would appear on

the surface" (p. 11). Marx and Engels also hoped that the foreign-policy troubles the Tsarist government was experiencing in connection with the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78 would precipitate revolutionary events in Russia.

Marx and Engels believed that the coming revolution in Russia should be a bourgeois-democratic, mostly peasant, revolution (see e.g. pp. 204-05). They saw that its prospects would be closely connected with the class struggle of the European proletariat. This revolution, Engels wrote in 1878, "means such a change in the whole situation of Europe as must be hailed with joy by the workmen of every country as a giant step towards their common goal—the universal emancipation of Labor" (p. 229; see also p. 426). Marx and Engels thought that a revolution in Russia would start a process "which, maybe after long and violent struggles, must ultimately and certainly lead to the establishment of a Russian Commune" (p. 372).

The question raised by Marx and Engels as to whether the non-capitalist development of Russia was possible, whether it would have to endure the torments of all the stages of economic evolution that the peoples of the industrially developed countries of Europe had endured before it, was of the greatest theoretical importance. Central to this question was the fate of the peasant commune. Marx and Engels showed that communal ownership of the land was not an exclusively Russian phenomenon, but one of the most ancient social institutions, an institution to be found "among all Indo-Germanic peoples ... from India to Ireland" (p. 46).

The commune could become "the fulcrum of social regeneration in Russia" only if it were ensured "the normal conditions of spontaneous development" (p. 371). Such conditions could be created only out of a successful democratic revolution in Russia, which would free it of exploitation "by trade, landed property and usury" and by "a new capitalist vermin" (pp. 354-55). In themselves neither the *artel* nor the commune could serve as a means of transition to socialism. This meant that the productive forces of society should be "developed so far that they permit the final destruction of class distinctions" (p. 39).

Only a revolution in Russia, Marx and Engels believed, and its support by the victorious working class of the developed capitalist countries (see p. 426) could offer the opportunity of reviving the archaic institution of the rural commune and remoulding it on socialist lines. Only such a revolution could open up for Russia the prospect of transition to socialism bypassing the stage of capitalist

development. While acknowledging such a possibility, Marx and Engels made a sober assessment of the growth of the capitalist economy in Russia and its probable consequences. Marx stressed: "If Russia continues along the path it has followed since 1861, it will miss the finest chance that history has ever offered to a nation, only to undergo all the fatal vicissitudes of the capitalist system" (p. 199).

The Preface to the second Russian edition of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1882), the translation of which was prepared by Georgi Plekhanov, provides a useful resumé of the views of Marx and Engels on the development of the revolutionary movement in Russia. Whereas in 1848-49 the reactionary governments and the European bourgeoisie, they wrote, "found their only salvation from the proletariat ... in Russian intervention", now the tsar is "a prisoner of war of the revolution", and "Russia forms the vanguard of revolutionary action in Europe" (p. 426). They also clearly defined their point of view on the fate of the peasant community: "If the Russian Revolution becomes the signal for a proletarian revolution in the West, so that the two complement each other, the present Russian common ownership of land may serve as the starting point for communist development" (p. 426). This path for Russia did not come about in this way in the course of history. However, this definition suggests that Marx and Engels saw the theoretical possibility of non-capitalist path of development for industrially underdeveloped countries in the event of a victorious socialist revolution in countries with highly developed productive forces.

Marx and Engels consider the problems of the liberation of Poland and the involvement in the revolutionary movement of other oppressed nations of Europe, and also the revolutionary changes in Austria-Hungary, in direct connection with the tasks and prospects of the Russian revolution. In the first article of his *Refugee Literature* Engels repeats and develops the idea he had first expressed in 1847: "A people that oppresses others cannot emancipate itself" (p. 11). This work and also the speeches made by Marx and Engels at meetings in honour of the anniversaries of the Polish uprisings of 1830 and 1863, raised the question of the organic link between the struggle of the working class against the exploiting society and that of the oppressed peoples for their national liberation (see pp. 57-58). The liberation of the Polish people from social and national oppression was thus linked with the struggle of the Russian people to overthrow the tsarist autocracy.

The section "From the Preparatory Materials" contains two very important manuscripts written by Marx, unpublished in his or Engels' lifetime. The first is his conspectus of Bakunin's *Statehood and Anarchy*, which Marx compiled in 1874 and the beginning of 1875 and in which he summed up, as it were, the ideological struggle with Bakuninism in the First International. In contrast to Bakunin's subjective and voluntarist arguments for the possibility of a social revolution at any time and in any place, Marx developed the proposition that "a radical social revolution is bound up with definite historical conditions of economic development" (p. 518). Showing the nonsensical character of Bakunin's slogan on the immediate "abolition of the state", Marx formulated the idea of the necessity of establishing the rule of the proletariat, the proletarian state, in which with the assumption of power the workers would have to suppress "the strata of the old world who are struggling against them" and keep power in their hands "as long as the economic basis of class society has not been destroyed" (p. 521). Here Marx states his views on the tactics of the proletarian party towards the peasantry. On coming to power the proletariat must "take the measures needed to enable the peasant to directly improve his condition, i.e. to win him over to the revolution; these measures, however, contain the seeds which will facilitate the transition from the private ownership of the land to collective ownership, so that the peasant arrives at this economically of his own accord" (p. 517). The important ideas expressed in this manuscript on the maturing of the social preconditions for the socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, the alliance of the working class with the peasantry and the petty-bourgeois strata in general, and the dangers of anarchism and voluntarism in the work of social transformation, were reflected and developed by Marx and Engels in the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, *Refugee Literature*, the drafts of the letter to Vera Zasulich and other works mentioned earlier.

The second manuscript is the "Marginal Notes on Adolph Wagner's *Lehrbuch der politischen Oeconomie*". Criticising the bourgeois economist Adolph Wagner, an "armchair socialist", Marx explains and specifies certain key propositions of his own economic theory, its subject and method. He exposes the dishonest tricks used by bourgeois economists in their "criticism" of him, their idealist approach to the analysis of economic phenomena and interpretation of them as reflections of the evolution of legal standards. Replying to Wagner's criticism of the theory of value in *Capital*, Marx stresses that for him the subject is not "value" and

not "exchange value" but *commodity* (p. 544). Here he sets forth his method of analysing the commodity, the foundations of its "duality" determined by the dual character of labour embodied in it—its specific determinateness, on the one hand, and simply as the expenditure of human labour power, on the other. Marx also speaks of the historicism of his economic theory; in his analysis use-value "still only comes under consideration when such a consideration stems from the analysis with regard to economic formations, not from arguing hither and thither about the concepts or words 'use-value' and 'value'" (p. 546). Marx thus emphasises that his investigation deals not with an abstract logical construction but with analysis of the existing economic reality.

The volume contains some vivid biographical material about Marx by Engels. These are "Karl Marx", written in 1877 for the *Volks-Kalender* almanac, and also the obituary and funeral oration with which Engels marked the death of his friend on March 14, 1883 ("Draft of a Speech at the Graveside of Karl Marx", "Karl Marx's Funeral" and "On the Death of Karl Marx"). Engels provides a model analysis of Marx's life and work. He saw Marx as a great scientist, who looked upon science "above all things as a grand historical lever, as a revolutionary power in the most eminent sense of the word" (p. 463). For Marx, according to Engels, theory was always inseparable from practice: "The struggle for the emancipation of the class of wages-labourers from the fetters of the present capitalist system of economic production," Engels wrote, "was his real element" (p. 464). Engels also showed Marx's role as organiser and leader of the class struggle of the proletariat, the true creator of the Communist League and the International Working Men's Association. "An immeasurable loss has been sustained both by the militant proletariat of Europe and America," Engels said at Marx's funeral, "and by historical science, in the death of this man" (p. 467). Engels concluded his funeral oration with the prophetic words, "His name will endure through the ages, and so also will his work!" (p. 469).

* * *

The volume contains 66 works by Marx and Engels, of which 28 appear in English for the first time, including *Prussian Schnapps in the German Reichstag*, *Wilhelm Wolff*, "The Anti-Socialist Law in

Germany.—The Situation in Russia”, “The Socialism of Mr. Bismarck” by Engels, and the “Notes on Bakunin’s Book *Statehood and Anarchy*” by Marx. Among the materials published in the Appendices, four documents make their first appearance in English. The drafts of Marx’s letter to Vera Zasulich in the main section of the volume are printed for the first time in English in full, in strict accordance with the manuscript.

The volume is arranged in chronological order with the exception of Engels’ letter to August Bebel of March 18-28, 1875, which is traditionally placed together with the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* by Marx. Engels’ manuscripts *On the Early History of the Germans* and *The Frankish Period*, written during the period covered by Volume 24, are printed in Volume 26 of the present edition because these works are connected with Engels’ *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*.

In cases where works by Marx or Engels have survived in several languages, the English version—manuscript or printed—is reproduced in this volume. Significant differences in reading with versions in other languages are indicated in the footnotes.

All the texts have been translated from the German except where otherwise stated. Headings supplied by the editors where none existed in the original are given in square brackets. The asterisks indicate footnotes by the authors; the editors’ footnotes are indicated by index letters.

Misprints in proper and geographical names, figures, dates, and so on, have as a rule been corrected without comment by checking with the sources used by Marx and Engels. The known literary and documentary sources are referred to in footnotes and in the index of quoted and mentioned literature. Words written in English in the original are given in small caps; longer passages written in English in the original are placed in asterisks.

When working on this volume, the editors made use of the results of the scientific research done when preparing for print volumes 24 (Section I) and 25 (Section I) of *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe* (MEGA₂), a new complete edition of the *Works of Marx and Engels* in the languages of the original.

The volume was compiled and the preface and notes written by Marina Doroshenko and Valentina Ostrikoval (Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the CC CPSU). The materials of the volume covering the period from May 1874 to September 1878, as well as the drafts of Marx’s letter to Vera Zasulich and the manuscripts in

the section "From the Preparatory Materials", were prepared by Marina Doroshenko. The materials from September 1878 to May 1883 and the documents in the Appendices were prepared by Valentina Ostrikova.

The name index, the index of quoted and mentioned literature, the index of periodicals and the glossary of geographical names were prepared by Yelena Kofanova.

The entire volume was edited by Valentina Smirnova (Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the CC CPSU).

The translations were made by David Forgacs, Rodney and Krystyna Livingstone, Peter and Betty Ross, Barrie Selman, and Joan and Trevor Walmsley (Lawrence & Wishart) and edited by Nicolas Jacobs (Lawrence & Wishart), Jane Sayer, Stephen Smith, Lydia Belyakova, Anna Vladimirova and Yelena Vorotnikova (Progress Publishers), and Vladimir Mosolov, scientific editor (Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the CC CPSU).

The volume was prepared for the press by the editor Yelena Kalinina.

KARL MARX
and
FREDERICK ENGELS

WORKS

May 1874-May 1883

Frederick Engels

REFUGEE LITERATURE¹

Written between mid-May 1874 and April 1875

First published in *Der Volksstaat*, Nos. 69, 73, 117 and 118, June 17 and 26, October 6 and 8, 1874; Nos. 36, 37, 43, 44 and 45, March 28, April 2, 16, 18 and 21, 1875. Article V appeared as a separate pamphlet: F. Engels, *Soziales aus Rußland*, Leipzig, 1875. Articles I, II and V were reprinted in the book: F. Engels, *Internationales aus dem "Volksstaat" (1871-75)*. Berlin, 1894

Signed: *F. Engels*

Printed according to the newspaper, checked (Articles I, II and V) with the text of the 1894 edition

Published in English in full for the first time

I

A POLISH PROCLAMATION²

When the Tsar of Russia arrived in London, the entire police force there was already astir. It was claimed that the Poles wanted to shoot him, the new Berezowski had already been found and was better armed than before, in Paris.³ The houses of well-known Poles were surrounded by plain-clothes policemen, and the police inspector with special responsibility for surveillance of Poles under the Empire was even summoned from Paris. The police precautions along the Tsar's route from his residence into the City were organised according to positively strategic principles—and all this trouble for nothing! No Berezowski showed up, no pistol shots were fired, and the Tsar, who was trembling quite as much as his daughter, got off with a fright. All this trouble was not, however, entirely in vain, for the Tsar awarded a tip of £5 to every police superintendent and £2 to every police inspector (33 and 14 talers^a respectively) who had been on duty for his sake.

Meanwhile, the Poles had other things on their minds than murdering the noble Alexander. The society called "The Polish People"⁴ issued an "Address of the Polish Refugees to the English People", signed: General W. Wróblewski, President, J. Kryński, Secretary. This address was distributed in large numbers in London during the Tsar's visit. With the exception of *Reynolds's Newspaper*,^b the London press unanimously refused to publish it: "England's guest" should not be insulted!

The address starts by pointing out to the English that it was no honour, but an insult, for the Tsar to visit them at the very

^a In the 1894 edition: "100 and 40 marks".—*Ed*

^b *Reynolds's Newspaper*, No. 1240, May 17, 1874.—*Ed*

moment he was making preparations in Central Asia to overthrow English rule in India, and that if England, instead of lending a willing ear to the blandishments of the Tsar, this ostensible father of the peoples he oppresses, were to be less indifferent to the Poles' aspirations to independence, England, as well as the rest of Western Europe, could quietly stop their colossal armaments. And this is quite correct. The background to all European militarism is Russian militarism. As a reserve in the war of 1859 on the side of France, in 1866 and 1870 on the side of Prussia,⁵ the Russian army enabled the leading military power of the day to vanquish its enemy in isolation. As the leading European military power, Prussia is a direct creation of Russia, although she has since grown too large for her patron's liking.

The address continues:

"By her geographical situation and by her readiness at any moment to fight in the cause of humanity, Poland always was, and in future always will continue to be, the foremost champion of justice, civilisation and social development in all North Eastern Europe. Poland has incontestably proved this by her centuries of resistance to the invasions of Eastern Barbarians⁶ on the one hand, and to the inquisition, then oppressing nearly the entire West, on the other. How was it that the Nations of Western Europe were enabled peaceably to occupy themselves with the development of their social vitality precisely in the most decisive epoch of modern times? Merely because on the Eastern frontier of Europe the Polish soldier stood sentry, always watchful, always ready to charge, always prepared to sacrifice his health, his property, his life. It was owing to the shelter of Polish arms, that on Europe's awakening to a new life in the sixteenth century, the arts and sciences could flourish afresh, that commerce, industry and wealth could attain their present wonderful extension. What, for instance, would have become of the legacy of civilisation left to the West by the labour of two centuries, had not Poland, herself threatened by Mongolian hordes at her back, come to the rescue of Central Europe threatened by the Turks, and broken the Ottoman power by the brilliant victory under the walls of Vienna?"^a

The address goes on to argue that even today it is essentially Poland's resistance that prevents Russia from turning her forces on the West and that has even managed to disarm the most dangerous allies of Russia, her pan-Slavist agents. The most renowned Russian historian, Pogodin, says, in a work printed by the order and at the expense of the Russian government,^b that Poland, hitherto the most painful sore on Russia's body, must become her right hand by restoring her as a small, weak kingdom under the sway of some Russian Prince—that would be the strongest bait for the Turkish and Austrian Slavonians:

^a *Address of the Polish Refugees to the English People*, London, 1874, p. 2.—Ed.

^b М. П. ПОГОДИНЪ, *Польской вопросъ. Собрание разсуждений, записокъ и замѣчаній. 1831-1867.*—Ed.

"We shall [...] proclaim this in a manifesto, England and France will bite their lips, and as for Austria it will be her death-blow.... All the Poles, even the most irreconcilable, will fly to our embrace; the Austrian and Prussian Poles will reunite with their brothers. All Slavonic races now oppressed by Austria, Czechs, Croats, Hungarians (1), even the Slavonians of Turkey, will long for the hour when they shall be able to breathe as freely as the Poles. We shall be a race of a hundred millions under one sceptre, and then, ye nations of Europe, come and try your strength with us!"^a

Unfortunately, this beautiful plan lacked only the main thing: the consent of Poland. But

"to all those allurements—the world knows it—Poland replied: I will live and must live, if I am to live at all, not as the tool of a foreign Tsar's plans for world conquest, but as a free nation among the free nations of Europe!"^a

The address then explains in further detail how Poland has confirmed this unshakeable decision of hers. At the critical moment of her existence, at the outbreak of the French Revolution, Poland was already crippled by the first partition and divided between four states.⁹ Yet she had the courage to raise the banner of the French Revolution on the Vistula—by the Constitution of the 3rd of May, 1791¹⁰—a deed that earned her a place high above all her neighbours. The old Polish economy was thus destroyed; given a few decades of peaceful development, undisturbed from outside, and Poland would have become the most advanced and most powerful country east of the Rhine. It would not, however, suit the partition powers for Poland to rise once again, and even less for her to rise through the naturalisation of revolution in north-eastern Europe. Her fate was sealed: the Russians imposed on Poland what Prussians, Austrians and Imperial troops attempted in France in vain.¹¹

"Kościuszko fought simultaneously for Polish independence and the principle of equality. [...] And it is notorious that from the moment of the loss of her national independence and in spite of it, Poland, in virtue of her innate patriotism and of her solidarity with all nations struggling for the rights of humanity, became the most active champion of justice outraged, no matter in what country, fighting on whatever battlefield tyranny was resisted. Unbroken by her own disasters, unshaken by the blindness and ill will of European governments, Poland has not for one moment been unmindful of the duties imposed upon her by herself, by history and by regard for the future."^b

At the same time, she has also developed the principles on which this future, the new Polish republic, will be organised: they are laid down in the manifestoes of 1836, 1845 and 1863.¹²

^a *Address...*, pp. 3-4.—*Ed.*

^b *Ibid.*, p. 4.—*Ed.*

"The first of those manifestoes, while asserting the unshakeable national rights of Poland, proclaims at the same time the *equality of rights of the peasantry*.^a That of 1845, issued on Polish soil, in the then free city of Cracow,¹³ and sanctioned by delegates from all parts of Poland, proclaims not only this equality of rights, but also the principle that the *soil*, cultivated by the peasantry for centuries, *shall become their property*.^a—In the part of Poland stolen by the Muscovites, the landlords, accepting the above manifestoes as part and parcel of Polish national law, had long before the imperial so-called Emancipation Proclamation resolved to settle this internal matter, which troubled their consciences, voluntarily and by agreement with the peasantry (1859-1863). The Polish land question was resolved, in principle, by the Constitution of May 3rd, 1791; if since then the Polish peasantry have been oppressed it was solely in consequence of the despotism and *Machiavellism*^a of the Tsar who based his domination upon the mutual antagonism of landlords and peasants. The resolution was taken long before the imperial proclamation of February 19th, 1861; and this proclamation, applauded by the whole of Europe and pretending to establish equal rights for the peasants, is merely a cloak for one of the ever-repeated attempts of the Tsar to take unto himself other people's property. The Polish rural populace is just as oppressed as before, but—*the soil has become the property of the Tsar!* And as a punishment for the bloody protest raised in 1863 against the treacherous barbarism of her oppressors,¹⁴ Poland has had to undergo a series of brutal persecutions such as would shake with horror even the tyranny of past centuries. [...]

"And yet neither the cruel yoke of the Tsar, though it has now weighed on her for a full century, nor the indifference of Europe, have been able to kill Poland.

"We have lived and we shall live by virtue of our own will, our own strength and our own social and political development, which renders us superior to our oppressors; for their existence is based, from beginning to end, upon brute force, prisons and the gallows, and their chief means of action abroad are clandestine machinations, treacherous surprises and, finally, conquest by force."^b

Let us, however, leave the address, which has been adequately characterised by the above extracts, in order to append to it some observations on the importance of the Polish question for the German workers.

No matter how much Russia had developed since Peter the Great, no matter how much her influence had grown in Europe (to which Frederick II of Prussia contributed more than a little, even though he knew full well what he was doing), she nevertheless remained essentially just as non-European a power as, for example, Turkey, until the moment she seized Poland. The first partition of Poland was in 1772; in 1779 in the Peace of Teschen^c Russia was already demanding^d the attested right to

^a Italicised by Engels.— *Ed.*

^b *Address...*, pp. 4-5.— *Ed.*

^c *Traité de paix entre Sa Majesté l'Impératrice de Hongrie et de Bohême, et Sa Majesté le Roi de Prusse, conclu et signé à Teschen le treize mai 1779, avec un article séparé et les conventions, garanties et actes annexés*.— *Ed.*

^d In the 1894 edition added: "and received".— *Ed.*

interfere in German affairs.¹⁵ That should have taught the German princes a lesson; yet Frederick William II, the only Hohenzollern ever to offer serious resistance to Russian policy, and Francis II agreed to the complete break-up of Poland. After the Napoleonic wars, Russia took, in addition, the lion's share of the previously Prussian and Austrian Polish provinces and now appeared openly as Europe's arbiter, a role she continued to play, without interruption, until 1853. Prussia was evidently proud of being allowed to crawl before Russia; Austria followed reluctantly, but always gave way at the crucial moment for fear of revolution, against which the Tsar remained the last bulwark. Thus, Russia became the stronghold of European reaction, without denying herself the pleasure of preparing further conquests in Austria and Turkey with pan-Slavist rabble-rousing. During the years of revolution, the crushing of the Hungarians by Russia¹⁶ was just as decisive an event for Eastern and Central Europe as was the June battle in Paris for the West¹⁷; and when Tsar Nicholas shortly afterwards sat in judgment on the King of Prussia^a and the Emperor of Austria^b in Warsaw, Russia's domination set the seal on the domination of reaction in Europe.¹⁸ The Crimean War liberated the West and Austria from the Tsar's insolence¹⁹, Prussia and the small states of Germany were all the more willing to crawl before him; but, in 1859, he was already chastising the Austrians for their disobedience by ensuring that his German vassals did not side with them,²⁰ and in 1866 Prussia completed the punishment of Austria.²¹ We have already seen above that the Russian army constitutes the pretext for and the reserve of all European militarism. Only the fact that Nicholas had challenged the West in 1853, relying on his million soldiers (who, admittedly, existed largely on paper only), provided Louis Napoleon with an excuse in the Crimean War to turn the then rather enfeebled French army into the strongest in Europe. Only because the Russian army prevented Austria from siding with France in 1870²² was Prussia able to defeat France and to complete the Prusso-German military monarchy. Behind all these grand performances of state²³ we see the Russian army. And even if the victory of Germany over France will just as surely produce a war between Russia and Germany—unless Russia's internal development soon enters a revolutionary flux—as the victory of Prussia over Austria at Sadowa²⁴ entailed

^a Frederick William IV.—*Ed.*

^b Francis Joseph I.—*Ed.*

the Franco-German War,* the Russian army will always be prepared to oppose any movement in the interior of Prussia. Even today, official Russia is the stronghold and bulwark of all European reaction, her army the reserve of all other armies, ensuring the suppression of the working class in Europe.

Yet it is the German workers who are first exposed to the onslaught of this large reserve army of oppression, both in the so-called German Empire and in Austria. As long as the Russians stand behind the Austrian and German bourgeoisie and governments, the sting is taken out of the entire German labour movement. So we, more than any others, have an interest in ridding ourselves of Russian reaction and the Russian army.

Moreover, in doing this we have only one reliable ally, which will remain reliable in all circumstances: *the Polish people*.

Through her historical development and her present position, Poland is faced, far more than France is, with the choice of either being revolutionary or perishing. And this scotches all the silly talk concerning the essentially aristocratic nature of the Polish movement. There are plenty of Polish refugees who have aristocratic cravings; but once Poland herself enters the movement it becomes revolutionary through and through, as we have seen in 1846²⁵ and 1863. These movements were not simply national; they were also aimed directly at liberating the peasants and transferring landed property to them. In 1871 the great mass of Polish refugees in France entered the service of the Commune²⁶; was this an act of aristocrats? Did that not prove that these Poles were at the very apex of the modern movement? Since Bismarck introduced the *Kulturkampf*²⁷ in Posen^a and, on the pretext of striking a blow against the Pope,^b searches out Polish textbooks, suppresses the Polish language and does his utmost to drive the Poles into the arms of Russia, what happens? The Polish aristocracy is increasingly siding with Russia to at least reunify Poland under Russian rule; the revolutionary masses reply by offering to ally themselves with the German workers' party and fighting in the ranks of the International.

In 1863, Poland showed that she could not be done to death, and continues to show this every day. Her claim to an

* This is already stated in the "Second Address of the General Council of the International Working Men's Association on the Franco-German War" (dated September 9, 1870).

^a The 1894 edition has: "Poland".— *Ed*

^b Pius IX.— *Ed*

independent existence in the European family of nations is irrefutable. Her restoration, however, is a necessity for two nations in particular: for the Germans and for the Russians themselves.

A people that oppresses others cannot emancipate itself. The power it needs to oppress others is ultimately always turned against itself. As long as there are Russian soldiers in Poland, the Russian people cannot liberate itself politically or socially. At the present stage of development in Russia, however, it is beyond dispute that the day Russia loses Poland, the movement will become strong enough in Russia herself to bring down the existing order. The independence of Poland and revolution in Russia imply each other. Meanwhile, Polish independence and revolution in Russia—which is far closer than it would appear on the surface, given the complete social, political and financial breakdown and the corruption that pervades the whole of official Russia—mean for the German workers that the bourgeoisie, the governments, in short, reaction in Germany, will be reduced to their own forces, forces that we shall, in time, overcome.

II

PROGRAMME OF THE BLANQUIST COMMUNE
REFUGEES²⁸

After every unsuccessful revolution or counter-revolution, feverish activity develops among the émigrés who escaped abroad. Party groups of various shades are formed, which accuse each other of having driven the cart into the mud, of treason and of all other possible mortal sins. They also maintain close ties with the homeland, organise, conspire, print leaflets and newspapers, swear that it will start over again within the next twenty-four hours, that victory is certain and, in the wake of this expectation, distribute government posts. Naturally, disappointment follows disappointment, and since this is attributed not to inevitable historical conditions, which they do not wish to understand, but to accidental mistakes by individuals, recriminations accumulate and result in general bickering. Such is the history of all refugee societies, from the royalist émigrés of 1792²⁹ to those of today; and those among the émigrés who have common sense and reason give up this fruitless squabbling as soon as this can properly be done, and turn to something more useful.

The French emigration after the Commune has not escaped this inevitable fate either. Owing to the European smear campaign, which attacked all equally, and especially in London, where the French emigration had its common centre in the General Council of the International, for some time it was compelled to conceal its internal squabbles at least from the outside world. In the last two years, however, it was no longer able to hide the process of disintegration that is progressing rapidly in its ranks. An open quarrel flared up everywhere. In Switzerland some of the refugees joined the Bakuninists, notably under the influence of *Malon*, who was one of the founders of the secret Alliance.³⁰ Then, in London,

the so-called Blanquists split off from the International and formed a group that called itself the Revolutionary Commune.³¹ Later, a number of other groups emerged that were, however, constantly fusing and reorganising, and did not produce anything worthwhile even as regards manifestoes, whereas the Blanquists have just issued the proclamation to the "Communeux",³ calling the world's attention to their programme.

They are called Blanquists not because they are a group founded by Blanqui—of the 33 signatories to the programme only a few may ever have spoken to Blanqui—but because they want to act in his spirit and in accordance with his tradition. Blanqui is essentially a political revolutionary, a socialist only in sentiment, because of his sympathy for the sufferings of the people, but he has neither socialist theory nor definite practical proposals for social reforms. In his political activities he was essentially a "man of action", believing that, if a small well-organised minority should attempt to effect a revolutionary uprising at the right moment, it might, after scoring a few initial successes, carry the mass of the people and thus accomplish a victorious revolution. Naturally, under Louis Philippe he was able to organise this nucleus only in the form of a secret society, and it met the fate usually reserved for conspiracies: the people, fed up with the constant proffering of empty promises that it would soon begin, finally lost all patience, became rebellious, and there remained only the alternative of letting the conspiracy collapse or of striking without any external cause. They struck (May 12, 1839), but the insurrection was immediately suppressed.³² This Blanqui conspiracy, by the way, was the only one in which the police never succeeded in gaining a foothold; for the police, the insurrection came like a bolt from the blue.—Since Blanqui regards every revolution as a coup de main by a small revolutionary minority, it automatically follows that its victory must inevitably be succeeded by the establishment of a dictatorship—not, it should be well noted, of the entire revolutionary class, the proletariat, but of the small number of those who accomplished the coup and who themselves are, at first, organised under the dictatorship of one or several individuals.

Obviously, Blanqui is a revolutionary of the old generation. These views on the course of revolutionary events have long since become obsolete, at least as far as the German workers' party is concerned, and in France, too, they meet the approval only of the less mature or more impatient workers. We shall also find that, in

³ *Aux Communeux*, London, June 1874.—*Ed.*

the programme in question, definite limitations have been imposed on these views. However, our London Blanquists too are guided by the principle that revolutions do not generally occur by themselves, but are made; that they are made by a relatively small minority and according to a plan worked out in advance; and, finally, that at any time it may "soon begin". With such principles people naturally become irretrievable victims of all the self-deceptions of the refugees and plunge from one folly into another. Most of all they want to play the role of Blanqui—the "man of action". But little good can be accomplished here by good will alone; Blanqui's revolutionary instinct, his ability to reach quick decisions are not, however, given to all, and no matter how much Hamlet may speak of action, he still remains Hamlet. Moreover, when our thirty-three men of action find that there is absolutely nothing to be done in the field they call action, our thirty-three Brutuses fall into a contradiction with themselves, which is comical rather than tragic, a contradiction wherein the tragedy is not heightened by the gloomy appearance they assume, as though they are a lot of "Möros, of the cloak and dagger",^a which, by the way, does not even enter their heads. What can they do? They are preparing for the next "outburst", by drawing up proscription lists for the future, to cleanse (*épuré*) the ranks of the people who took part in the Commune, which is why the other refugees call them the *pure* (*les purs*). Whether or not they have themselves assumed that title I do not know; it would ill fit some of them. Their meetings are closed, their decisions are kept secret, but this does not prevent their being echoed throughout the whole French Quarter the following morning. As always happens with such serious men of action, when they have nothing to do—they have picked first a personal, then a literary quarrel with a worthy opponent, one of the most notorious members of the Paris petite press, a certain Vermersch, who under the Commune published the *Père Duchêne*, a miserable caricature of Hébert's newspaper of 1793. In reply to their moral indignation, this gentleman published a pamphlet in which he branded them as "rogues or accomplices of rogues"^b and poured a veritable stream of abusive invectives at them:

Each word a night-pot
and not an empty one at that.^c

^a F. Schiller, *Die Bürgschaft* ("Damon und Phintias"), 1st stanza.—Ed.

^b E. Vermersch, *Un mot au public*, London, April 1874; *Les partageux. Poème*, May 12, 1874.—Ed.

^c H. Heine, "Disputation", Verse 86, *Romanzera Drittes Buch. Hebräische Melodien*.—Ed.

And our thirty-three Brutuses find it worthwhile to pick a public quarrel with such an opponent!

If one thing is certain it is that, after the exhausting war, after the hunger in Paris and, notably, after the awful blood-letting of the May days in 1871,³³ the Paris proletariat needs a long rest to recuperate, and that every premature attempt at an insurrection can only end in a new, perhaps still more horrible defeat. Our Blanquists hold a different view. In their opinion, the disintegration of the monarchic majority in Versailles³⁴ ushers in

"the fall of Versailles, the revanche for the Commune. This is because we are approaching a great historical moment, one of the great crises when the people, apparently succumbing in wretchedness and condemned to death, resume their revolutionary advance with renewed force".^a

So, it starts all over again, and what is more, immediately. This hope for an immediate "revanche for the Commune" is not merely an émigré illusion; it is an essential article of faith for people who have taken it into their heads to play "men of action" at a time when absolutely nothing can be done in their sense, that is, in the sense of precipitating a revolution. All the same, since it is to begin, they feel that "the time has come for all refugees who still have a spark of life left in them to define their position".^b And thus the thirty-three tell us that they are 1) atheists, 2) Communists, 3) revolutionaries.

Our Blanquists have a basic feature in common with the Bakuninists, in that they want to represent the most far-reaching, most extreme trend. It is for this reason, incidentally, that the Blanquists, while opposing the Bakuninists over aims, often agree with them over means. It is, therefore, a question of being more radical than all others as regards atheism. Luckily, it is easy enough these days to be an atheist. In the European workers' parties atheism is more or less self-understood, even though in some countries it is quite often similar to that of the Spanish Bakuninist who declared: to believe in God is against all socialism, but to believe in the Virgin Mary is something quite different, and every decent Socialist should naturally do so. As regards the German Social-Democratic workers,^c it can be said that atheism has already outlived its usefulness for them; this pure negation does not apply to them, since they no longer stand in theoretical, but only in practical opposition to all belief in God: they are *simply*

^a *Aux Communeux*, p. 2.—*Ed.*

^b *Ibid.*—*Ed.*

^c The 1894 edition has: "As regards the great majority of the German Social-Democratic workers".—*Ed.*

through with God, they live and think in the real world and are, therefore, materialists. The same probably applies to France. If not, there could be nothing simpler than to organise the mass distribution among the workers of the splendid French materialist literature of the last century, of the literature in which the French spirit has attained its sublime expression as regards both form and content, and which, considering the level of science that existed then, even today stands exceedingly high as regards content, and still unexcelled as regards form. This, however, does not suit our Blanquists. To prove that they are the most radical of all, God, as in 1793,³⁵ is decreed out of existence:

"Let the Commune forever deliver mankind from this spectre of past misery" (God), "of this cause" (non-existent God a cause!) "of their present misery.—There is no room for priests in the Commune; every religious service, every religious organisation must be banned."^a

And this demand to transform the people *par ordre du mufti*^b into atheists is signed by two members of the Commune,^c who surely must have had sufficient opportunity to discover, first, that anything can be decreed on paper but that this does not mean that it will be carried out; second, that persecution is the best way of strengthening undesirable convictions! This much is certain: the only service that can still be rendered to God today is to make atheism a compulsory dogma and to surpass Bismarck's anticlerical *Kulturkampf* laws by prohibiting religion in general.

The second point of the programme is communism. Here we find ourselves on more familiar ground for the ship we are sailing here is called the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, published in February 1848. Already in the autumn of 1872 the five Blanquists who had left the International embraced a socialist programme that, in all its essential features, was that of present-day German communism, and based their withdrawal solely on the refusal of the International to play at revolution after the fashion of those five.³⁶ Now the council of the thirty-three has adopted this programme, with all its materialist view of history, even though its translation into Blanquist French leaves much to be desired where the wording of the *Manifesto* was not kept almost verbatim, as for example, in this phrase:

^a *Aux Communeux*, p. 4.—*Ed.*

^b by order of the mufti, by order from above.—*Ed.*

^c A slip of the pen; the proclamation is signed by four members of the Commune: Édouard Vaillant, Émile Eudes, Jean Clement and Frédéric Cournet.—*Ed.*

"The bourgeoisie has removed the mystic veils from the exploitation of labour in which this last expression of all forms of slavery was formerly shrouded: governments, religions, the family, laws, institutions of both the past and present are finally revealed in this society, resting on the simple opposition of capitalists and wage-workers, as the instruments of oppression, with whose help the bourgeoisie upholds its rule and suppresses the proletariat."^a

Let us compare this with the *Communist Manifesto*, Section I: "In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation. The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honoured and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage-labourers. The bourgeoisie has torn away from the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation to a mere money relation," etc.^b

Yet as soon as we leave theory aside and get down to practice, the peculiar stand of the thirty-three becomes evident:

"We are Communists because we want to arrive at our aim without stop-overs at intermediate stations, without entering into compromises, which only put off victory and prolong slavery."^c

The German Communists are Communists because, through all intermediate stations and compromises, created not by them but by historical development, they clearly perceive^d the ultimate aim: the abolition of classes, the establishment of a society in which there will be no private ownership of land and means of production. The thirty-three are Communists because they imagine that, as soon as *they* have only the good will to jump over intermediate stations and compromises, everything is assured, and if, as they firmly believe, it "begins" in a day or two, and they take the helm, "communism will be introduced" the day after tomorrow. And they are not Communists if this cannot be done immediately. What childish naïveté to advance impatience as a convincing theoretical argument!

Finally, our thirty-three are "revolutionaries".^e As regards the bandying of big words, the Bakuninists are known to have done everything humanly possible in this respect. But our Blanquists feel obliged to outdo them. But how? It will be remembered that the whole socialist proletariat, from Lisbon and New York to Budapest and Belgrade, immediately adopted responsibility for

^a *Aux Communeux*, pp. 4.5.—*Ed*

^b See present edition, Vol. 6, p. 487.—*Ed*

^c *Aux Communeux*, p. 5.—*Ed*

^d The 1894 edition has: "they clearly perceive and pursue".—*Ed*

^e *Aux Communeux*, p. 7.—*Ed*

the actions of the Paris Commune *en bloc*. But that is not enough for our Blanquists:

"As far as we are concerned, we claim our share of the responsibility for the executions" (under the Commune) "of the enemies of the people" (a list of the executed is appended), "we claim our share of the responsibility for the arson that destroyed the instruments of monarchic or bourgeois oppression or protected those engaged in struggle."^a

A lot of follies are unavoidably committed in every revolution, as they are indeed at all other times, and when at last people calm down sufficiently to be able to review events critically, they inevitably draw the following conclusion: we have done many things that it would have been better to leave undone, and have failed to do many things that it would have been better to do, and that is why things took a bad turn. But what a lack of critical attitude is needed to declare the Commune impeccable and infallible and to assert that, every time a house was burned down or a hostage shot, this was a case of retributive justice, right down to the dot on the "i". Is this not tantamount to asserting that, during the week in May, the people shot precisely the number of people, and no more, than was necessary, that exactly those buildings were burned down, and no more, than had to be burned down? Is that not tantamount to saying of the first French revolution: each one beheaded got his deserts, first those whom Robespierre beheaded, and then Robespierre himself? Such childish patter results when essentially quite good-natured people give in to the urge to appear savagely brutal.

Enough. In spite of all the foolish actions taken by the refugees and the droll attempts to make boy Karl (or Eduard?)^b appear awe-inspiring, some definite progress can be noted in this programme. It is the first manifesto in which *French workers rally to the cause of present-day German communism*. Moreover, these workers are of a trend that regards the French as the chosen people of the revolution, and Paris the revolutionary Jerusalem. To have brought them this far is to the indisputable credit of *Vaillant*, who is one of the signatories and who, as is widely known, has a good knowledge of the German language and of German socialist writing. The German socialist workers who, in 1870, proved that any national chauvinism is absolutely alien to them, may consider it a favourable omen that the French workers are adopting correct theoretical principles, even though these come from Germany.

^a *Aux Communeux*, pp. 11-12.—*Ed*

^b Engels plays on the words of Philipp II from Schiller's drama *Don Carlos* (Act I, Scene 6). In the 1894 edition the words "(or Eduard?)"—an allusion to Edouard Vaillant—are omitted.—*Ed*

In London a review entitled *Vperyod!* (Forward)^a is appearing in the Russian language and at irregular intervals. It is edited by a personally most respectable scholar,^b whom the prevailing strict etiquette in Russian refugee literature prevents me from naming. For even those Russians who pose as out-and-out revolutionary ogres, who dub it a betrayal of the revolution to respect anything at all—in their polemics even they respect the appearance of anonymity with a conscientiousness only equalled in the English bourgeois press; they respect it even when it becomes comical, as it does here, because all the Russian refugees and the Russian government know perfectly well what the man's name is. It would never occur to us to let out such a carefully kept secret without good reason; but since the child must have a name, let us hope that the editor of the *Forward* will excuse us if, for the sake of brevity, in this article we call him by the popular Russian name *Peter*.

In his philosophy, Friend Peter is an eclectic who selects the best from all the different systems and theories: try everything and keep the best! He knows that everything has a good side and a bad side, and that the main thing is to appropriate the good side of everything without being saddled with the bad, too. Since every thing, every person, every theory has these two sides, a good and a bad, every thing, every person, every theory is as good and as bad as any other in this respect, hence, from this vantage point, it would be foolish to become impassioned for or against one or the other. From this point of view, the struggles and disputes of the

^a *Впередь! Непериодическое обозрѣніе.*— Ed.

^b P. L. Lavrov.— Ed.

revolutionaries and socialists amongst themselves are bound to appear sheer fatuous absurdities that serve no better purpose than to please their opponents. Moreover, nothing could be more understandable for a man of this opinion than to attempt to bring all of these mutually hostile factions together and earnestly enjoin them no longer to treat reaction to this scandalous spectacle, but exclusively to attack the common adversary. All the more natural, of course, if one comes from Russia, where the labour movement is, as we know, so extremely highly developed.

The *Forward* is, then, full of exhortations urging concord on all socialists or urging them, at least, to avoid all *public* discord. When the Bakuninists' attempts to subjugate the International to their rule under false pretences, by lies and deceit, occasioned the well-known split in the Association, again it was the *Forward* that exhorted us to unity. This unity could, of course, only be attained by immediately letting the Bakuninists have their way and delivering the International up to their secret conspiracies, tied hand and foot. One was not unprincipled enough to do so; one accepted the challenge; the Hague Congress came to its decision, threw out the Bakuninists and resolved to publish the documents justifying this expulsion.³⁸

There was a great deal of lamentation on the editorial board of the *Forward* over the fact that the entire labour movement had not been sacrificed to dear "unity". Yet even greater was the horror when the compromising Bakuninist documents really did appear in the commission's report (see "Ein Komplott gegen die Internationale",³⁹ German edition, Brunswick, Bracke). Let us hear from the *Forward* itself:

"This publication ... has the character of caustic polemics against persons who are in the foremost ranks of the Federalists, ... its contents are topped up with private matters which could only have been collected by hearsay, and the credibility of which could consequently not have been indisputable for the authors."^a

In order to prove to the people who implemented the decision of the Hague Congress what a colossal crime they had committed, the *Forward* refers to a feuilleton in the *Neue Freie Presse* by a certain Karl Thaler,^b which,

"having emerged from the bourgeois camp, merits particular attention because it proves most clearly the importance for the common enemies of the working class,

^a [P. L. Lavrov,] "Лѣтопись рабочаго движенія", *Впередь! Непериодическое обозрѣніе*. Zurich, 1874, Vol. II, Part II, Ch. II, p. 26.—*Ed.*

^b Karl von Thaler, "Rothe Jesuiten", *Neue Freie Presse* (Morgenblatt), Nos. 3284 and 3285, October 14 and 15, 1873 (in the section *Feuilleton*).—*Ed.*

for the bourgeoisie and governments of the mutually accusatory pamphlets of the contenders for supremacy among the ranks of the workers" ^a

First let us remark that the Bakuninists are here presented simply as "*Federalists*", as opposed to the alleged *Centralists*, as if the author believed in this non-existent opposition invented by the Bakuninists. That this was not, in fact, the case will become evident. Second, let us remark that from this feuilleton, written to order for such a venal bourgeois sheet as the Vienna *Neue Freie Presse*, the conclusion is drawn that *genuine* revolutionaries should not expose merely *ostensible* revolutionaries because these mutual accusations provide amusement for the bourgeois and governments. I believe that the *Neue Freie Presse* and all this press rabble could write ten thousand articles without having the slightest effect on the stance of the German workers' party. Every struggle has moments when one cannot deny one's opponent a certain satisfaction, if one is not to inflict positive damage on oneself. Fortunately, we have got so far that we can allow our opponents this private pleasure if we thereby achieve real successes.

The main charge, however, is that the report is full of private matters the credibility of which could not have been indisputable for the authors, because they could only have been collected by hearsay. How Friend Peter knows that a society like the International, which has its official organs throughout the civilised world, can only collect such facts by hearsay is not stated. His assertion is, anyway, frivolous in the extreme. The facts in question are attested by authentic evidence, and those concerned took good care not to contest them.

But Friend Peter is of the opinion that private matters, such as private letters, are sacred and should not be published in political debates. To accept the validity of this argument on any terms is to render the writing of all history impossible. The relationship between Louis XV and Du Barry or Pompadour was a private matter, but without it the whole pre-history of the French Revolution is incomprehensible. Or, to take a step towards the present: if an innocent girl called Isabella ^b is married to a man ^c who, according to experts (assessor Ulrichs, for example) cannot stand women and hence only falls in love with men—if, finding herself neglected, she takes men wherever she finds them, then that is purely a private matter. But if the said innocent Isabella is

^a [P. I. Lavrov.] "Лѣтопись рабочаго движенія", *Впередь!*, Zurich, 1874, Vol. II, Part II, Ch. II, p. 26.—*Ed.*

^b Isabella II—Queen of Spain.—*Ed.*

^c Francisco de Asis.—*Ed.*

Queen of Spain and one of these young men kept by her is a young officer called Serrano^a; if this Serrano is promoted field marshal and prime minister in recognition of the heroic deeds he has performed behind closed doors, is then supplanted and overthrown by another,^b subsequently throws his faithless sweetheart out of the country with the help of other companions in misfortune, and after a variety of adventures eventually himself becomes dictator of Spain and such a great man that Bismarck does his utmost to persuade the Great Powers to recognise him—then this private affair between Isabella and Serrano becomes a piece of Spanish history, and anyone wishing to write about modern Spanish history and knowingly concealing this titbit from his readers would be falsifying history. Again, if one is describing the history of a gang like the Alliance, among whom there is such a large number of tricksters, adventurers, rogues, police spies, swindlers and cowards alongside those they have duped, should one falsify this history by knowingly concealing the individual villainies of these gentlemen as “private matters”? Much as it may horrify Friend Peter, he may rely on it that we are not done with these “private matters” by a long chalk. The material is still mounting up.

When, however, the *Forward* describes the report as a clumsy concoction of essentially private facts, it is committing an act that is hard to characterise. Anyone who could write such a thing had either not read the report in question at all; or he was too limited or prejudiced to understand it; or else he was writing something he knew to be incorrect. Nobody can read the “Komplotz gegen die Internationale” without being convinced that the private matters interspersed in it are the most insignificant part of it, are illustrations meant to provide a more detailed picture of the characters involved, and that they could all be cut without jeopardising the main point of the report. The organisation of a secret society, with the sole aim of subjecting the European labour movement to a hidden dictatorship of a few adventurers, the infamies committed to further this aim, particularly by Nechayev in Russia⁴⁰—this is the central theme of the book, and to maintain that it all revolves around private matters is, to say the least, irresponsible.

To be sure, it may be extremely painful for some Russians suddenly to see the dirty side—and it certainly is very dirty—of

^a Francisco Serrano y Dominguez.—*Ed.*

^b Luis Gonzales Bravo.—*Ed.*

the Russian movement ruthlessly exposed to Western Europe. But who is to blame? Who else but those Russians themselves who represent this dirty side, who, not satisfied with deceiving their own compatriots, attempted to subordinate the whole European labour movement to their personal ends? If Bakunin and company had restricted their heroic deeds to Russia, people in Western Europe would hardly have troubled to train their sights on them. The Russians themselves would have done that. But as soon as those gentlemen, who do not even understand the rudiments of the conditions and development of the West European labour movement, seek to play the dictator with us, it ceases to be amusing: one simply fires at them pointblank.

Anyway, the Russian movement can take such revelations with equanimity. A country that has produced two writers of the stature of Dobrolyubov and Chernyshevsky, two socialist Lessings, will not be destroyed because, all at once, it spawns a humbug like Bakunin and a few immature little students, who inflate themselves with big words like frogs, and finally gobble one another up. Even among the younger Russians we know people of first-class theoretical and practical talents and great energy, people who have the advantage over the French and the English, thanks to their knowledge of languages, in their intimate acquaintance with the movement in different countries, and over the Germans in their cosmopolitan versatility. Those Russians who understand and participate in the labour movement can only regard it as a service rendered to have been relieved of complicity in the Bakuninists' acts of villainy. All this does not, however, prevent the *Forward* from concluding its account with the words:

"We do not know what the authors of this pamphlet think of the results it has achieved. The majority of our readers would probably share the feeling of depression with which we have read it and with which we record these sorry phenomena in our pages, in pursuance of our duty as chroniclers."^a

With this feeling of depression on the part of Friend Peter we conclude the first section of our tale. The second begins with the following paragraph from the same volume of the *Forward*:

"Our readers will be pleased to receive another piece of news in a similar vein. With us, in our ranks, we also have the well-known writer Peter Nikitch Tkachov; after four years' detention he has succeeded in escaping from the place where he was interned and condemned to inactivity, to reinforce our ranks."^b

^a [P. L. Lavrov,] *Op. cit.*, p. 27.—*Ed.*

^b *Впередь! Непериодическое обозрѣние*, Vol. II, Part 2, Zurich, 1874: *Изъ Иркутска*. In the section: *Что дѣлается на Родинѣ?*, p. 115.—*Ed.*

We learn who the well-known writer Tkachov is from a Russian pamphlet, *The Tasks of Revolutionary Propaganda in Russia*, which he himself published in April 1874 and which depicts him as a green grammar-school boy of singular immaturity, the Karlchen Missnick, as it were, of Russian revolutionary youth. He tells us that many people have asked him to collaborate in the *Forward*; he knew the editor was a reactionary; nevertheless, he considered it his duty to take the *Forward* under his wing, although—it should be noted—it had not asked for him. On arriving he finds, to his astonishment, that the editor, Friend Peter, presumes to make the final decision on the acceptance or rejection of articles. *Such* an undemocratic procedure naturally infuriates him; he composes a detailed document claiming, for himself and the other staff (who—it should be noted—had not asked for it), “in the name of justice, on the basis of purely theoretical considerations ... equality of rights and obligations” (with the editor-in-chief) “with regard to everything affecting the literary and economic side of the enterprise”.^a

Here we see straightaway the immaturity that, while it does not dominate the Russian refugee movement, is, nevertheless, more or less endured. A Russian scholar, who has a considerable reputation in his own country, becomes a refugee and acquires the means to found a political journal abroad. Scarcely has he managed to do this, when some more or less enthusiastic youth comes along, unasked, and offers to take part, on the more or less childish condition that he should have an equal voice with the founder of the journal in all literary and financial matters. In Germany he would have been laughed at. But the Russians are not so coarse. Friend Peter goes to great pains to convince him that he is wrong, both “in the name of justice and on the basis of purely theoretical considerations”—naturally in vain. Tkachov, offended, withdraws like Achilles to his tent⁴¹ and fires off his pamphlet against Friend Peter, whom he calls a “philistine philosopher”.^b

With a stifling heap of eternally repeated Bakunist phrases about the nature of true revolution, he accuses Friend Peter of the crime of *preparing* the people for revolution, of seeking to bring them to a “clear understanding and awareness of their needs”. Anyone, however, who wishes to do that is no revolutionary, but a man of peaceful progress, i.e., a reactionary, a supporter of

^a П. Н. Ткачевъ, *Задачи революционной пропаганды въ Россіи*, [London,] 1874, p. VIII.—Ed.

^b *Ibid.*, p. 10.—Ed.

"bloodless revolution in the German taste".^a The true revolutionary "knows that the people are always ready for revolution"^b; anyone who does not believe this does not believe in the people, and faith in the people "constitutes our strength". To anyone who does not realise this, the writer quotes a pronouncement by Nechayev, this "typical representative of our modern youth". Friend Peter says we must wait until the people are ready for revolution—"but we cannot and will not wait"^c; the true revolutionary differs from the philistine philosopher in that he "assumes the right to summon the people to revolution at any time".^d And so on.

Here in Western Europe we would simply dismiss all this childish nonsense with the answer: "If your people are ready for revolution at any time, if you assume the right to summon them to revolution at any time, and if you simply cannot wait, why do you go on boring us with your prattle, why, for goodness sake, don't you go ahead and strike now?"

But our Russians do not view matters quite so simply. Friend Peter thinks that Mr. Tkachov's childish, tedious and contradictory observations, which revolve in an eternal circle, may exert the seductive attraction of a *mons veneris*⁴² on Russian youth, and, as the faithful Eckart of this youth, he issues an admonitory exhortation of sixty closely printed pages against them.^e In this he sets out his own views on the nature of revolution, investigating in deadly earnest whether or not the people are ready for revolution and in what circumstances revolutionaries have the right to summon them to revolution or not and similar niceties, which at this level of generality have about as much value as the scholastics' studies of the Virgin Mary. In the process, "the Revolution" itself becomes a sort of Virgin Mary, theory becomes faith, activity in the movement becomes a religion, and the whole debate takes place not on *terra firma*, but in a cloudy sky of generalities.

Here, however, Friend Peter becomes involved in a tragic contradiction with himself. He, the preacher of unity, the opponent of all polemics, of all "mutually accusatory pamphlets" within the revolutionary party, cannot, of course, do his duty as Eckart, without also engaging in polemics; he cannot reply to his opponent's accusations without similarly accusing him. Friend

^a Ibid., p. 8.—Ed

^b Ibid., p. 10.—Ed

^c Ibid., p. 34.—Ed

^d Ibid., p. 10.—Ed

^e [P. L. Lavrov,] *Русской социально-революционной молодежи*, [London,] 1874.—Ed

Peter will himself testify to the "feeling of depression" that accompanies this "sorry phenomenon".

His pamphlet begins as follows:

"Of two evils, one must choose the lesser.

"I know full well that all this refugee literature of mutually accusatory pamphlets, of polemics about who is the genuine friend of the people and who is not, who is honest and who is not, and, in particular, who is genuine representative of Russian youth, of the true revolutionary party—that all this literature about the personal dirt of the Russian emigration is as repugnant to the reader as it is insignificant for the revolutionary struggle, and can only gratify our enemies—this I know, and yet I find it *necessary* to pen these lines, necessary with my own hand to swell the number of these wretched writings by one more, to the tedium of our readers and the delight of our enemies—necessary, because of two evils, one must choose the lesser."^a

Splendid. But why is it that Friend Peter, who evinces so much Christian tolerance in the *Forward* and demands the same of us towards the tricksters we have exposed—tricksters whom, as we shall see, he knows as well as we do,—that he did not even have the modicum of tolerance towards the writers of the report to ask himself whether they, too, were obliged to choose the lesser of two evils? Why must the fire first burn his own fingers before he realises that there might be even greater evils than a little harsh polemics against people who, in the guise of ostensibly revolutionary activity, were endeavouring to debase and destroy the entire European labour movement?

Let us, however, be indulgent towards Friend Peter; fate has been rather hard on him. No sooner has he done, in full consciousness of his own guilt, what he reproaches us with doing, than Nemesis drives him on and forces him to supply Mr. Karl Thaler with new material for several more articles in the *Neue Freie Presse*.

"Or," he asks the ever-ready madcap Tkachov, "has your agitation already done its work? Is your organisation perhaps ready? Ready? Really ready? Or have we here that notorious secret committee of 'typical' revolutionaries, the committee that consists of two men and circulates decrees?⁴⁵ Our young people have been told so many lies, they have been so often deceived, their trust so shamefully abused, that they will not, all at once, believe in the readiness of the revolutionary organisation."^b

For the Russian reader it is, of course, unnecessary to add that the "two men" are Bakunin and Nechayev. Further:

"But there are those who claim to be friends of the people, supporters of the social revolution, and who, at the same time, bring to their activity that mendaciousness and dishonesty that I have described above as a belch of the old

^a Ibid., p. 3.—*Ed.*

^b Ibid., p. 17.—*Ed.*

society.... These people used the bitterness of the supporters of the new social order against the injustice of the old society, asserting the principle that, in war, every means is allowable. Among these *allowable* means they included the deception of their collaborators, the deception of the people whom they, nevertheless, claimed to serve. They were prepared to lie to everyone and anyone solely in order to organise a sufficiently strong party, just as if a strong social-revolutionary party could be produced without the honest solidarity of its members! They were ready to arouse in the people the old passions of banditry and enjoyment without work.... They were ready to exploit their friends and comrades, to make them tools of their plans; they were ready verbally to defend the most complete independence and autonomy of persons and sections, while at the same time organising the most pronounced secret dictatorship and training their supporters in the most sheep-like and thoughtless obedience, as if the social revolution could be carried out by a union of exploiters and exploited, by a group of people whose actions are, at every turn, a slap in the face for everything their words preach!"^a

It is incredible, but true: these lines, which resemble an extract from the "Komplott gegen die Internationale" as closely as one egg does another, were written by the very man who, a few months before, had described that pamphlet as a crime against the common cause, because of its attacks on the very same people, attacks that were in complete agreement with the above lines. Well, let us be satisfied with this.

If, however, we now look back on Mr. Tkachov, with his great pretensions and utterly insignificant achievements, and at the little *malheur* that befell our Friend Peter on this occasion, we might well consider it our turn to say:

"We do not know what the authors think of the results achieved. The majority of our readers would probably share the feeling of 'amusement' with which we have read it and with which we record these 'strange' phenomena in our pages, in pursuance of our duty as chroniclers."

Joking aside, however. Many peculiar phenomena in the Russian movement to date are explained by the fact that, for a long time, every Russian publication was a closed book to the West, and that it was, therefore, easy for Bakunin and his consorts to conceal from it their goings-on, which had long been known to the Russians. They zealously spread the assertion that even the dirty sides of the Russian movement should—in the interests of the movement itself—be kept secret from the West; anyone who communicated Russian matters to the rest of Europe, in so far as they were of an unpleasant nature, was a traitor. That has now ceased. Knowledge of the Russian language—a language that, both for its own sake, as one of the richest and most powerful living languages, and on account of the literature thereby made

^a *Ibid.*, pp. 44, 45.—*Ed.*

accessible, richly deserves study—is no longer a great rarity, at any rate among the German Social-Democrats. The Russians will have to bow to the inevitable international fate: their movement will henceforth develop in full view and under the surveillance of the rest of Europe. Nobody has had to pay so dearly for their earlier isolation than they themselves. But for this isolation, it would never have been possible to cheat them so disgracefully for years on end, as Bakunin and his consorts did. Those who will derive the greatest benefit from the West's criticism, from the international interaction of the various West European movements on the Russian movement and vice versa, from the eventual fusion of the Russian movement with the all-European movement, are the Russians themselves.

IV⁴⁴

The readers of the *Volksstaat* have suffered a misfortune. Some of them may still remember that, in my last article on "refugee literature" (Nos. 117 and 118),^a I dealt with some passages from the Russian periodical *Forward* and a pamphlet by its editor.^b Quite by chance I happened to mention a Mr. Peter Tkachov, who has published a little pamphlet attacking the aforementioned editor,^c and with whom I had only concerned myself as little as was absolutely necessary. I described him, to judge by the form and content of his immortal work, "as a green grammar-school boy of singular immaturity, the Karlchen Missnick, as it were, of Russian revolutionary youth"^d and pitied the editor of the *Forward* for deeming it necessary to bandy words with such an adversary. I was soon to learn, however, that the boy Karl is beginning to get cross with me^e and entangling me, too, in polemics with him. He publishes a pamphlet: *Offener Brief an Herrn Friedrich Engels* by Peter Tkachov, Zurich, typography by *Tagwacht*, 1874. The fact that, in it, I have all sorts of things foisted on to me that Mr. Tkachov must know I have never maintained would be a matter of indifference to me; but the fact that he gives the German workers quite a false picture of the situation in Russia, in order to justify the activities of the Bakuninists in relation to Russia, makes a reply necessary.

In his open letter, Mr. Tkachov consistently sets himself up as a representative of Russian revolutionary youth. He maintains that I "dispensed advice to the Russian revolutionaries ... urging them to

^a See this volume, pp. 19-28.—*Ed.*

^b *Ibid.*, p. 25.—*Ed.*

^c *Ibid.*, p. 24.—*Ed.*

^d *Ibid.*—*Ed.*

^e *Ibid.*, p. 18.—*Ed.*

enter into an alliance with me (!)"^a; at the same time I had depicted them, "the representatives of the Russian revolutionary party abroad", their efforts and their literature in the "most unfavourable colours to the German labour world"; he says: "You express your utter contempt for *us Russians* because *we* are so 'stupid' and 'immature'," etc. "...'green grammar-school boys', as you please to call *us*"—and finally there follows the inevitable trump-card: "By mocking *us* you have done our common enemy, the Russian state, a valuable service." I have subjected him, Mr. Tkachov claims, "to every conceivable kind of abuse".^b

Now, nobody knows better than Peter Nikitich Tkachov that there is not a single grain of truth in all this. First, in the article in question, I held no one responsible for Mr. Tkachov's utterances other than Mr. Tkachov himself. It never occurred to me to see him as a representative of the Russian revolutionaries. If he appoints himself as such, thereby transferring the green grammar-school boy and other pleasantries from his shoulders on to theirs, then I must definitely protest. Among Russian revolutionary youth there are, of course, as everywhere, people of widely differing moral and intellectual calibre. Yet its general level, even after taking full account of the time difference and the essentially different milieu, is undoubtedly still far higher than our German student youth has ever attained, even during its best period in the early 1830s. Nobody but Mr. Tkachov himself gives him the right to speak on behalf of these young people in their entirety. Indeed, even though he reveals himself as a true Bakuninist on this occasion, I nevertheless doubt at the moment whether he has the right to conduct himself as the representative of the small number of Russian Bakuninists whom I described as "a few immature little students, who inflate themselves with big words like frogs, and finally gobble one another up".^c But even if this were the case, it would only be a new version of the old story of the three tailors of Tooley Street in London, who issued a proclamation that started, "We, the people of England, declare"^d etc.* Thus, the main point that needs to be made is that the "Russian revolutionaries" do not

* What's the betting that Mr. Tkachov will say that, with the above anecdote, I have betrayed the proletariat by depicting tailors as such in a "ridiculous light"^d?

^a P. Tkatschhoff, *Offener Brief an Herrn Friedrich Engels...*, Zurich, 1874, p. 3.—*Ed.*

^b *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 7, 10 and 11.—*Ed.*

^c See this volume, p. 23.—*Ed.*

^d P. Tkatschhoff, *Offener Brief...*, p. 10.—*Ed.*

come into it, now any more than before, and that for Tkachov's "we" it is necessary to substitute "I", throughout.

I am supposed to have given him "advice". I haven't the faintest idea what he is talking about. I may have let fly a few *blows*, Peter Nikitich, but *advice*? Be so kind as to furnish proof.

At the end of my last article, I am supposed to have urged him or his ilk to enter into an alliance with me. I will pay Mr. Tkachov ten marks in Bismarck's coin of the realm⁴⁶ if he can demonstrate that.

I am supposed to have maintained that he is "stupid", and he puts the word in quotation marks. Although I would not deny that he has hidden his talents—if that is the appropriate word here—under a bushel of considerable size in both these works, it is open to anyone to ascertain that the word "stupid" does *not occur once* anywhere in my article. But if all else fails, the Bakuninists resort to bogus quotations.

Further, I am supposed to have "mocked" him and portrayed him in a "ridiculous light". Granted, Mr. Tkachov will never be able to force me to take his pamphlet seriously. We Germans are widely reputed to be boring, and must have richly deserved this reputation on many an occasion. That does not, however, oblige us in all circumstances to be as boring and pompous as the Bakuninists. The German labour movement has acquired a singularly humorous character from its skirmishes with police, state prosecutors and prison-warders; why should I deny it? Mr. Tkachov has full permission to mock me and depict me in a ridiculous light, if he can manage it without imputing any lies to me.

Now the incomparable accusation: by portraying Mr. Tkachov in a light befitting him and his works, I have "done our common enemy, the Russian state, a valuable service"! Similarly, he says at another point: by describing him as I have, I am breaching "the basic principles of the programme of the International Working Men's Association"! Here we see the true Bakuninist. These gentlemen, as true revolutionaries, shun no means against us, particularly in the dark; but if one fails to treat *them* with the greatest respect, if one drags *their* antics into the light, criticises *them* and their ringing phrases, then one is serving the Tsar of Russia and breaching the basic principles of the International. Precisely the opposite is the case, in fact. The one who has done

⁴⁶ In the original a play on the words *Schläge* (blows) and *Ratschläge* (advice).—*Ed.*

the Russian government a service is no other than Mr. Tkachov. If the Russian police had any sense, it would spread this gentleman's pamphlet throughout Russia in large numbers. On the one hand, it could hardly find a better means of discrediting the Russian revolutionaries, whom the writer claims to represent, in the eyes of all sensible people. On the other hand, it is always possible that some worthy but inexperienced young people would allow it to provoke them to rash acts, thus delivering themselves into a trap.

But, says Mr. Tkachov, I have subjected him to "every conceivable kind of abuse". Now a certain kind of abuse, the so-called invective, is one of the most effective forms of rhetoric, employed by all great orators when necessary; the most powerful English political writer, William Cobbett, possessed a supreme command of it that is still admired to this day and serves as an unsurpassed model. Mr. Tkachov himself also indulges in a good deal of "abuse" in his pamphlet. So, if I *had* indulged in abuse, that would not in itself have been wrong of me at all. But as I did not become rhetorical with regard to Mr. Tkachov, as I did not take him seriously at all, I *cannot* have used abuse to attack him. Let us examine what I said about him.

I called him "a green grammar-school boy of singular immaturity". Immaturity may refer to character, mind or knowledge. As far as immaturity of character is concerned, I made the following addition to Mr. Tkachov's own account:

"A Russian scholar, who has a considerable reputation in his own country, becomes a refugee and acquires the means to found a political journal abroad. Scarcely has he managed to do this, when some more or less enthusiastic youth comes along, unmasked, and offers to take part, on the more or less childish condition that he should have an equal voice with the founder of the journal in all literary and financial matters. In Germany he would have been laughed at."^a

I hardly think I need adduce any further evidence of immaturity of character. Immaturity of mind is sufficiently demonstrated by the further quotations from Mr. Tkachov's pamphlet that follow below. As far as knowledge is concerned, the dispute between the *Forward* and Mr. Tkachov largely concerns this: the editor of the *Forward* demands that the Russian revolutionary youth should learn something, should enrich themselves with serious and thorough information, should acquire critical faculties in accordance with accepted methods, should work

^a See this volume, p. 24.—*Ed.*

at their self-development and self-education by the sweat of their brow. Tkachov rejects such advice with disgust:

"Again and again I must express the feeling of profound indignation that it has always aroused in me... Learn! Educate yourselves! Oh God, how can a *living* human being say such a thing to another *living* human being! Wait! Study and finish your education! But have we the right to wait" (with revolution to wit)? "Have we the right to waste time on education?" (p. 14). "Knowledge is probably a necessary precondition for peaceful progress, but it is not necessary at all for the revolution" (p. 17).^a

So, if Mr. Tkachov evinces profound indignation at the very injunction to study, if he declares all knowledge superfluous for a revolutionary, if, in addition, he does not betray even the slightest trace of knowledge in his entire pamphlet, he himself writes out the testimony to his own immaturity, and I have but ascertained the fact. Yet anyone who makes out this testimony himself can, in our opinion, aspire *at most* to the educational level of a grammar-school boy. Thus, by attributing the highest possible level to him, rather than abusing him, I was perhaps doing him even too much credit.

Furthermore, I said that Mr. Tkachov's observations were childish (for examples of this, see the quotations in this article), tedious (surely even the writer himself would not deny this), contradictory (as the editor of the *Forward* has demonstrated) and revolving in an eternal circle (which is also true). I then go on to speak of his great pretensions (which I have simply related in his own terms) and his utterly insignificant achievements (which the present article demonstrates more than adequately). Where, then, is all the abuse? Surely, it cannot be abuse to compare him with Karlchen Missnick, Germany's favourite grammar-school boy and one of the most popular German writers. But stay! Did I not say of him that he had retired like Achilles to his tent and from there fired off his pamphlet against the *Forward*?^b That must be the crux of the matter. In the case of a man whose hackles rise at the mere mention of studying, who can boldly take Heine's words:

And all his ignorance
He acquired himself,^c

as his motto, I dare say one may assume that it is the first time he has come across the name Achilles. And as I link Achilles with "tent" and "firing", perhaps Mr. Tkachov imagines that this Achilles is a Russian N.C.O. or a Turkish bashibazouk⁴⁷ and it

^a П. Ткачѣвъ, *Задачи революціонной пропаганды въ Россіи*.—Ed.

^b See this volume, p. 24.—Ed.

^c H. Heine, *Kobes I*.—Ed.

must, therefore, be a breach of etiquette to call him an Achilles. Let me, however, assure Mr. Tkachov that the Achilles of whom I speak was the greatest hero of Greek legend, and that the said retreat to his tent provided the material for the greatest heroic epic of all time, the *Iliad*, which even Mr. Bakunin will confirm for him. If my assumption should be correct I would then, of course, be forced to declare that Mr. Tkachov is *not* a grammar-school boy at all.

Mr. Tkachov goes on to say:

"Despite all this I ventured, however, to express the conviction that the social revolution can be easily called into life. 'If it is so easy to call it into life,' you remark, 'why do you not do so, instead of talking about it?'—It seems to you to be ridiculous, childish behaviour... I and those who think as I do are convinced that the practicability of the social revolution in Russia presents no problems, that it is possible at any moment to induce the Russian people to make a general revolutionary protest (!). True, this conviction commits us to a certain amount of practical activity, but it does not militate in the least against the usefulness and necessity of literary propaganda. It is not enough that we are convinced; we want others, too, to share our conviction. The more like-minded comrades we have, the stronger we shall feel, the easier it will be for us to achieve a practical solution to the task."^a

That really does take the cake. It sounds so nice, so sensible, so cultivated, so reasonable. It quite sounds as though Mr. Tkachov had only written his pamphlet^b to demonstrate the usefulness of literary propaganda, and I, the impatient greenhorn, had answered him: "The devil take literary propaganda, let's get cracking!" Now, what is the true state of affairs?

Mr. Tkachov commences his pamphlet by straightaway giving newspaper propaganda (and that is surely the most effective form of literary propaganda) a vote of no confidence, saying that one should not "expend too much revolutionary energy on it", for "it does far more harm through inappropriate use, than it does the good through appropriate use."^c So enthusiastic is our Tkachov about literary propaganda in general. In particular, though, if one wishes to engage in such propaganda and recruit like-minded comrades, mere rhetoric is no good; one must examine causes, and treat the matter theoretically, i.e., in the final analysis, scientifically. On this point, Mr. Tkachov tells the editor of the *Forward*:

"Your philosophical struggle, that purely theoretical, scientific propaganda to which your journal is devoted, ... is, from the point of view of the interests of the revolutionary party, not merely useless; it is even harmful."^d

^a P. Tkatschhoff, *Offener Brief...*, pp. 9-10.—Ed.

^b *Задачи революционной пропаганды в России*.—Ed.

^c П. Ткачёвъ, *Задачи революционной пропаганды в России*, p. II.—Ed.

^d *Ibid.*, p. 37.—Ed.

It is evident that the more we investigate Mr. Tkachov's views on literary propaganda, the more bogged down we become, and the further we are from discovering what he wants. So what does he really want? Let us listen to a little more:

"Do you not realise that the revolutionary always assumes and must assume the right to summon the people to revolt; that he differs from philistine philosophers in that, without waiting until the course of historical events announces the moment, he himself chooses this moment, in that he knows that the people are always ready for revolution (p. 10) ... Whoever does not believe in the possibility of the revolution in the present does not believe in the people, does not believe in the people's readiness for revolution (p. 11) ... That is why we cannot wait, why we maintain that revolution is an urgent necessity in Russia, and particularly necessary *at the present time*; we permit no hesitation, no delay. Now or very late, perhaps *never* (p. 16)! ... Every people exposed to despotism, enslaved by exploiters ... any such people (and *all* peoples are in this position) is by virtue of the very conditions of its social order—revolutionary; it is always *capable*, it is always *willing* to make revolution; it is always ready for revolution (p. 17)... But we cannot and will not wait (p. 34)... Now is no time for long, protracted arrangements and eternal preparations—let everyone pack his possessions and hasten on his way. The question of what is to be done^a must no longer concern us. It has long since been settled. It is to make revolution.—How? To the best of one's ability" (p. 39[-40]).

This seems clear enough to me. So I asked Karlchen Missnick: If nothing else will do, if the people are ready for revolution, and you are too; if you are simply unwilling and unable to wait any longer, and have no right to wait; if you claim the right to choose the moment to strike, and if it is, at last, "now or never!"—well, dear Karlchen, do what you cannot refrain from doing, make revolution today and smash the Russian state into a thousand pieces, otherwise you will end up by bringing about an even greater misfortune!

And what does Karlchen Missnick do? Does he strike? Does he destroy the Russian state? Does he liberate the Russian people, "this unfortunate people, streaming in blood, with the crown of thorns, nailed to the cross of slavery",^a whose suffering prevents him from waiting any longer?

Not a bit of it. Karlchen Missnick, with tears of injured innocence in his eyes, appears before the German workers saying: See what lies that depraved Engels is imputing to me! He claims I spoke of striking immediately; yet it is not a question of that, but of making *literary propaganda*, and this Engels, who does nothing more himself than make literary propaganda, has the effrontery to pretend that he does not understand "the usefulness of literary propaganda".^b

^a Ibid., p. 34.—Ed.

^b P. Tkatschhoff, *Offener Brief...*, p. 10.—Ed.

But stay! Make literary propaganda! But have we the right to wait, have we the right to waste time on literary propaganda? After all, every minute, every hour the revolution is delayed costs the people a thousand victims (p. 14)!^a Now is no time for literary propaganda; the revolution must be carried out now, or perhaps never—we permit no hesitation, no delay. And we are supposed to make literary propaganda! Oh God, how can a living human being say such a thing to another human being, and this human being's name is Peter Tkachov!

Was I wrong when I described these impetuous rodomontades, now so basely denied, as "childish"? They are so childish that one would think the writer had gone as far as was humanly possible in this respect. And yet he has since surpassed himself. The editor of the *Forward* quotes a passage from a proclamation to the Russian peasants, penned by Mr. Tkachov. In it Mr. Tkachov describes the state of affairs after a completed social revolution as follows:

"And then the peasant would embark on a merry life with song and music ... his pockets would be full, not of coppers but of gold ducats. He would have all kinds of beasts and poultry in the farmyard, as many as he desired. On the table he would have every kind of meat, and festive cakes, and sweet wines, and the table would be laid from morn to night. And he would eat and drink as much as his belly would hold, but he would work no more than he had a mind to. And there would be no one who dared to force him; go, eat!—go, lie down on the stove!"^b

And the person capable of perpetrating this proclamation complains when I confine myself to calling him a green grammar-school boy of rare immaturity!

Mr. Tkachov continues:

"Why do you reproach us with conspiracies? If we were to renounce conspiratorial, secret, underground activities, we would have to renounce all revolutionary activity. But you also castigate us for not wanting to depart from our conspiratorial ways here in the European West and thus disturbing the great international labour movement."^c

First, it is untrue that the Russian revolutionaries have no other means at their disposal than pure conspiracy. Mr. Tkachov himself has just stressed the importance of literary propaganda, from abroad into Russia! Even within Russia oral propaganda among the people themselves, particularly in the cities, can never be quite excluded as a method, whatever Mr. Tkachov may find it in his interest to say about it. The best proof of this is that, in the latest

^a П. Ткачёвъ, *Задачи революционной пропаганды въ Россіи*.— *Ed.*

^b П. Лавровъ, *Русской социальна-революционной молодежи*, [London,] 1874, p. 47.— *Ed.*

^c P. Tkatschhoff, *Offener Brief...*, p. 7.— *Ed.*

mass arrests in Russia, it was not the educated nor the students, but the workers who were in the majority.⁴⁹

Second, I undertake to fly to the moon, even before Tkachov liberates Russia, as soon as he proves that I have ever, anywhere, at any time in my political career, declared that conspiracies were to be universally condemned in all circumstances. I undertake to bring him back a souvenir from the moon as soon as he proves that any other plots are mentioned in my article but the one against the International by the Alliance. Indeed, if only the Russian Bakuninists really were to conspire seriously against the Russian Government! If only, instead of fraudulent conspiracies based on lies and deceit against their co-conspirators, like that of Nechayev,⁵⁰ this "typical representative of our present-day youth" according to Tkachov,^a instead of plots against the European labour movement like the Alliance, fortunately exposed and thus destroyed—if only they, the "doers" (*dejateli*), as they boastfully call themselves, would at last, for once, perform a deed proving that they really possess an organisation and that they are concerned with something else apart from the attempt to form a dozen! Instead, they cry out loud to all and sundry: We conspire, we conspire!—just like operatic conspirators roaring in four parts: "Silence, silence! Make not a sound!"^b And all the tales about far-reaching conspiracies only serve as a cloak to hide nothing more than revolutionary inactivity vis-à-vis governments and ambitious cliquishness within the revolutionary party.

It is precisely our ruthless exposure of this entire fraud in the *Komplotz gegen die Internationale* that causes these gentlemen to wax so indignant. It was "tactless". In exposing Mr. Bakunin we were seeking "to besmirch one of the greatest and most selfless representatives of the revolutionary epoch in which we live", and with "dirt", at that. The dirt that came to light on this occasion was, to the very last particle, of Mr. Bakunin's own making, and not his worst by any means. The pamphlet in question made him out to be far cleaner than he really was. We simply quoted § 18 of the "Revolutionary Catechism", the article stipulating how to behave vis-à-vis the Russian aristocracy and bourgeoisie, how "to seize hold of their dirty secrets and thereby make them our slaves, so that their wealth, etc., becomes an inexhaustible treasure and a valuable support in all kinds of undertaking".⁵¹ We have not yet

^a П. Ткачёвъ, *Задачи революционной пропаганды въ Россіи*, [London,] 1874, p. 19.—*Ed.*

^b G. Verdi, *Rigoletto*, Scene II. Libretto by Piave with changes according to Victor Hugo's *Le roi s'amuse*.—*Ed.*

related how this article has been translated into practice. This is a story that would be long in the telling, but it will, in due course, be told.

It thus turns out that all the accusations Mr. Tkachov has made against me, with that virtuous mien of injured innocence that becomes all Bakuninists so well, are all based on claims he not only knew to be false, but were also a pack of lies that he himself had concocted. Whereupon we take our leave of the personal part of his "Open Letter".

V

ON SOCIAL RELATIONS IN RUSSIA.⁵²

On the subject matter, Mr. Tkachov tells the German workers that, as regards Russia, I possess not even a "little knowledge",^a possess nothing but "ignorance", and he feels himself, therefore, obliged to explain the real state of affairs to them, particularly the reasons that, just at the present time, a social revolution could be accomplished in Russia with the greatest of ease, much more easily than in Western Europe.

"We have no urban proletariat, that is undoubtedly true; but, then, we also have no bourgeoisie; ...our workers will have to fight only against the *political power*—the *power of capital* is with us still only in embryo. And you, sir, are undoubtedly aware that the fight against the former is much easier than against the latter."^b

The revolution that modern socialism strives to achieve is, briefly, the victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie and the establishment of a new organisation of society by the destruction of all class distinctions. This requires not only a proletariat to carry out this revolution, but also a bourgeoisie in whose hands the social productive forces have developed so far that they permit the final destruction of class distinctions. Among savages and semi-savages there likewise often exist no class distinctions, and every people has passed through such a state. It could not occur to us to re-establish this state, for the simple reason that class distinctions necessarily emerge from it as the social productive forces develop. Only at a certain level of development of these social productive forces, even a very high level for our modern conditions, does it

^a P. Tkatschov, *Offener Brief an Herrn Friedrich Engels...*, pp 3-5.—Ed.

^b *Ibid.*—Ed.

become possible to raise production to such an extent that the abolition of class distinctions can constitute real progress, can be lasting without bringing about stagnation or even decline in the mode of social production. But the productive forces have reached this level of development only in the hands of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie, therefore, in this respect also is just as necessary a precondition for the socialist revolution as is the proletariat itself. Hence a man who says that this revolution can be more easily carried out in a country where, *although* there is no proletariat, there is no bourgeoisie *either*, only proves that he has still to learn the ABC of socialism.

The Russian workers—and these workers are, as Mr. Tkachov himself says, “tillers of the soil and, as such, not proletarians but *owners*”^a—have, therefore, an easier task, because they do not have to fight against the power of capital, but “only against the political power”, against the Russian state. And this state

“appears only at a distance as a power... It has no roots in the economic life of the people; it does not embody the interests of any particular estate... In your country the state is no imaginary power. It stands four square on the basis of capital; it embodies in itself” (!!) “certain economic interests... In our country the situation is just the reverse—our form of society owes its existence to the state, to a state hanging in the air, so to speak, one that has nothing in common with the existing social order, and has its roots in the past, but not in the present.”^b

Let us waste no time over the confused notion that the economic interests need the state, which they themselves create, in order to acquire a *body*, or over the bold contention that the Russian form of society (which, of course, must also include the communal property of the peasants) owes its existence to the state, or over the contradiction that this same state “has nothing in common” with the existing social order, which is supposed to be its very own creation. Let us rather examine at once this “state hanging in the air”, which does not represent the interests of even a single estate.

In European Russia, the peasants possess 105 million *dessiatines*,^c the nobility (as I shall here term the big landowners for the sake of brevity)—100 million *dessiatines* of land, of which about half belong to 15,000 nobles, each of whom consequently possesses, on average, 3,300 *dessiatines*.^d The area belonging to the peasants is, therefore, only a trifle bigger than that of the nobles. So, you see,

^a P. Tkatschhoff, *Offener Brief...*, p. 8.—*Ed.*

^b *Ibid.*, p. 6.—*Ed.*

^c *Dessiatine*—measure of land in Russia until 1917—equals 2,7 acres. Here and below Engels quotes data from *Военно-статистический сборник*. Выпускъ IV. St. Petersburg, 1871, pp. 105, 108, 200 and 203.—*Ed.*

^d *Der Volksstaat* and the 1894 edition mistakenly have: “33,000”.—*Ed.*

the nobles have not the slightest interest in the existence of the Russian state, which protects them in the possession of half the country. To continue: the peasants pay 195 million rubles land tax annually for their half, the nobles—13 million! The lands of the nobles are, on average, twice as fertile as those of the peasants, because during the settlement^a for the redemption of the *corvée*,⁵³ the state not only took the greater part, but also the best part of the land from the peasants and gave it to the nobles, and for this worst land the peasants had to pay the nobility the price of the best.* And the Russian nobility has no interest in the existence of the Russian state!

The peasants—taken in the mass—have been put by the redemption into a most miserable and wholly untenable position. Not only has the greatest and best part of their land been taken from them, so that, in all the fertile parts of the empire, the peasant land is far too small—under Russian agricultural conditions—for them to be able to make a living from it. Not only were they charged an excessive price for it, which was advanced to them by the state and for which they now have to pay interest and instalments on the principal to the state. Not only is almost the whole burden of the land tax thrown upon them, while the nobility escapes almost scot-free—so that the land tax alone consumes the entire ground rent value of the peasant land and more, and all further payments which the peasant has to make and which we will speak of immediately are direct deductions from that part of his income which represents his wages. Then, in addition to the land tax, to the interest and depreciation payments on the money advanced by the state, since the recent introduction of local administration there are the provincial and district imposts as well.⁵⁵ The most essential consequence of this “reform” was fresh tax burdens for the peasants. The state retained its revenues in their entirety, but passed on a large part of its expenditures to the provinces and districts, which imposed new taxes to meet them, and in Russia it is the rule that the higher estates are almost tax exempt and the peasants pay almost everything.

Such a situation is as if specially created for the usurer, and with the almost unequalled talent of the Russians for trading on a

* The exception was Poland,⁵⁴ where the government wanted to ruin the nobility hostile to it and to draw the peasants to its side. [Note to the text published in *Der Volksstaat*; in the 1875 and 1894 editions it was omitted.]

^a “Общее положение о крестьянахъ, вышедшихъ изъ крѣпостной зависимости”, *Санктпетербургскія Вѣдомости*, Nos. 53 and 54, March 7 and 8, 1861.—Ed

lower level, for taking full advantage of favourable business situations and the swindling inseparable from this—Peter I long ago said that one Russian could get the better of three Jews—the usurer makes his appearance everywhere. When taxes are about to fall due, the usurer, the *kulak*—frequently a rich peasant of the same village community—comes along and offers his ready cash. The peasant must have the money at all costs and is obliged to accept the conditions of the usurer without demur. But this only gets him into a tighter fix, and he needs more and more ready cash. At harvest time, the grain dealer arrives; the need for money forces the peasant to sell part of the grain he and his family require for their subsistence. The grain dealer spreads false rumours, which lower prices, pays a low price and often even part of this in all sorts of highly priced goods; for the TRUCK SYSTEM⁵⁶ is also highly developed in Russia. It is quite obvious that the great corn exports of Russia are based directly on starvation of the peasant population.—Another method of exploiting the peasant is the following: a speculator rents domain land from the government for a long term of years, and cultivates it himself as long as it yields a good crop without manure; then he divides it up into small plots and lets out the exhausted land at high rents to neighbouring peasants, who cannot manage on the income from their allotment. Here we have precisely the Irish MIDDLEMEN,⁵⁷ just as above the English TRUCK SYSTEM. In short, there is no country in which, in spite of the pristine savagery of bourgeois society, capitalistic parasitism is so developed, so covers and entangles the whole country, the whole mass of the population with its nets, as in Russia. And all these bloodsuckers of the peasants are supposed to have no interest in the existence of the Russian state, the laws and law courts of which protect their sleek and profitable practices!

The big bourgeoisie of Petersburg, Moscow, and Odessa, which has developed with unprecedented rapidity over the last decade, chiefly owing to the railways, and which cheerfully “went smash” along with the rest during the last swindle years, the grain, hemp, flax and tallow exporters, whose whole business is built on the misery of the peasants, the entire Russian large-scale industry, which only exists thanks to the protective tariffs granted it by the state—have all these important and rapidly growing elements of the population no interest in the existence of the Russian state? To say nothing of the countless army of officials, which swarms over Russia and plunders her, and here constitutes a real social estate. And when Mr. Tkachov assures us that the Russian state has “no

roots in the economic life of the people", that "it does not embody the interests of any particular estate", that it hangs "in the air", methinks it is not the Russian state that hangs in the air, but rather Mr. Tkachov.

It is clear that the condition of the Russian peasants, since the emancipation from serfdom, has become intolerable and cannot be maintained much longer, and that for this reason alone, if for no other, a revolution is in the offing in Russia. The question is only: what can be, what will be the result of this revolution? Mr. Tkachov says it will be a social one. This is pure tautology. Every real revolution is a social one, in that it brings a new class to power and allows it to remodel society in its own image. But he wants to say it will be a socialist one; it will introduce into Russia the form of society at which West European socialism aims, even before we in the West succeed in doing so—and that under the conditions of a society in which both proletariat and bourgeoisie appear only sporadically and at a low stage of development. And this is supposed to be possible because the Russians are, so to speak, the chosen people of socialism, and have *artels* and communal ownership of the land.

The *artel*, which Mr. Tkachov mentions only incidentally, but with which we deal here because, since the time of Herzen, it has played a mysterious role with many Russians⁵⁸; the *artel* in Russia is a widespread form of association, the simplest form of free co-operation, such as is found for hunting among hunting tribes. Word and content are not of Slavic but of Tatar origin. Both are to be found among the Kirghiz, Yakuts, etc., on the one hand, and among the Lapps, Samoyeds⁵⁹ and other Finnish peoples, on the other.* That is why the *artel* developed originally in the North and East, by contact with Finns and Tatars, and not in the South-West. The severe climate necessitates industrial activity of various kinds, and so the lack of urban development and of capital is replaced, as far as possible, by this form of co-operation.—One of the most characteristic features of the *artel*, the collective responsibility of its members for one another to third parties, was originally based on blood relationship, like the mutual liability [*Gewere*] of the ancient Germans, blood vengeance, etc.—Moreover, in Russia the word *artel* is used for every form not only of collective activity, but also of collective institution. The *Bourse* is also an *artel*.^a

* On the *artel*, compare *inter alia*: *Sbornik materialov ob Arteljach v Rossiji* (Collection of Material on *Artels* in Russia), St. Petersburg, 1873, Part I.

^a Engels left out this sentence from the 1894 edition.—*Ed.*

In workers' artels, an elder (*starosta, starshina*) is always chosen who fulfils the functions of treasurer, bookkeeper, etc., and of manager, as far as necessary, and who receives a special salary. Such artels are formed:

1. for temporary enterprises, after the completion of which they dissolve;
2. for the members of one and the same trade, for instance, porters, etc.;
3. for permanent enterprises, industrial in the proper sense of the word.

They are established by a contract signed by all the members. Now, if these members cannot bring together the necessary capital, as very often happens, such as in the case of cheeseries and fisheries (for nets, boats, etc.), the artel falls prey to the usurer, who advances the amount lacking at a high interest rate, and thereafter pockets the greater part of the income from the work. Still more shamefully exploited, however, are the artels that hire themselves in a body to an employer as wage-labourers. They direct their industrial activity themselves and thus save the capitalist the cost of supervision. The latter lets to the members huts to live in and advances them the means of subsistence, which in turn gives rise to the most disgraceful TRUCK SYSTEM. Such is the case with the lumbermen and tar distillers in the Archangel gubernia, and in many trades in Siberia, etc. (Cf. Flerovsky, *Položenie rabočago klassa v Rossiji*. "The Condition of the Working Class in Russia", St. Petersburg, 1869).⁶⁰ Here, then, the artel serves to *facilitate* considerably the exploitation of the wage-worker by the capitalist. On the other hand, there are also artels which themselves employ wage-workers, who are *not* members of the association.

It is thus seen that the artel is a co-operative society that has arisen spontaneously and is, therefore, still very undeveloped, and as such neither exclusively Russian, nor even Slavic. Such societies are formed wherever there is a need for them. For instance, in Switzerland among the dairy farmers and in England among the fishermen, where they even assume a great variety of forms. The Silesian navvies (Germans, not Poles), who built so many German railways in the forties, were organised in fully fledged artels. True, the predominance of this form in Russia proves the existence in the Russian people of a strong impulse to associate, but is far from proving their ability to jump, with the aid of this impulse, from the artel straight into the socialist order of society. For that, it is necessary above all that the artel itself should be capable of

development, that it shed its primitive form, in which, as we saw, it serves the workers less than it does capital, and rise *at least* to the level of the West European co-operative societies. But if we are to believe Mr. Tkachov for once (which, after all that has preceded, is certainly more than risky), this is by no means the case. On the contrary, he assures us with a pride highly indicative of his standpoint:

"As regards the co-operative and credit associations on the German" (!) "model, recently artificially transplanted to Russia, these have met with complete indifference on the part of the majority of our workers and have been a failure almost everywhere."^a

The modern co-operative society has at least proved that it can run large-scale industry profitably on its own account (spinning and weaving in Lancashire). The *artel* is so far not only incapable of doing this; it must of necessity even be destroyed by big industry if it does not develop further.

The communal property of the Russian peasants was discovered in 1845 by the Prussian Government Councillor Haxthausen and trumpeted to the world as something absolutely wonderful, although Haxthausen could still have found survivals enough of it in his Westphalian homeland and, as a government official, it was even part of his duty to know them thoroughly. It was from Haxthausen that Herzen, himself a Russian landowner, first learned that his peasants owned the land in common, and he made use of the fact to describe the Russian peasants as the true vehicles of socialism, as born communists, in contrast to the workers of the aging, decayed European West, who would first have to go through the ordeal of acquiring socialism artificially. From Herzen this knowledge came to Bakunin, and from Bakunin to Mr. Tkachov. Let us listen to the latter:

"Our people ... in its great majority ... is permeated with the principles of common ownership; it is, if one may use the term, instinctively, traditionally communist. The idea of collective property is so closely interwoven with the whole world outlook of the Russian people" (we shall see immediately how far the world of the Russian peasant extends) "that today, when the government begins to understand that this idea is incompatible with the principles of a 'well-ordered' society, and in the name of these principles wishes to impress the idea of individual property on the consciousness and life of the people, it can succeed in doing so only with the help of the bayonet and the knout. It is clear from this that our people, despite its ignorance, is much nearer to socialism than the peoples of Western Europe, although the latter are more educated."^b

^a P. Tkatschhoff, *Offener Brief...*, p. 8.—*Ed.*

^b *Ibid.*, p. 5.—*Ed.*

In reality, communal ownership of the land is an institution found among all Indo-Germanic peoples at a low level of development, from India to Ireland, and even among the Malays, who are developing under Indian influence, for instance, on Java. As late as 1608, in the newly conquered North of Ireland, the legally established communal ownership of the land served the English as a pretext for declaring the land to be ownerless and, as such, escheated to the Crown. In India, a whole series of forms of communal ownership has been in existence down to the present time. In Germany it was general; the communal lands still to be found here and there are a relic of it; and often still distinct traces of it, temporary divisions of the communal lands, etc., are also to be found, especially in the mountains. More exact references and details with regard to old German communal ownership may be consulted in the various writings of *Maurer*, which are classic on this question.^a In Western Europe, including Poland and Little Russia, at a certain stage in social development, this communal ownership became a fetter, a brake on agricultural production, and was increasingly eliminated. In Great Russia (that is, Russia proper), on the other hand, it persists until today, thereby proving, in the first place, that here agricultural production and the social conditions in the countryside corresponding to it are still very undeveloped, as is actually the case. The Russian peasant lives and has his being only in his village community; the rest of the world exists for him only in so far as it interferes with his community. This is so much the case that, in Russian, the same word "mir" means, on the one hand, "world" and, on the other, "peasant community". "Ves' mir", the whole world, means to the peasant the meeting of the community members. Hence, when Mr. Tkachov speaks of the "world outlook" of the Russian peasants,^b he has obviously translated the Russian "mir" incorrectly. Such a complete isolation of individual communities from one another, which creates throughout the country similar, but the very opposite of common, interests, is the natural basis for *oriental despotism*; and from India to Russia this form of society, wherever it has prevailed, has always produced it and always found its complement in it. Not only the Russian state in general, but even its specific form, tsarist despotism, instead of hanging in the air, is

^a G. L. von Maurer, *Einleitung zur Geschichte der Mark-, Hof-, Dorf-, und Stadt-Verfassung und der öffentlichen Gewalt; Geschichte der Dorfverfassung in Deutschland; Geschichte der Fronhöfe, der Bauernhöfe und der Hofverfassung in Deutschland; Geschichte, der Markenverfassung in Deutschland.*—Ed.

^b P. Tkatschhoff, *Offener Brief...*, p. 5.—Ed.

a necessary and logical product of Russian social conditions with which, according to Mr. Tkachov, it has "nothing in common"!—Further development of Russia in a *bourgeois* direction would here also destroy communal ownership little by little, without any need for the Russian government to intervene with "bayonet and knout". And this especially since the communally owned land in Russia is not cultivated by the peasants in common, so that the product may then be divided, as is still the case in some districts in India; on the contrary, from time to time the land is divided up among the various heads of families, and each cultivates his allotment for himself. Consequently, very great differences in degree of prosperity are possible and actually exist among the members of the community. Almost everywhere there are a few rich peasants among them—here and there millionaires—who play the usurer and suck the blood of the mass of the peasants. No one knows this better than Mr. Tkachov. While he wants the German workers to believe that the "idea of collective ownership" can be driven out of the Russian peasants, these instinctive, traditional communists, only by bayonet and knout, he writes on page 15 of his Russian pamphlet^a:

"Among the peasants a class of usurers (*kulakov*) is making its way, a class of people who *buy up* and *rent* the lands of peasants and nobles—a muzhik aristocracy."

These are the same kind of bloodsuckers as we described more fully above.

The severest blow to communal ownership was dealt again by the redemption of the *corvée*. The greater and better part of the land was allotted to the nobility; for the peasant there remained scarcely enough, often not enough, to live on. In addition, the forests were given to the nobles; the wood for fuel, implements and building, which the peasant formerly might fetch there for nothing, he now has to buy. Thus, the peasant has nothing now but his house and the bare land, without means to cultivate it and, on average, without enough land to support him and his family from one harvest to the next. Under such conditions and under the pressure of taxes and usurers, communal ownership of the land is no longer a blessing; it becomes a fetter. The peasants often run away from it, with or without their families, to earn their living as migratory labourers, and leave their land behind them.*

* On the position of the peasants compare, *inter alia*, the official report of the government commission on agricultural production (1873), and further, Skaldin,

^a *Задачи революционной пропаганды в России*—Ed.

It is clear that communal ownership in Russia is long past its period of florescence and, to all appearances, is moving towards its disintegration. Nevertheless, the possibility undeniably exists of raising this form of society to a higher one, if it should last until the circumstances are ripe for that, and if it shows itself capable of developing in such manner that the peasants no longer cultivate the land separately, but collectively*; of raising it to this higher form without it being necessary for the Russian peasants to go through the intermediate stage of bourgeois small holdings. This, however, can only happen if, before the complete break-up of communal ownership, a proletarian revolution is successfully carried out in Western Europe, creating for the Russian peasant the preconditions requisite for such a transition, particularly the material things he needs, if only to carry through the revolution, necessarily connected therewith, of his whole agricultural system. It is, therefore, sheer bounce for Mr. Tkachov to say that the Russian peasants, although "owners", are "nearer to socialism" than the propertyless workers of Western Europe. Quite the opposite. If anything can still save Russian communal ownership and give it a chance of growing into a new, really viable form, it is a proletarian revolution in Western Europe.

Mr. Tkachov treats the political revolution just as lightly as he does the economic one. The Russian people, he relates, "protests incessantly" against its enslavement, now in the form of "religious sects ... refusal to pay taxes ... robber bands" (the German workers will be glad to know that, accordingly, Schinderhannes^a is the father of German Social-Democracy) "... incendiarism ... revolts ... and hence the Russian people may be termed an instinctive revolutionist". Therefore, Mr. Tkachov is convinced that "it is only necessary to evoke an outburst in a number of places at the same time of all the accumulated bitterness and discontent, which ... is always seething in the breast of our people". Then "the union of the revolutionary forces will come about *of itself*, and the fight ... must end favourably for the people's cause. Practical

W Zacholusti i w Stolice (In the Backwoods and in the Capital), St. Petersburg, 1870; the later publication by a liberal conservative.

* In Poland, particularly in the Grodno gubernia, where the nobility for the most part was ruined by the insurrection of 1863, the peasants now frequently buy or rent estates from the nobles and cultivate them unpartitioned and *on their collective account*. And these peasants have not had communal ownership for centuries and are not Great Russians, but Poles, Lithuanians and Byelorussians.

^a *Schinderhannes*: nickname of Johann Bückler, a notorious German robber.—
Ed.

necessity, the instinct of self-preservation", will then achieve, quite of themselves, "a firm and indissoluble alliance among the protesting village communities".^a

It is impossible to conceive of a revolution on easier and more pleasant terms. One starts shooting, at three or four places simultaneously, and the "instinctive revolutionist", "practical necessity" and the "instinct of self-preservation" do the rest "of themselves". Being so dead easy, it is simply incomprehensible why the revolution has not been carried out long ago, the people liberated and Russia transformed into the model socialist country.

Actually, matters are quite different. The Russian people, this instinctive revolutionist, has, true enough, made numerous isolated peasant revolts against the nobility and against individual officials, but never against the tsar, except when a false tsar put himself at its head and claimed the throne. The last great peasant rising,⁶¹ under Catherine II, was only possible because Yemelyan Pugachov claimed to be her husband, Peter III, who allegedly had not been murdered by his wife, but dethroned and clapped in prison, and had now escaped. The tsar is, on the contrary, the earthly god of the Russian peasant: *Bog vysok, Car daljok*—God is on high and the tsar far away, is his cry in hour of need. There is no doubt that the mass of the peasant population, especially since the redemption of the *corvée*, has been reduced to a condition that increasingly forces on it a fight also against the government and the tsar; but Mr. Tkachov will have to try to sell his fairy-tale of the "instinctive revolutionist" elsewhere.

Then again, even if the mass of the Russian peasants were ever so instinctively revolutionary, even if we imagined that revolutions could be made to order, just as one makes a piece of flowered calico or a teakettle—even then I ask, is it permissible for anyone over twelve years of age to imagine the course of a revolution in such an utterly childish manner as is the case here? And remember, further, that this was written after the first revolution made on this Bakuninist model—the Spanish one of 1873—had so brilliantly failed.⁶² There, too, they let loose at several places simultaneously. There, too, it was calculated that practical necessity and the instinct of self-preservation would, of themselves, bring about a firm and indissoluble alliance between the protesting communities. And what happened? Every village community, every town defended only itself; there was no question of mutual assistance and, with only 3,000 men, Pavia overcame one town

^a P. Tkatschhoff, *Offener Brief...*, pp. 5-6, 9.—Ed.

after another in a fortnight and put an end to the entire anarchist glory (cf. my *Bakuninists at Work*, where this is described in detail).

Russia undoubtedly is on the eve of a revolution. Her financial affairs are in extreme disorder. Taxes cannot be screwed any higher, the interest on old state loans is paid by means of new loans, and every new loan meets with greater difficulties; money can now be raised only on the pretext of building railways! The administration, corrupt from top to bottom as of old, the officials living more from theft, bribery and extortion than on their salaries. The entire agricultural production—by far the most essential for Russia—completely dislocated by the redemption settlement of 1861; the big landowners, without sufficient labour power; the peasants without sufficient land, oppressed by taxation and sucked dry by usurers; agricultural production^a declining by the year. The whole held together with great difficulty and only outwardly by an Oriental despotism the arbitrariness of which we in the West simply cannot imagine; a despotism that, from day to day, not only comes into more glaring contradiction with the views of the enlightened classes and, in particular, with those of the rapidly developing bourgeoisie of the capital, but, in the person of its present bearer, has lost its head, one day making concessions to liberalism and the next, frightened, cancelling them again and thus bringing itself more and more into disrepute. With all that, a growing recognition among the enlightened strata of the nation concentrated in the capital that this position is untenable, that a revolution is impending, and the illusion that it will be possible to guide this revolution along a smooth, constitutional channel. Here all the conditions of a revolution are combined, of a revolution that, started by the upper classes of the capital, perhaps even by the government itself, must be rapidly carried further, beyond the first constitutional phase, by the peasants; of a revolution that will be of the greatest importance for the whole of Europe, if only because it will destroy at one blow the last, so far intact, reserve of the entire European reaction. This revolution is surely approaching. Only two events could still delay it: a successful war against Turkey or Austria, for which money and firm alliances are necessary, or—a premature attempt at insurrection, which would drive the possessing classes back into the arms of the government.

^a The 1894 edition has: "agricultural output".—*Ed.*

Karl Marx

EPILOGUE
 [TO REVELATIONS CONCERNING
 THE COMMUNIST TRIAL IN COLOGNE]⁶³

The *Revelations Concerning the Communist Trial in Cologne*, which the *Volksstaat* now considers it timely to reprint, originally appeared in Boston (Massachusetts) and in Basle. Most of the latter edition was confiscated at the German border. The pamphlet saw the light of day a few weeks after the trial closed. At that point, it was of prime importance to waste no time, hence a good many errors of detail were inevitable. An example of this is the list of names of the Cologne jury. Thus, a certain Levy and not M. Hess is said to have been the author of the Red Catechism.⁶⁴ And W. Hirsch assures us in his "Rechtfertigungsschrift"^a that Cherval's escape from gaol in Paris was pre-arranged by Greif, the French police and Cherval himself, in order that the latter might act as an informer in London during the court proceedings. This is likely, as the forgery of a bill of exchange committed in Prussia and the resultant risk of extradition were bound to bring Crämer^b (Cherval's real name) to heel. My account of the incident is based on Cherval's "confessions" to a friend of mine. Hirsch's statement casts an even harsher light on Stieber's perjury, the intrigues of the Prussian embassies in London and Paris, and the shameless intervention by Hinckeldey.

When the *Volksstaat* started to reprint the pamphlet in its columns, I was for a moment undecided whether or not it might

^a W. Hirsch, "Die Opfer der Moucharderie. Rechtfertigungsschrift", *Belletristisches Journal und New-Yorker Criminal-Zeitung*, Nos. 3-6, April 1, 8, 15 and 22, 1853. See also Marx's *Herr Vogt* (present edition, Vol. 17, p. 64) and *Hirsch's Confessions* (ibid., Vol. 12, pp. 40-43).— *Ed.*

^b A pun: Crämer—Cherval's real name, Krämer (in German) means huckster.— *Ed.*

be appropriate to omit Section VI (The Willich-Schapper Group).^a On further consideration, however, any mutilation of the text appeared to me to be a falsification of an historical document.

The violent suppression of a revolution leaves behind a shock in the minds of its protagonists, particularly those forced into exile far from the domestic scene—a shock that, for a time, renders even the most able people, as it were, not responsible for their actions. They are unable to accept the course of history; they are loth to realise that the form of the movement has changed. Hence the conspiratorial and revolutionary games they play, equally compromising for themselves and for the cause they serve; hence, too, the errors of Schapper and Willich. In the North American Civil War, Willich showed that he was more than a visionary, and Schapper, a life-long champion of the labour movement, confessed and acknowledged his momentary aberration soon after the Cologne trial. Many years later, on his death-bed, the day before he died, he spoke to me with scathing irony about that time of “refugee foolishness”.—Nevertheless, the circumstances in which the *Revelations* were written explain the bitterness of the attack on the involuntary accomplices of the common enemy. In times of crisis, thoughtlessness is a crime against the party calling for public expiation.

“*The whole existence of the political police depends on the outcome of this trial!*” With these words, written during the Cologne court proceedings to the embassy in London (see my pamphlet *Herr Vogt*, p. 27^b), Hinckeldey betrayed the secret of the Communist trial. “The whole existence of the political police” is not merely the existence and activities of the staff immediately concerned with this area. It is the subordination of the entire governmental machinery, including the courts (see the Prussian disciplinary law for judicial officials of May 7, 1851^c) and the press (see reptile funds⁶⁵), to that institution, just as the entire state system of Venice was once subordinated to the State Inquisition.⁶⁶ The political police, paralysed during the revolutionary storm in Prussia, needed re-organising along the lines of the second French Empire.

After the demise of the 1848 revolution, the German labour

^a See present edition, Vol. 11, pp. 445-52.—Ed.

^b A reference to the 1860 edition published in London (see present edition, Vol. 17, p. 67).—Ed.

^c *Gesetz, betreffend die Dienstvergehen der Richter und die unfreiwillige Versetzung derselben auf eine andere Stelle oder in den Ruhestand. Vom 7. Mai 1851.* In: *Gesetz-Sammlung für die Königlichen Preussischen Staaten*, No. 13, 1851.—Ed.

movement continued to exist only in the form of theoretical propaganda, confined to narrow circles; the Prussian Government was not for a moment deceived about its harmlessness in practice. The government's Communist witch-hunt served simply as a prelude to its reactionary crusade against the liberal bourgeoisie, and the bourgeoisie itself steeled the main weapon of this reaction, the political police, by sentencing the workers' representatives and acquitting Hinckeldey-Stieber. Stieber thus earned his spurs at the assizes in Cologne. At that time Stieber was a humble low-ranking policeman ruthlessly pursuing a higher salary and promotion; now Stieber stands for the unrestricted rule of the political police in the new holy Prussian-German empire. Thus he has, to a certain extent, become a moral person, moral in the metaphorical sense, as, for example, the Reichstag is a moral creation. This time the political police is not striking at the workers in order to hit the bourgeoisie. Quite the reverse. Precisely in his position as dictator of the German liberal bourgeoisie, Bismarck considers himself strong enough to drive^a the workers' party out of existence. The German proletariat can, therefore, measure the progress of the movement it has achieved since the Cologne Communist trial by Stieber's growth in stature.

The Pope's infallibility is small beer compared with that of the political police. After for decades sticking young hotheads in gaol in Prussia for advocating German unity,⁶⁷ the German Empire and the German monarchy, it is today even incarcerating bald-headed old men for refusing to advocate these divine gifts. Today it is just as vainly attempting to eradicate the *enemies of the Empire* as it once tried to eradicate the *friends of the Empire*. What glaring proof that it is not called on to make history, even if it were only the history of the quarrel over the Emperor's beard!

The Communist trial in Cologne itself brands the state power's impotence in its struggle against social development. The royal Prussian state prosecutor ultimately based the guilt of the accused on the fact that they secretly disseminated the subversive principles of the *Communist Manifesto*.^b Are not the same principles being proclaimed openly in the streets in Germany twenty years later? Do they not resound even from the tribune of the Reichstag? Have they not journeyed round the world, in the shape of the *Programme of the International Working Men's Association*,⁶⁸ despite all the government arrest-warrants? Society

^a Marx uses here the verb *stiebern* coined from the name of Stieber.— *Ed.*

^b by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels.— *Ed.*

simply does not find its equilibrium until it revolves around the sun of labour.

At the end of the *Revelations* it says: "*Jena* ... that is the final outcome of a government⁶⁹ that requires such methods in order to survive and of a society that needs such a government for its protection. The word that should stand at the end of the Communist trial is—*Jena!*"²

An accurate prediction indeed, giggles the first Treitschke to happen along, with a proud reference to Prussia's latest feat of arms and the Mauser rifle. Suffice it for me to point out that there is not only an *inner Düppel*,⁷⁰ but also an *inner Jena*.

London, January 8, 1875

Karl Marx

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² See present edition, Vol. 11, p. 457.—*Ed.*

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels

FOR POLAND⁷¹

This year, too, a memorial celebration was held in London to commemorate the Polish uprising of January 22, 1863. Large numbers of our German party comrades took part in the celebration; several of them made speeches, among whom were Engels and Marx.

"There has been talk here," said Engels, "about the reasons for the revolutionaries of all countries to sympathise with Poland's cause and intervene on its behalf. Only one thing has been forgotten to mention, namely this: that the political situation in which Poland has been placed is a thoroughly revolutionary one, leaving Poland with no other choice than to be revolutionary or to perish. This was already evident after the first partition, which was brought about by the efforts of the Polish nobility to maintain a constitution and privileges which had lost their right to existence and were harming the country and public order instead of preserving peace and securing progress.⁷² Already after the first partition a section of the nobility acknowledged the mistake and came to the conviction that Poland could only be restored by revolution;—and ten years later we saw Poles fighting for liberty in America.⁷³ The French Revolution of 1789 found an immediate echo in Poland. The Constitution of 1791⁷⁴ with the rights of man became the banner of revolution on the banks of the Vistula and turned Poland into the vanguard of revolutionary France, and that at the very moment when the three powers which had already despoiled Poland once were uniting in order to march to Paris and strangle the revolution.⁷⁵ Could they stand back and allow revolution to gain a foothold in the centre of the coalition? Unthinkable. Again they hurled themselves on Poland, this time

with the intention of completely depriving it of its national existence. The unfolding of the revolutionary banner was one of the chief reasons for the subjugation of Poland. The country that has been dismembered and struck off the list of nations because it was revolutionary can seek its salvation nowhere else but in revolution. And for this reason we find Poles in all revolutionary struggles. Poland realised this in 1863, and during the uprising whose anniversary we are celebrating today published the most radical revolutionary programme^a that has ever been drawn up in Eastern Europe. It would be ridiculous should one consider the Polish revolutionaries to be aristocrats wishing to reconstruct the aristocratic Poland of 1772, just because there exists a Polish aristocratic party. The Poland of 1772 is lost and gone forever. No power will be capable of raising it out of the grave. The new Poland, which the revolution will put on its feet, is as fundamentally different socially and politically from the Poland of 1772 as the new society towards which we are hastening is fundamentally different from present-day society.

“One more word. No one can enslave a people with impunity. The three powers that murdered Poland have been severely punished. Look at my own country: Prussia-Germany. Under the signboard of national unification we brought upon us the Poles, the Danes and the French—and have a *threefold Venice*⁷⁶; we have enemies everywhere, we have encumbered ourselves with debts and taxes in order to maintain countless masses of soldiers who must also serve to suppress the German workers. Austria, even official Austria, knows full well how dearly that little bit of Poland has cost her. At the time of the Crimean War, Austria was prepared to go to war against Russia provided that Russian Poland was occupied and liberated. However, that did not agree with Louis Napoleon’s plans, and still less with Palmerston’s. And as far as Russia is concerned, we see: in 1861 the first major movement broke out among the students, all the more dangerous since the people were everywhere in a state of great agitation as a result of the emancipation of the serfs; and what did the Russian government do, well realising the danger?—It *provoked the uprising of 1863 in Poland*⁷⁷; for it has been *proved* that this uprising was its work. The movement amongst the students, the profound agitation of the people vanished at once, giving way to Russian chauvinism, which descended on Poland once it was a question of

^a *Centralny Narodowy Komitet jako tymczasowy Rząd Narodowy, Dan w Warszawie 22 Sycznia 1863.—Ed.*

maintaining Russian rule there. Thus perished the first significant movement in Russia as a result of the calamitous struggle against Poland. The restoration of Poland is indeed in the interest of revolutionary Russia, and I hear tonight with pleasure that this opinion agrees with the convictions of the Russian revolutionaries" (who had expressed this view at the meeting⁷⁸).

Marx said roughly this: The Working Men's Party of Europe takes the keenest interest in the emancipation of Poland, and the original programme of the International Working Men's Association declares the restoration of Poland to be one of the goals of working-class politics.^a What are the reasons for this special interest of the Working Men's Party in the fate of Poland?

Firstly, of course, sympathy for a subjugated people, which by continuous heroic struggle against its oppressors has proved its historic right to national independence and self-determination. It is by no means a contradiction that the *international* Working Men's Party should strive for the restoration of the Polish nation. On the contrary: only when Poland has re-conquered its independence, when it once again exercises control over itself as a free people, only then can its internal development recommence and will it be able to take part in its own right in the social transformation of Europe. As long as a viable people is fettered by a foreign conqueror, it must necessarily apply all its strength, all its efforts, all its energy against the enemy from without; for this length of time, then, its inner life remains paralysed, it remains unable to work for social emancipation. Ireland, Russia under Mongolian rule, etc., provide striking proof of this thesis.

Another reason for the sympathy of the Working Men's Party for the resurrection of Poland is its special geographical, military and historical position. The partition of Poland is the mortar binding together the three great military despotisms: Russia, Prussia and Austria. Only the reconstitution of Poland can break this bond and thus remove the greatest obstacle to the social emancipation of the peoples of Europe.

The main reason for the sympathy of the working class towards Poland is, however, this: Poland is not merely the only Slavic tribe, it is the only European people that has fought and is fighting as the *cosmopolitan soldier of the revolution*. Poland shed its blood during the American War of Independence; its legions fought under the banner of the first French Republic; by its revolution of

^a K. Marx, "Inaugural Address of the Working Men's International Association" (see present edition, Vol. 20, p. 13).—Ed

1830 it prevented the invasion of France that had been decided by the partitioners of Poland; in 1846 in Cracow it was the first in Europe to plant the banner of social revolution; in 1848 it played an outstanding part in the revolutionary struggle in Hungary, Germany and Italy; finally, in 1871 it supplied the Paris Commune with its best generals and most heroic soldiers.

In the brief moments when the popular masses of Europe were able to move freely, they remembered what they owe to Poland. After the victorious March Revolution in Berlin in 1848, the first deed of the people was to release the Polish prisoners, Mieroslawski and his comrades-in-suffering, and proclaim the restoration of Poland⁷⁹; in Paris, in May 1848, Blanqui marched at the head of the workers against the reactionary National Assembly in order to force it to accept armed intervention for Poland⁸⁰; finally, in 1871, when the Parisian workers had constituted themselves as the government, they honoured Poland by entrusting its sons with the military leadership of their forces.

Neither at the present moment does the German Working Men's Party allow itself to be the least misled by the reactionary conduct of the Polish deputies in the German Reichstag; it knows that these gentlemen are not acting on behalf of Poland but of their own private interests; it knows that the Polish peasant, the Polish worker, in short, every Pole who is not blinded by class interests, must realise that *Poland has and can only have one ally in Europe—the Working Men's Party.*⁸¹—*Long Live Poland!*

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Frederick Engels

SEMI-OFFICIAL WAR-CRIES⁸²

Once again the press reptiles⁸³ of the German Empire have received orders to sound the war-trumpets. That godless and degenerate country France will simply not, at any price, leave Germany in peace, that god-fearing country bursting out in glorious bloom under the rule of stock-exchange swindles, floatation⁸⁴ and the crash. France is re-arming on the most colossal scale, and the high-pressure velocity at which these armaments are being carried out is the best proof that it intends, if possible next year, to attack the innocent, peace-loving Bismarckian Empire, which, as we all know, has never done anything to offend anyone, which is tirelessly disarming and about which only the subversive press has spread the slander that it has just turned two million citizens into reserve soldiers by a *Landsturm* Law.⁸⁵

The press reptiles are in a difficult position. While in the service of the Foreign Office they have to portray the Empire as a lamb of infinite meekness, the Ministry of War finds it in its interest to make it clear to the German bourgeois that something is actually happening in return for their heavy taxes, that the armaments decided on are really being produced, the fortifications really being built, the cadres and mobilisation plans for the large number of soldiers "on leave" are being completed, that the combat readiness of the army is increasing with every day that passes. And as the announcements made in this connection are authentic and, moreover, originate from experts, we are perfectly able to judge the war-cries of the press toads.

The new French Cadre Law⁸⁶ provides the pretext for all the noise. Let us then compare the institutions thus created in France—for the time being still on paper—with those actually

existing in Germany, restricting ourselves for brevity's sake to the decisive branch of the service, the infantry.

On the whole, the new French law turns out to be a considerably worsened version of the Prussian one.

The French infantry of the line is supposed to consist of 144 regiments of the line, 4 Zouave and 3 Turco regiments of 4 battalions each,⁸⁷ 30 rifle battalions, 4 foreign and 5 penal battalions, in all 643 battalions, while the German army of the line admittedly only amounts to 468 battalions. This superiority of the French line is, however, purely apparent.

Firstly, the French battalion, like the Prussian, does indeed have four companies, but each company has only four officers instead of five; and of these four, one is a reserve officer, which is a species that *simply does not yet exist* in France. In France they have hitherto had one officer to every 35-40 men, and on account of the outdated and cumbersome French drill regulations this is necessary, while Prussia has managed quite well with one officer to 50 men. But this is also the maximum, and the committee of the National Assembly that dealt with this law was agreed that *no more than 200 men* might be placed in each company. The French company is thus 25 per cent weaker numerically than the Prussian, and as the reserve officer does not exist at present, and will not exist for many years to come, it is also far from being its equal organisationally. But as the company—because of the breech-loader⁸⁸—has now become the tactical unit in battle and the action of the company columns and of the skirmishers based on them requires *strong* companies, the National Assembly has hereby inflicted the greatest harm on the French Army that it could have inflicted.

The French line on a war-footing therefore comprises

606 battalions of the line with 800 men each	484,800 men
Zouaves, Turcos, Foreign Legion, Penal Battalions	46,000 "
	<hr/>
	total 530,800 men.

From this number, though, at least 40,000 men must be subtracted for Algeria, who only become available when new formations are capable of relieving them. This leaves, then, 490,800 infantrymen at the outbreak of war. The 468 battalions of the German infantry each comprise 1,050 men on a war-footing, a total of 490,480 men according to official figures, almost exactly as many as the French line.

So far, then, equality of numbers, with Germany having a better and stronger organisation. But now comes the difference.

As far as France is concerned, the above 643 weak battalions comprise all the infantry for which there exists any war organisation at all. Certainly, the 318 depot companies of the line and of the riflemen are said to contain a total of 249,480 extra reserves (including 50 or 40 officers and non-commissioned officers per company), but of these only the men actually exist up to now, and these are for the greater part quite untrained, and those who are trained have mostly had only six months' service. As for the officers and non-commissioned officers, a quarter are available, at the most. By the time these 318 depot companies are turned into 318 mobile battalions, the entire campaign may have been decided, and those who do go into action will not exceed the quality of the mobile guards of 1870.⁸⁹ Then there is the Territorial Army, which is composed of the men between 30 and 40 years old, and is to be organised in 144 regiments of 3 battalions each, making 432 battalions. All this exists only on paper. In order to put such a scheme really into effect, 10,000 officers and 20,000 non-commissioned officers are needed, of which almost literally not a single one is yet available. And where are these officers to come from? It took almost two generations before the one-year volunteers provided serviceable reserve and *Landwehr*⁹⁰ officers in Prussia; right up to the forties, they were regarded as a liability in nearly all regiments and treated accordingly. And in France, where such an institution infringes all traditions of revolutionary equality, where those serving one year are despised by the officers and hated by the men, there is quite simply no chance of getting anywhere. Yet no other source of reserve officers exists.

As far as the non-commissioned officers and men are concerned, it will be remembered that the victors of Sadowa in 1866⁹¹ boasted that the long existence of the *Landwehr* system in Prussia gave them a lead of 20 years over any other country that might adopt the same system; not until the oldest annual intakes consisted of trained men would equality with Prussia be attained. This appears to have been forgotten now, as does the fact that in France only half of the annual contingent actually serves, the other half being released after six months' service (which is totally inadequate in view of the present pedantic regulations). The reserves and militia in France thus chiefly consist of recruits, in contrast to their Prussian counterparts. And they pretend to be frightened of the present French Territorial Army, which consists

of the same untrained cannon-fodder that in 1870 and 1871 could not hold its ground on the Loire and at Le Mans against German units which were only half as strong, but disciplined!⁹²

But there is more to tell yet. In Prussia, after bitter experience, they have finally learnt how to mobilise. In eleven days the whole army is ready for combat, the infantry much sooner. But this requires that everything is organised in the simplest way and, in particular, that every individual soldier on leave is assigned in advance to the unit he is to join. The basis for this is that every regiment has its own permanent recruitment district, from which the corresponding *Landwehr* regiment also draws most of its recruits. The new French law, on the contrary, assigns the recruits and reservists to the regiment that happens to be in the district at the time of mobilisation. This was done out of attachment to a tradition handed down from the days of Napoleon whereby the individual regiments are garrisoned in all parts of France in turn and are supposed to be recruited as far as possible from the whole of France. Being obliged to drop the latter, they stuck all the more determinedly to the former, thus rendering impossible that permanent organic link between regiment command and territorial district command which ensures rapid mobilisation in Prussia. Even if this senseless change, which is bound to cause much more trouble for the specialised branches than for the infantry, *only* delays the mobilisation of the latter for three days, in the face of an active adversary they will be the most important three days of the entire campaign.

So what do all the immense French armaments come to? An infantry of the line equal to the German in numbers but more poorly organised, which, moreover, has to call up a number of men with only six months' training in order to get on a war-footing; a first reserve which is dominated by men with only six months' training for which at best a quarter of the necessary officers and non-commissioned officers are available; a second reserve of predominantly untrained men without any officers whatsoever, and for both reserves, of course, a total lack of regular cadres. In addition, the certain prospect of *never* being able to procure the officers that are lacking under the present system, so that in the case of war neither of the reserves will be able to perform better than the battalions hurriedly established in the autumn and winter of 1870.

Now let us take a look at the German Empire, which is gentle like a lamb and which supposedly does not even have any teeth, even less baring them. We have already shown the existence of an

infantry of the line of 468 battalions, with 490,480 men on a war-footing. But to this must be added the following new formations.

Since the beginning of 1872 each battalion has been allocated another 36 recruits, making 17,000 men per year in round figures. Furthermore, a full quarter of the men have been released after two years' service, this, however, being compensated by an equal number of new recruits, making about 28,000 men. Thus a total of 45,000 more men are being recruited and trained every year than hitherto, making by the end of 1875, in three years, 135,000 men, to which must be added 12,000 one-year volunteers (at 4,000 per year); all in all 147,000 men, or just enough to form a fourth battalion in each of the 148 regiments. The surplus reserve companies for this purpose have already been "organisationally prepared" in all the regiments of the line since the same time, i.e. the officers and non-commissioned officers of the line and of the reserves due to enter these battalions have already been selected. The fourth battalions can thus be on the march at the most two or three days after the first three, reinforcing the army by 148 battalions of 1,050 men = 155,400 men. But these figures do not by any means express the full addition to its strength that the field army thereby receives. Anyone who saw the Prussian fourth battalions in 1866 knows that, consisting chiefly of strong, physically mature men of 24-27 years, they are the vital core of the army.

Alongside the formation of the fourth battalions, the organisation of the reserve battalions—148 in number, not to mention the reserve companies of the riflemen—is going ahead. They are composed of the surplus trained reservists and the untrained men of the second reserve.⁹³ Their strength was officially given as 188,690 men in 1871. By this it should be understood, however, that the cadres of officers and non-commissioned officers already appointed in peacetime are capable of training this number of men, for the second reserve alone, whose first class now has an annual intake of about 45,000 men, supplies in seven annual contingents far more than the above figure. The reserve battalions are, in fact, the reservoirs from which the battalions in the field, weakened by combat and even more by hardship, obtain the necessary re-inforcements of more or less trained men, and which then go on bringing themselves up to strength again from the second reserves.

At the same time as the line and the reserve troops, the *Landwehr* is mobilised. The cadres of the *Landwehr*, likewise

already appointed in peacetime, comprise 287 battalions (to be brought up to 301). In the two last wars the *Landwehr* battalions were only brought up to 800 men; accepting this very low envisaged strength, we find that the German Empire can muster a *Landwehr* infantry of 229,600 organised troops, while an annually increasing surplus still remains available for subsequent use.

As if this were not enough, the *Landsturm* has also been revived. According to semi-official reports, by the end of 1874 the war-strength of the German infantry had already been increased by 234 *Landsturm* battalions (at 800 men = 187,200 men) excluding the rifle companies; which can only mean that the cadres for these battalions have at least been appointed after a fashion. But this is far from exhausting the *Landsturm* for according to Voigts-Rhetz's triumphant announcement in Reichstag it embraces "five per cent of the population, two million men".^a

So what does the balance-sheet look like?

France has an infantry of the line, including the troops serving in Algeria, of 530,800 men, and that is its total organised infantry. Even if we include the whole of the first reserve, insofar as it possesses *any* apparent organisation at all, 254,600 men (288 depot companies of 800 men, 30 rifle depots of 540 men and 8,000 surplus convicts), it still only makes 785,400 men on foot.

As for the German Empire, eleven days after the mobilisation order it can muster:

an infantry of the line of	490,480 men
Two or three days later	
another 148 battalions	155,400 "
In another fortnight	
287 <i>Landwehr</i> battalions of 800 men	229,600 "
And after another fortnight	
234 <i>Landsturm</i> battalions of 800 men	187,200 "
	<hr/>
making a total infantry of	1,062,680 men

which already in peace-time is completely organised and supplied in advance with all necessities, backed up by 148 reserve battalions with a strength of 188,690 (see above) for filling the gaps caused

^a J. von Voigts-Rhetz made this announcement in his speech in the German Reichstag on January 11, 1875. See *Stenographische Berichte über die Verhandlungen des Deutschen Reichstages*. 2. Legislatur-Periode. II. Session 1874/75. Zweiter Band. Berlin, 1875, p. 945.—Ed.

by the campaign. All in all, an organised infantry body of 1,251,370 men.

Does anyone think we are exaggerating? By no means. We are still lagging behind the truth by neglecting various small factors which all the same amount to quite a respectable total when added up. Here is the evidence.

The *Kölnische Zeitung* of December 27, 1874 contains a "military announcement" emanating from the War Ministry^a from which we gather the following. At the end of 1873 the German Army on a war-footing amounted to:

1,361,400 men, of which infantry	994,900 men.
In 1874 were added the fourth battalions	155,400 "
and 234 battalions of the <i>Landsturm</i>	187,200 "
	<hr/>
a total infantry of	1,337,500 men,

in other words, almost 100,000 men more than in our estimate. The same article puts the strength of the entire war capability of all arms at 1,723,148 men, of whom 39,948 are officers; while the French, on the other hand, have at the most 950,000 troops organised in advance, of which 785,000 are infantrymen!

As regards the quality of the troops—assuming the average warlike tendencies of each nation to be the same—that of the French army has certainly not improved since the war. The government has done everything to demoralise the troops, particularly by placing them in barracks, where in winter a soldier can neither drill nor do anything else and is reduced exclusively, as it were, to drinking absinth. There is a lack of non-commissioned officers, the companies are weak, the cavalry regiments are seriously short of horses. The *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* emphasised this fact as late as January 15^b; at the time it was still preaching peace!

But the new army legislation places at the disposal of the French minister of war: 704,714 men of the line, 510,294 reserves, a territorial army of 582,523 men and its reserves of 625,633 men, making 2,423,164 men in all, which in an emergency can be brought up to 2,600,000! Certainly—although after careful

^a "Die Steigerung der deutschen Kriegsstärke im Jahre 1874 und die Vergleichstellung derselben zu der Wehrmacht der andern europäischen Mächte", *Kölnische Zeitung*, No. 358, December 27, 1874 (in the section *Militärische Mittheilungen. Deutschland*).—Ed.

^b See *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 12, January 15, 1875 (in the section *Politischer Tagesbericht*).—Ed.

scrutiny of the relevant documents, General Lewal announces that this total must be reduced to 2,377,000. And even this is enough to drive the best war minister mad. What on earth is he supposed to do with this host of men, almost two-thirds of whom are untrained? Where is he to obtain the officers and non-commissioned officers without whom he cannot train, much less organise, them?

In Germany the position is quite different. The strength of the army on a war-footing is already assumed to be 1,500,000 men in the motives of the Imperial Military Law.^a But as a result of this law, these are supplemented by five annual contingents of the second reserve, whose liability to service has been extended from their 27th year to the end of their 31st—45,000 men every year—making about 200,000 men. At least 200,000 surplus men over and above the war capability had already been on the registers. And in addition, there is the *Landsturm* with fully two million men; so that the German war minister has 3,900,000 men, if not *four million*, at his disposal. This army, as the semi-official quoted above says,

"even with conscription up to 1,800,000 men *and more*, will, with the exception of the recruits conscripted into the reserve army, consist throughout of experienced soldiers with a complete military training, a state which is not likely to be reached in France, including the Territorial Reserve, *for another twenty years*".

We can see that it is not France but the German Empire of the Prussian Nation⁹⁴ that is the true representative of militarism. Four million soldiers, ten per cent of the population! Let them go on. It suits us perfectly that the system is being taken to the furthest extremes. This system cannot be ultimately broken from without by another victorious military state, only from within, by its own inevitable consequences. And the more it is exaggerated, the sooner it will collapse. Four million soldiers! Social-Democracy will also be indebted to Bismarck when he raises the figure to five or six million and then as soon as possible starts calling up girls too.

Written between April 6 and 18, 1875

First published in *Der Volksstaat*, No. 46,
April 23, 1875

Signed: F. E.

Printed according to the newspaper

Published in English for the first time

^a *Motive* [zum Reichsmilitärgesetz]. See *Stenographische Berichte über die Verhandlungen des Deutschen Reichstages*, 2. Legislatur-Periode. I. Session 1874. Dritter Band. *Anlagen zu den Verhandlungen des Reichstages*, Berlin, 1874.—Ed.

Frederick Engels
LETTER TO AUGUST BEBEL⁹⁵

London, March 18-28, 1875

Dear Bebel,

I have received your letter of February 23 and am glad to hear that you are in such good bodily health.

You ask me what we think of the unification affair. We are, unfortunately, in exactly the same boat as yourself. Neither Liebknecht nor anyone else has let us have any kind of information, and hence we too know only what is in the papers—not that there was anything in them until a week or so ago, when the draft programme appeared. That astonished us not a little, I must say.

Our party had so often held out a conciliatory hand to the Lassalleans, or at least proffered co-operation, only to be rebuffed so often and so contemptuously by the Hasenclevers, Hasselmanns and Tölckes as to lead any child to the conclusion that, should these gentlemen now come and themselves proffer conciliation, they must be in a hell of a dilemma. Knowing full well what these people are like, however, it behoves us to make the most of that dilemma and insist on every conceivable guarantee that might prevent these people from restoring, at our party's expense, their shattered reputation in general working-class opinion. They should be given an exceedingly cool and cautious reception, and union be made dependent on the degree of their readiness to abandon their sectarian slogans and their state aid,⁹⁶ and to accept in its essentials the Eisenach Programme of 1869⁹⁷ or an improved edition of it adapted to the present day. Our party has *absolutely nothing to learn* from the Lassalleans in the theoretical sphere, i.e. the crux of the matter where the programme is

concerned, but the Lassalleans doubtless have something to learn from the party; the first prerequisite for union was that they cease to be sectarians, Lassalleans, i.e. that, first and foremost, they should, if not wholly relinquish the universal panacea of state aid, at least admit it to be a secondary provisional measure alongside and amongst many others recognised as possible. The draft programme shows that our people, while infinitely superior to the Lassallean leaders in matters of theory, are far from being a match for them where political guile is concerned; once again the "honest men"⁹⁸ have been cruelly done in the eye by the dishonest.

To begin with, they adopt the high-sounding but historically false Lassallean dictum: in relation to the working class all other classes are only one reactionary mass. This proposition is true only in certain exceptional instances, for example in the case of a revolution by the proletariat, e.g. the Commune, or in a country in which not only has the bourgeoisie constructed state and society after its own image but the democratic petty bourgeoisie, in its wake, has already carried that reconstruction to its logical conclusion. If, for instance, in Germany, the democratic petty bourgeoisie were part of this reactionary mass, then how could the Social-Democratic Workers' Party have gone hand in hand with it, with the People's Party,⁹⁹ for years on end? How could the *Volksstaat* derive virtually all its political content from the petty-bourgeois democratic *Frankfurter Zeitung*? And how can one explain the adoption in this same programme of no less than seven demands that coincide exactly and word for word with the programme of the People's Party and of petty-bourgeois democracy? I mean the seven political demands, 1 to 5 and 1 to 2, of which there is not one that is not *bourgeois-democratic*.¹⁰⁰

Secondly, the principle that the workers' movement is an international one is, to all intents and purposes, utterly denied in respect of the present, and this by men who, for the space of five years and under the most difficult conditions, upheld that principle in the most laudable manner. The German workers' position in the van of the European movement rests *essentially* on their genuinely international attitude during the war¹⁰¹; no other proletariat would have behaved so well. And now this principle is to be denied by them at a moment when, everywhere abroad, workers are stressing it all the more by reason of the efforts made by governments to suppress every attempt at its practical application in an organisation! And what is left of the internationalism of the workers' movement? The dim prospect—not

even of subsequent co-operation among European workers with a view to their liberation—nay, but of a future “international brotherhood of peoples”—of your Peace League bourgeois “United States of Europe”!¹⁰²

There was, of course, no need whatever to mention the International as such. But at the very least there should have been no going back on the programme of 1869, and some sort of statement to the effect that, *though first of all* the German workers' party is acting within the limits set by its political frontiers (it has no right to speak in the name of the European proletariat, especially when what it says is wrong), it is nevertheless conscious of its solidarity with the workers of all other countries and will, as before, always be ready to meet the obligations that solidarity entails. Such obligations, even if one does not definitely proclaim or regard oneself as part of the “International”, consist for example in aid, abstention from blacklegging during strikes, making sure that the party organs keep German workers informed of the movement abroad, agitation against impending or incipient dynastic wars and, during such wars, an attitude such as was exemplarily maintained in 1870 and 1871, etc.

Thirdly, our people have allowed themselves to be saddled with the Lassallean “iron law of wages” which is based on a completely outmoded economic view, namely that on average the workers receive only the *minimum* wage because, according to the Malthusian theory of population, there are always too many workers (such was Lassalle's reasoning). Now in *Capital* Marx has amply demonstrated that the laws governing wages are very complex, that, according to circumstances, now this law, now that, holds sway, that they are therefore by no means iron but are, on the contrary, exceedingly elastic, and that the subject really cannot be dismissed in a few words, as Lassalle imagined. Malthus' argument, upon which the law Lassalle derived from him and Ricardo (whom he misinterpreted) is based, as that argument appears, for instance, on p. 5 of the *Arbeiterlesebuch*, where it is quoted from another pamphlet of Lassalle's,¹⁰³ is exhaustively refuted by Marx in the section on “Accumulation of Capital”^a. Thus, by adopting the Lassallean “iron law” one commits oneself to a false proposition and false reasoning in support of the same.

Fourthly, as its *one and only social* demand, the programme puts forward—Lassallean state aid in its starkest form, as stolen by Lassalle from Buchez.¹⁰⁴ And this, after Bracke has so ably

^a K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Part VII (see present edition, Vol. 35).—Ed.

demonstrated the sheer futility of that demand^a; after almost all, if not all, of our party speakers have, in their struggle against the Lassalleans, been compelled to make a stand against this "state aid"! Our party could hardly demean itself further. Internationalism sunk to the level of Amand Goegg, socialism to that of the bourgeois republican Buchez, who *confronted the socialists* with this demand in order to supplant them!

But "state aid" in the Lassallean sense of the word is, after all, at most only *one* measure among many others for the attainment of an end here lamely described as "paving the way for the solution of the social question", as though in our case there were still a social *question* that remained *unsolved* in theory! Thus, if you were to say: The German workers' party strives to abolish wage labour and hence class distinctions by introducing co-operative production into industry and agriculture, and on a national scale; it is in favour of any measure calculated to attain that end!—then no Lassallean could possibly object.

Fifthly, there is absolutely no mention of the organisation of the working class as a class through the medium of trade unions. And that is a point of the utmost importance, this being the proletariat's true class organisation in which it fights its daily battles with capital, in which it trains itself and which nowadays can no longer simply be smashed, even with reaction at its worst (as presently in Paris). Considering the importance this organisation is likewise assuming in Germany, it would in our view be indispensable to accord it some mention in the programme and, possibly, to leave some room for it in the organisation of the party.

All these things have been done by our people to oblige the Lassalleans. And what have the others conceded? That a host of somewhat muddled and *purely democratic demands* should figure in the programme, some of them being of a purely fashionable nature—for instance "legislation by the people" such as exists in Switzerland and does more harm than good, if it can be said to do anything at all. *Administration* by the people—that would at least be something. Similarly omitted is the first prerequisite of all liberty—that all officials be responsible for all their official actions to every citizen before the ordinary courts and in accordance with common law. That demands such as freedom of science and freedom of conscience figure in every liberal bourgeois programme and seem a trifle out of place here is something I shall not enlarge upon.

^a W. Bracke, *Der Lassalle'sche Vorschlag*, Brunswick, 1873.—Ed.

The free people's state is transformed into the free state. Grammatically speaking, a free state is one in which the state is free vis-à-vis its citizens, a state, that is, with a despotic government. All the palaver about the state ought to be dropped, especially after the Commune, which had ceased to be a state in the true sense of the term. The *people's state* has been flung in our teeth *ad nauseam* by the anarchists, although Marx's anti-Proudhon piece^a and after it the *Communist Manifesto*^b declare outright that, with the introduction of the socialist order of society, the state will dissolve of itself and disappear. Now, since the state is merely a transitional institution of which use is made in the struggle, in the revolution, to keep down one's enemies by force, it is utter nonsense to speak of a free people's state; so long as the proletariat still *makes use* of the state, it makes use of it, not for the purpose of freedom, but of keeping down its enemies and, as soon as there can be any question of freedom, the state as such ceases to exist. We would therefore suggest that *Gemeinwesen*^c be universally substituted for *state*; it is a good old German word that can very well do service for the French "Commune".

"The elimination of all social and political inequality", rather than "the abolition of all class distinctions", is similarly a most dubious expression. As between one country, one province and even one place and another, living conditions will always evince a *certain* inequality which may be reduced to a minimum but never wholly eliminated. The living conditions of Alpine dwellers will always be different from those of the plainsmen. The concept of a socialist society as a realm of *equality* is a one-sided French concept deriving from the old "liberty, equality, fraternity", a concept which was justified in that, in its own time and place, it signified a *phase of development*, but which, like all the one-sided ideas of earlier socialist schools, ought now to be superseded, since they produce nothing but mental confusion, and more accurate ways of presenting the matter have been discovered.

I shall desist, although almost every word in this programme, a programme which is, moreover, insipidly written, lays itself open to criticism. It is such that, should it be adopted, Marx and I could *never* recognise a *new* party set up on that basis and shall have to consider most seriously what attitude—public as well as private—we should adopt towards it.¹⁰⁵ Remember that abroad *we* are held

^a K. Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy. Answer to the "Philosophy of Poverty" by M. Proudhon.*—Ed.

^b K. Marx and F. Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party.*—Ed.

^c Commonalty.—Ed.

responsible for any and every statement and action of the German Social-Democratic Workers' Party. E.g. by Bakunin in his work *Statehood and Anarchy*,^a in which we are made to answer for every injudicious word spoken or written by Liebknecht since the inception of the *Demokratisches Wochenblatt*. People imagine that we run the whole show from here, whereas you know as well as I do that we have hardly ever interfered in the least with internal party affairs, and then only in an attempt to make good, as far as possible, what we considered to have been blunders—and *only theoretical* blunders at that. But, as you yourself will realise, this programme marks a turning-point which may very well force us to renounce any kind of responsibility in regard to the party that adopts it.

Generally speaking, less importance attaches to the official programme of a party than to what it does. But a *new* programme is after all a banner planted in public, and the outside world judges the party by it. Hence, whatever happens there should be no going-back, as there is here, on the Eisenach programme. It should further be considered what the workers of other countries will think of this programme; what impression will be created by this genuflection on the part of the entire German socialist proletariat before Lassalleanism.

I am, moreover, convinced that a union on *this* basis would not last a year. Are the best minds of our party to descend to repeating, parrot-fashion, Lassallean maxims concerning the iron law of wages and state aid? I'd like to see you, for one, thus employed! And were they to do so, their audiences would hiss them off the stage. And I feel sure that it is precisely on *these* bits of the programme that the Lassalleans are insisting, like Shylock the Jew on his pound of flesh.^b The split will come; but we shall have "made honest men" again of Hasselmann, Hasenclever and Tölcke and Co.; we shall emerge from the split weaker and the Lassalleans stronger; our party will have lost its political virginity and will never again be able to come out whole-heartedly against the Lassallean maxims which for a time it inscribed on its own banner; and then, should the Lassalleans again declare themselves to be the sole and most genuine workers' party and our people to be bourgeois, the programme would be there to prove it. All the socialist measures in it are *theirs*, and *our* party has introduced

^a Бакунинъ, *Государственность и анархія*, [Geneva,] 1873 (for Marx's notes on this book see this volume, pp. 485-526).—Ed.

^b Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, Act I, Scene 3.—Ed.

nothing save the demands of that petty-bourgeois democracy which it has *itself* described in that same programme as part of the "reactionary mass"!

I had held this letter back in view of the fact that you would only be released on April 1, in honour of Bismarck's birthday,¹⁰⁶ not wanting to expose it to the risk of interception in the course of an attempt to smuggle it in. Well, I have just had a letter from Bracke, who has also felt grave doubts about the programme and asks for our opinion. I shall therefore send this letter to him for forwarding, so that he can read it without my having to write the whole thing over again. I have, by the way, also spoken my mind to Ramm; to Liebknecht I wrote but briefly. I cannot forgive his not having told us a *single word* about the whole business (whereas Ramm and others believed he had given us exact information) until it was, in a manner of speaking, too late. True, this has always been his wont—hence the large amount of disagreeable correspondence which we, both Marx and myself, have had with him, but this time it really is too bad, and *we definitely shan't act in concert with him.*

Do see that you manage to come here in the summer; you would, of course, stay with me and, if the weather is fine, we might spend a day or two taking sea baths, which would really do you good after your long spell in jail.

Ever your friend,
F. E.

Marx has just moved house. He is living at 41 Maitland Park Crescent, NW London.

First published in the book:
A. Bebel, *Aus meinem Leben*, Part 2,
Stuttgart, 1911

Printed according to the book

Karl Marx

CRITIQUE OF THE GOTHA PROGRAMME¹⁰⁷

Written in April-early May 1875

First published abridged in *Die Neue Zeit*,
Vol. 1, No. 18, 1891

Printed according to the manu-
script

LETTER TO WILHELM BRACKE

London, May 5, 1875

Dear Bracke,

Will you be so kind, after you have read the following marginal notes on the unity programme,^a to pass them on for Geib and Auer, Bebel and Liebknecht to see. Notabene. *The manuscript should be returned to you* so as to be at my disposal if needs be. I have more than enough to do, and, as it is, must take on far more work than laid down for me by my doctor. Hence it was by no means a "pleasure" to write such a lengthy screed. Yet it was necessary if the steps I shall have to take later on are not to be misinterpreted by the party friends for whom this communication is intended.

After the Unity Congress is over, Engels and I will publish a short statement to the effect that we entirely disassociate ourselves from the said programme of principles and have nothing to do with it.

This is indispensable because of the view taken abroad—a totally erroneous view, carefully nurtured by party enemies—that we are secretly directing the activities of the so-called Eisenach Party from here. Only recently, in a newly published Russian work,^b Bakunin suggests that I, for instance, am responsible, not only for that party's every programme, etc., but actually for every step taken by Liebknecht from the day he began co-operating with the People's Party.

Aside from this, it is my duty to refuse recognition, even by maintaining a diplomatic silence, to a programme which, I am

^a "Programm der deutschen Arbeiterpartei". *Der Volksstaat*, No. 27, March 7, 1875.—Ed.

^b Бакунинъ, *Государственность и анархизм*.—Ed.

convinced, is altogether deplorable as well as demoralising for the party.

Every step of real movement is more important than a dozen programmes. Hence, if it was impossible to advance *beyond* the Eisenach Programme—and circumstances at the time precluded this—they should simply have come to an agreement about action against the common foe. But to draw up programmes of principles (instead of waiting till a longish spell of common activity has prepared the ground for that sort of thing) is to set up bench marks for all the world to see, whereby it may gauge how far the party has progressed.

The leaders of the Lassalleans came because circumstances forced them to. Had they been told from the start that there was to be no haggling over principles, they would have been *compelled* to content themselves with a programme of action or a plan of organisation for common action. Instead, our people allow them to present themselves armed with mandates, and recognise those mandates as binding, thus surrendering unconditionally to men who are themselves in need of help. To crown it all, they are holding another congress *prior to the congress of compromise*, whereas our own party is holding its congress *post festum*.^a Obviously their idea was to elude all criticism and not allow their own party time for reflection. One knows that the mere fact of unification is enough to satisfy the workers, but it is wrong to suppose that this momentary success has not been bought too dear.

Besides, the programme's no good, even apart from its canonisation of the Lassallean articles of faith.

I shall shortly be sending you the final instalments of the French edition of *Capital*. Printing was held up for a considerable time by the French government ban. The thing will be finished this week or at the beginning of next. Have you received the six previous instalments?¹⁰⁸ Would you also very kindly send me the *address* of Bernhard Becker, to whom I must likewise send the final instalments.

The *bookshop* of the *Volksstaat* has peculiar manners. For instance, they haven't as yet sent me so much as a single copy of their reprint of the *Cologne Communist Trial*.^b

With kind regards.

Your

Karl Marx

^a After the event.—Ed.

^b K. Marx, *Revelations Concerning the Communist Trial in Cologne*.—Ed.

MARGINAL NOTES ON THE PROGRAMME
OF THE GERMAN WORKERS' PARTY

I

1. "Labour is the source of all wealth and all culture, *and since* useful labour is possible only in society and through society, the proceeds of labour belong undiminished with equal right to all members of society."^a

First part of the paragraph: "Labour is the source of all wealth and all culture."

Labour is *not the source* of all wealth. *Nature* is just as much the source of use values (and it is surely of such that material wealth consists!) as labour, which itself is only the manifestation of a force of nature, human labour power. The above phrase is to be found in all children's primers and is correct insofar as it is *implied* that labour is performed with the pertinent objects and instruments. But a socialist programme cannot allow such bourgeois phrases to pass over in silence the *conditions* that alone give them meaning. And insofar as man from the outset behaves towards nature, the primary source of all instruments and objects of labour, as an owner, treats her as belonging to him, his labour becomes the source of use values, therefore also of wealth. The bourgeois have very good grounds for ascribing *supernatural creative power* to labour; since precisely from the fact that labour is determined by nature, it follows that the man who possesses no other property than his labour power must, in all conditions of society and culture, be the slave of other men who have made themselves the owners of the material conditions of labour. He can work only with their permission, hence live only with their permission.

Let us now leave the sentence as it stands, or rather limps. What would one have expected in conclusion? Obviously this:

"Since labour is the source of all wealth, no one in society can appropriate wealth except as the product of labour. Therefore, if

^a Here and below Marx quotes the draft of the "Programm der deutschen Arbeiterpartei", *Der Volksstaat*, No. 27, March 7, 1875.—*Ed.*

he himself does not work, he lives by the labour of others and also acquires his culture at the expense of the labour of others."

Instead of this, by means of the verbal rivet "*and since*" a second proposition is added in order to draw a conclusion from this and not from the first one.

Second part of the paragraph: "Useful labour is possible only in society and through society."

According to the first proposition, labour was the source of all wealth and all culture; therefore no society is possible without labour. Now we learn, conversely, that no "useful" labour is possible without society.

One could just as well have said that only in society can useless and even socially harmful labour become a gainful occupation, that only in society can one live by being idle, etc., etc.—in short, one could just as well have copied the whole of Rousseau.

And what is "useful" labour? Surely only labour which produces the intended useful result. A savage—and man was a savage after he had ceased to be an ape—who kills an animal with a stone, who collects fruits, etc., performs "useful" labour.

Thirdly. The conclusion: "And since useful labour is possible only in society and through society, the proceeds of labour belong undiminished with equal right to all members of society."

A fine conclusion! If useful labour is possible only in society and through society, the proceeds of labour belong to society—and only so much therefrom accrues to the individual worker as is not required to maintain the "condition" of labour, society.

In fact, this proposition has at all times been made use of *by the champions of the state of society prevailing at any given time*. First come the claims of the government and everything that sticks to it, since it is the social organ for the maintenance of the social order; then come the claims of the various kinds of private owners for the various kinds of private property are the foundations of society, etc. One sees that such hollow phrases can be twisted and turned as desired.

The first and second parts of the paragraph have some intelligible connection only in the following wording:

"Labour becomes the source of wealth and culture only as social labour", or, what is the same thing, "in and through society".

This proposition is incontestably correct, for although isolated labour (its material conditions presupposed) can create use values, it can create neither wealth nor culture.

But equally incontestable is the other proposition:

"In proportion as labour develops socially, and becomes

thereby a source of wealth and culture, poverty and destitution develop among the workers, and wealth and culture among the non-workers."

This is the law of all history hitherto. What, therefore, had to be done here, instead of setting down general phrases about "labour" and "society", was to prove concretely how in present capitalist society the material, etc., conditions have at last been created which enable and compel the workers to lift this historical curse.

In fact, however, the whole paragraph, bungled in style and content, is only there in order to inscribe the Lassallean catchword of the "undiminished proceeds of labour" as a slogan at the top of the party banner. I shall return later to the "proceeds of labour", "equal right", etc., since the same thing recurs in a somewhat different form further on.

2. "In present-day society, the means of labour are the monopoly of the capitalist class; the resulting dependence of the working class is the cause of misery and servitude in all their forms."

This sentence, borrowed from the Rules of the International, is incorrect in this "improved" edition.¹⁰⁹

In present-day society the means of labour are the monopoly of the landowners (the monopoly of land ownership is even the basis of the monopoly of capital) and the capitalists. In the passage in question, the Rules of the International mention neither the one nor the other class of monopolists. They speak of the "*monopoly of the means of labour, that is, the sources of life*". The addition, "sources of life", makes it sufficiently clear that land is included in the means of labour.

The correction was introduced because Lassalle, for reasons now generally known,¹¹⁰ attacked *only* the capitalist class and not the landowners. In England, the capitalist is mostly not even the owner of the land on which his factory stands.

3. "The emancipation of labour demands the raising of the means of labour to the common property of society and the collective regulation of the total labour with a fair distribution of the proceeds of labour."

"The raising of the means of labour to common property"! Ought obviously to read their "conversion into common property". But this only in passing.

What are "*proceeds of labour*"? The product of labour or its value? And in the latter case, is it the total value of the product or only that part of the value which labour has newly added to the value of the means of production consumed?

"Proceeds of labour" is a loose notion which Lassalle has put in the place of definite economic concepts.

What is "fair" distribution?

Do not the bourgeois assert that present-day distribution is "fair"? And is it not, in fact, the only "fair" distribution on the basis of the present-day mode of production? Are economic relations regulated by legal concepts or do not, on the contrary, legal relations arise from economic ones? Have not also the socialist sectarians the most varied notions about "fair" distribution?

To understand what is implied in this connection by the phrase "fair distribution", we must take the first paragraph and this one together. The latter presupposes a society wherein "the means of labour are common property and the total labour is collectively regulated", and from the first paragraph we learn that "the proceeds of labour belong undiminished with equal right to all members of society".

"To all members of society"? To those who do not work as well? What remains then of "the undiminished proceeds of labour"? Only to those members of society who work? What remains then of "the equal right" of all members of society?

But "all members of society" and "equal right" are obviously mere phrases. The crucial point is this, that in this communist society every worker must receive his "undiminished" Lassallean "proceeds of labour".

Let us take first of all the words "proceeds of labour" in the sense of the product of labour; then the collective proceeds of labour are the *total social product*.

From this must now be deducted:

First, cover for replacement of the means of production used up.

Secondly, additional portion for expansion of production.

Thirdly, reserve or insurance funds to provide against accidents, disturbances caused by natural factors, etc.

These deductions from the "undiminished proceeds of labour" are an economic necessity and their magnitude is to be determined according to available means and forces, and partly by computation of probabilities, but they are in no way calculable by equity.

There remains the other part of the total product, intended to serve as means of consumption.

Before this is divided among the individuals, there has to be again deducted from it:

First, the general costs of administration not directly appertaining to production.

This part will, from the outset, be very considerably restricted in comparison with present-day society and it diminishes in proportion as the new society develops.

Secondly, that which is intended for the common satisfaction of needs, such as schools, health services, etc.

From the outset this part grows considerably in comparison with present-day society and it grows in proportion as the new society develops.

Thirdly, funds for those unable to work, etc., in short, for what is included under so-called official poor relief today.

Only now do we come to the "distribution" which the programme, under Lassallean influence, has alone in view in its narrow fashion, namely, to that part of the means of consumption which is divided among the individual producers of the collective.

The "undiminished proceeds of labour" have already unnoticeably become converted into the "diminished" proceeds, although what the producer is deprived of in his capacity as a private individual benefits him directly or indirectly in his capacity as a member of society.

Just as the phrase of the "undiminished proceeds of labour" has disappeared, so now does the phrase of the "proceeds of labour" disappear altogether.

Within the collective society based on common ownership of the means of production, the producers do not exchange their products; just as little does the labour employed on the products appear here *as the value* of these products, as a material quality possessed by them, since now, in contrast to capitalist society, individual labour no longer exists in an indirect fashion but directly as a component part of the total labour. The phrase "proceeds of labour", objectionable even today on account of its ambiguity, thus loses all meaning.

What we are dealing with here is a communist society, not as it has *developed* on its own foundations, but on the contrary, just as it *emerges* from capitalist society, which is thus in every respect, economically, morally and intellectually, still stamped with the birth-marks of the old society from whose womb it emerges.

Accordingly, the individual producer receives back from society—after the deductions have been made—exactly what he gives to it. What he has given to it is his individual quantum of labour. For example, the social working day consists of the sum of the individual hours of work; the individual labour time of the individual producer is the part of the social working day contributed by him, his share in it. He receives a certificate from society that he has furnished such and such an amount of labour (after deducting his labour for the common funds), and with this certificate he draws from the social stock of means of consumption as much as the same amount of labour costs. The same amount of labour which he has given to society in one form he receives back in another.

Here obviously the same principle prevails as that which regulates the exchange of commodities, as far as this is the exchange of equal values. Content and form are changed, because under the altered circumstances no one can give anything except his labour, and because, on the other hand, nothing can pass to the ownership of individuals except individual means of consumption. But, as far as the distribution of the latter among the individual producers is concerned, the same principle prevails as in the exchange of commodity-equivalents: a given amount of labour in one form is exchanged for an equal amount of labour in another form.

Hence, *equal right* here is still in principle—*bourgeois right*, although principle and practice are no longer at loggerheads, while the exchange of equivalents in commodity exchange only exists *on the average* and not in the individual case.

In spite of this advance, this *equal right* is still constantly encumbered by a bourgeois limitation. The right of the producers is *proportional* to the labour they supply; the equality consists in the fact that measurement is made with an *equal standard*, labour. But one man is superior to another physically or mentally and so supplies more labour in the same time, or can work for a longer time; and labour, to serve as a measure, must be defined by its duration or intensity, otherwise it ceases to be a standard of measurement. This *equal right* is an unequal right for unequal labour. It recognises no class distinctions, because everyone is only a worker like everyone else; but it tacitly recognises the unequal individual endowment and thus productive capacity of the workers as natural privileges. *It is, therefore, a right of inequality, in its content, like every right.* Right by its nature can exist only as the application of an equal standard; but unequal individuals (and

they would not be different individuals if they were not unequal) are measurable by an equal standard only insofar as they are made subject to an equal criterion, are taken from a *certain* side only, for instance, in the present case, are regarded *only as workers* and nothing more is seen in them, everything else being ignored. Besides, one worker is married, another not; one has more children than another, etc., etc. Thus, given an equal amount of work done, and hence an equal share in the social consumption fund, one will in fact receive more than another, one will be richer than another, etc. To avoid all these defects, right would have to be unequal rather than equal.

But these defects are inevitable in the first phase of communist society as it is when it has just emerged after prolonged birth-pangs from capitalist society. Right can never be higher than the economic structure of society and its cultural development which this determines.

In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labour, and thereby also the antithesis between mental and physical labour, has vanished; after labour has become not only a means of life but life's prime want; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-round development of the individual, and all the springs of common wealth flow more abundantly—only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs!

I have dealt at greater length with the "undiminished proceeds of labour", on the one hand, and with "equal right" and "fair distribution", on the other, in order to show what a crime it is to attempt, on the one hand, to force on our Party again, as dogmas, ideas which in a certain period had some meaning but have now become obsolete verbal rubbish, while again perverting, on the other, the realistic outlook, which it cost so much effort to instil into the Party but which has now taken root in it, by means of ideological, legal and other trash so common among the Democrats and French Socialists.

Quite apart from the analysis so far given, it was in general a mistake to make a fuss about so-called *distribution* and put the principal stress on it.

Any distribution whatever of the means of consumption is only a consequence of the distribution of the conditions of production themselves. The latter distribution, however, is a feature of the mode of production itself. The capitalist mode of production, for

example, rests on the fact that the material conditions of production are in the hands of non-workers in the form of capital and land ownership, while the masses are only owners of the personal condition of production, of labour power. If the elements of production are so distributed, then the present-day distribution of the means of consumption results automatically. If the material conditions of production are the collective property of the workers themselves, then there likewise results a distribution of the means of consumption different from the present one. The vulgar socialists (and from them in turn a section of the Democrats) have taken over from the bourgeois economists the consideration and treatment of distribution as independent of the mode of production and hence the presentation of socialism as turning principally on distribution. After the real relation has long been made clear, why retrogress again?

4. "The emancipation of labour must be the work of the working class, in relation to which all other classes are *only one reactionary mass*."

The main clause is taken from the introductory words of the Rules of the International,^a but "improved". There it is said: "The emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves"; here, on the contrary, the "working class" has to emancipate—what? "Labour". Let him understand who can.

In compensation, the subordinate clause, on the other hand, is a Lassallean quotation of the first water: "in relation to which (the working class) all other classes are *only one reactionary mass*".

In the *Communist Manifesto* it is said: "Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a *really revolutionary class*. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of Modern Industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product."^b

The bourgeoisie is here conceived as a revolutionary class—as the bearer of large-scale industry—in relation to the feudal lords and the middle estates, who desire to maintain all social positions that are the creation of obsolete modes of production. Thus they

^a See present edition, Vol. 20, p. 441.—*Ed.*

^b *Ibid.*, Vol. 6, p. 494.—*Ed.*

do not form *together with the bourgeoisie* only one reactionary mass.

On the other hand, the proletariat is revolutionary in relation to the bourgeoisie because, having itself grown up on the basis of large-scale industry, it strives to strip off from production the capitalist character that the bourgeoisie seeks to perpetuate. But the *Manifesto* adds that the "middle estates" are becoming revolutionary "in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat".

From this point of view, therefore, it is again nonsense to say that they, "together with the bourgeoisie", and with the feudal lords into the bargain, "form only one reactionary mass" in relation to the working class.

Did anyone proclaim to the artisans, small manufacturers, etc., and *peasants* during the last elections: In relation to us you, together with the bourgeoisie and feudal lords, form only one reactionary mass?¹¹¹

Lassalle knew the *Communist Manifesto* by heart, as his faithful followers know the gospels written by him. If, therefore, he has falsified it so grossly, this has occurred only to put a good colour on his alliance with absolutist and feudal opponents against the bourgeoisie.

In the above paragraph, moreover, his oracular saying is dragged in by the hair, without any connection with the botched quotation from the Rules of the International. Thus it is here simply an impertinence, and indeed not at all displeasing to Mr. Bismarck, one of those cheap pieces of insolence in which the Marat of Berlin¹¹² deals.

5. "The working class strives for its emancipation first of all *within the framework of the present-day national state*, conscious that the necessary result of its efforts, which are common to the workers of all civilised countries, will be the international brotherhood of peoples."

Lassalle, in opposition to the *Communist Manifesto* and to all earlier socialism, conceived the workers' movement from the narrowest national standpoint. He is being followed in this—and that after the work of the International!

It is altogether self-evident that, to be able to fight at all, the working class must organise itself at home *as a class* and that its own country is the immediate arena of its struggle. To this extent its class struggle is national, not in substance, but, as the

Communist Manifesto says, "in form".^a But the "framework of the present-day national state", for instance, the German Empire, is itself in its turn economically "within the framework of the world market", politically "within the framework of the system of states". Every businessman knows that German trade is at the same time foreign trade, and the greatness of Mr. Bismarck consists, to be sure, precisely in his pursuing his kind of *international* policy.

And to what does the German workers' party reduce its internationalism? To the consciousness that the result of its efforts "will be the *international brotherhood of peoples*"—a phrase borrowed from the bourgeois League of Peace and Freedom, which is intended to pass as equivalent to the international brotherhood of the working classes in the joint struggle against the ruling classes and their governments. So not a word *about the international functions* of the German working class! And it is thus that it is to defy its own bourgeoisie—which is already linked up in brotherhood against it with the bourgeois of all other countries—and Mr. Bismarck's international policy of conspiracy!

In fact, the internationalism of the programme stands *even infinitely below* that of the Free Trade Party. The latter also asserts that the result of its efforts will be "the international brotherhood of peoples". But it also *does* something to make trade international and by no means contents itself with the consciousness—that all peoples are carrying on trade at home.

The international activity of the working classes does not in any way depend on the existence of the "*International Working Men's Association*". This was only the first attempt to create a central organ for that activity; an attempt which was a lasting success on account of the impulse which it gave, but which was no longer realisable in *its first historical form* after the fall of the Paris Commune.

Bismarck's *Norddeutsche* was absolutely right when it announced, to the satisfaction of its master, that the German workers' party had forsworn internationalism in the new programme.¹¹³

^a See present edition, Vol. 6, pp. 495, 502-03.—Ed

II

"Starting from these basic principles, the German workers' party strives by all legal means for the *free state—and—socialist* society: the abolition of the wage system *together with the iron law of wages—and—exploitation* in every form; the elimination of all social and political inequality."

I shall return to the "free" state later.

So, in future, the German workers' party has got to believe in Lassalle's "iron law of wages"¹⁴! That this may not be lost, the nonsense is perpetrated of speaking of the "abolition of the wage system" (it should read: system of wage labour) "*together with the iron law of wages*". If I abolish wage labour, then naturally I abolish its laws too, whether they are of "iron" or sponge. But Lassalle's attack on wage labour turns almost solely on this so-called law. In order, therefore, to prove that the Lassallean sect has won, the "wage system" must be abolished "*together with the iron law of wages*" and not without it.

It is well known that nothing of the "iron law of wages" is Lassalle's except the word "iron" borrowed from Goethe's "eternal, iron, great laws".^a The word *iron* is a label by which the true believers recognise one another. But if I take the law with Lassalle's stamp on it and, consequently, in his sense, then I must also take it with his substantiation. And what is that? As Lange already showed, shortly after Lassalle's death, it is the Malthusian theory of population (preached by Lange himself).^b But if this theory is correct, then again I cannot abolish the law even if I abolish wage labour a hundred times over, because the law then governs not only the system of wage labour but *every* social system. Basing themselves directly on this, the economists have been proving for fifty years and more that socialism cannot abolish destitution, *which has its basis in nature*, but can only make it *general*, distribute it simultaneously over the whole surface of society!

But all this is not the main thing. *Quite apart* from the *false* Lassallean formulation of the law, the truly outrageous retrogression consists in the following:

^a Quoted from Goethe's poem *Das Göttliche*, sixth stanza.—*Ed.*

^b F. A. Lange, *Die Arbeiterfrage in ihrer Bedeutung für Gegenwart und Zukunft*, Duisburg, 1865, pp. 108-12.—*Ed.*

Since Lassalle's death there has asserted itself in our Party the scientific understanding that *wages* are not what they *appear* to be, namely the *value*, or *price*, of labour, but only a masked form for the *value*, or *price*, of labour power. Thereby the whole bourgeois conception of wages hitherto, as well as all the criticism hitherto directed against this conception, was thrown overboard once for all and it was made clear that the wage-worker has permission to work for his own subsistence, that is, *to live* only insofar as he works for a certain time gratis for the capitalist (and hence also for the latter's co-consumers of surplus value); that the whole capitalist system of production turns on increasing this gratis labour by extending the working day or by developing productivity, that is, increasing the intensity of labour power, etc.; that, consequently, the system of wage labour is a system of slavery, and indeed of a slavery which becomes more severe in proportion as the social productive forces of labour develop, whether the worker receives better or worse payment. And after this understanding has gained more and more ground in our Party, one returns to Lassalle's dogmas although one must have known that Lassalle *did not know* what wages were, but following in the wake of the bourgeois economists took the appearance for the essence of the matter.

It is as if, among slaves who have at last got behind the secret of slavery and broken out in rebellion, a slave still in thrall to obsolete notions were to inscribe on the programme of the rebellion: Slavery must be abolished because the feeding of slaves in the system of slavery cannot exceed a certain low maximum!

Does not the mere fact that the representatives of our Party were capable of perpetrating such a monstrous attack on the understanding that has spread among the mass of our Party prove by itself with what criminal levity and with what lack of conscience they set to work in drawing up this compromise programme!

Instead of the indefinite concluding phrase of the paragraph, "the elimination of all social and political inequality", it ought to have been said that with the abolition of class distinctions all social and political inequality arising from them would disappear of itself.

III

"The German workers' party, in order to pave the way for the solution of the social question, demands the establishment of producers' co-operative societies with state aid under the democratic control of the working people. The producers' co-operative societies are to be called into being for industry and agriculture on such a scale that the socialist organisation of the total labour will arise from them."

After the Lassallean "iron law of wages", the panacea of the prophet. The way for it is "paved" in worthy fashion. In place of the existing class struggle appears a newspaper scribbler's phrase: "*the social question*", for the "*solution*" of which one "paves the way". Instead of arising from the revolutionary process of the transformation of society, the "socialist organisation of the total labour" "arises" from the "state aid" that the state gives to the producers' co-operative societies which the *state*, not the worker, "*calls into being*". It is worthy of Lassalle's imagination that with state loans one can build a new society just as well as a new railway!¹¹⁵

From the remnants of a sense of shame, "state aid" has been put—"under the democratic control of the working people".

In the first place, the "working people" in Germany consist in their majority of peasants, and not of proletarians.

Secondly, "democratic" means in German "*volksherrschaftlich*" ["by the rule of the people"]. But what does "control of the working people by the rule of the people" mean? And particularly in the case of working people who, through these demands that they put to the state, express their full consciousness that they neither rule nor are ripe for rule!

It would be superfluous to deal here with the criticism of the recipe prescribed by Buchez in the reign of Louis Philippe in *opposition* to the French Socialists and accepted by the reactionary workers of the *Atelier*. The chief offence does not lie in having inscribed this specific nostrum in the programme, but in taking a retrograde step at all from the standpoint of a class movement to that of a sectarian movement.

That the workers desire to establish the conditions for co-operative production on a social scale, and first of all on a national scale, in their own country, only means that they are working to transform the present conditions of production, and it has nothing in common with the foundation of co-operative

societies with state aid. But as far as the present co-operative societies are concerned, they are of value *only* insofar as they are the independent creations of the workers and not protégés either of the governments or of the bourgeois.

[IV]

I come now to the democratic section.

A. "*The free basis of the state.*"

First of all, according to II, the German workers' party strives for "the free state".^a

Free state—what is it?

It is by no means the purpose of the workers, who have got rid of the narrow mentality of humble subjects, to set the state "free". In the German Empire the "state" is almost as "free" as in Russia. Freedom consists in converting the state from an organ superimposed upon society into one completely subordinate to it, and even today forms of state are more free or less free to the extent that they restrict the "freedom of the state".

The German workers' party—at least if it adopts the programme—shows that its socialist ideas are not even skin-deep, in that, instead of treating existing society (and this holds good for any future one) as the *basis* of the existing *state* (or of the future state in the case of future society), it treats the state rather as an independent entity that possesses its own "*intellectual, ethical and libertarian bases*".

And what of the wild abuse which the programme makes of the words "*present-day state*", "*present-day society*", and of the still more riotous misconception it creates in regard to the state to which it addresses its demands?

"Present-day society" is capitalist society, which exists in all civilised countries, more or less free from medieval admixture, more or less modified by the particular historical development of each country, more or less developed. On the other hand, the "present-day state" changes with a country's frontier. It is different in the Prusso-German Empire from that in Switzerland,

^a See this volume, p. 91.—Ed.

and different in England from that in the United States. "The *present-day state*" is, therefore, a fiction.

Nevertheless, the different states of the different civilised countries, in spite of their motley diversity of form, all have this in common that they are based on modern bourgeois society, more or less capitalistically developed. They have, therefore, also certain essential characteristics in common. In this sense it is possible to speak of the "present-day state", in contrast with the future, in which its present root, bourgeois society, will have died off.

The question then arises: what transformation will the state undergo in communist society? In other words, what social functions will remain in existence there that are analogous to present state functions? This question can only be answered scientifically, and one does not get a flea-hop nearer to the problem by a thousandfold combination of the word people with the word state.

Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*.

Now the programme deals neither with this nor with the future state of communist society.

Its political demands contain nothing beyond the old democratic litany familiar to all: universal suffrage, direct legislation, popular rights, a people's militia, etc. They are a mere echo of the bourgeois People's Party, of the League of Peace and Freedom. They are all demands which, insofar as they are not exaggerated in fantastic presentation, have already been *implemented*. Only the state to which they belong does not lie within the borders of the German Empire, but in Switzerland, the United States, etc. This sort of "state of the future" is a *present-day state*, although existing outside the "framework" of the German Empire.

But one thing has been forgotten. Since the German workers' party expressly declares that it acts within "the present-day national state", hence within its own state, the Prusso-German Empire—its demands would indeed otherwise be largely meaningless, since one only demands what one has not yet got—it should not have forgotten the chief thing, namely that all those pretty little gewgaws rest on the recognition of what is called sovereignty of the people and hence are appropriate only in a *democratic republic*.

Since one has not the courage—and wisely so, for the

circumstances demand caution—to demand the democratic republic, as the French workers' programmes under Louis Philippe and under Louis Napoleon did, one should not have resorted to the subterfuge, neither "honest"^a nor decent, of demanding things which have meaning only in a democratic republic from a state which is nothing but a police-guarded military despotism, embellished with parliamentary forms, alloyed with a feudal admixture and at the same time already influenced by the bourgeoisie, and bureaucratically carpentered, and then assuring this state into the bargain that one imagines one will be able to force such things upon it "by legal means".

Even vulgar democracy, which sees the millennium in the democratic republic and has no suspicion that it is precisely in this last form of state of bourgeois society that the class struggle has to be fought out to a conclusion—even it towers mountains above this kind of democratism which keeps within the limits of what is permitted by the police and not permitted by logic.

That, in fact, by the word "state" is meant the government machine or the state insofar as it forms a special organism separated from society through division of labour, is shown alone by the words

"the German workers' party demands as the economic basis of the state: a single progressive income tax," etc.

Taxes are the economic basis of the government machinery and of nothing else. In the state of the future existing in Switzerland, this demand has been pretty well fulfilled. Income tax presupposes various sources of income of the various social classes, and hence capitalist society. It is, therefore, nothing remarkable that the Liverpool FINANCIAL REFORMERS, bourgeois headed by Gladstone's brother,^b are putting forward the same demand as the programme.¹¹⁶

B. "The German workers' party demands as the intellectual and ethical basis of the state:

1. "Universal and equal education of the people by the state. Universal compulsory school attendance. Free instruction."

Equal education of the people? What idea lies behind these words? Is it believed that in present-day society (and it is only with this that one is dealing) education can be *equal* for all classes? Or is it

^a See this volume, p. 68.—*Ed.*

^b Robertson Gladstone.—*Ed.*

demanded that the upper classes also shall be compulsorily reduced to the modicum of education—the elementary school—that alone is compatible with the economic conditions not only of the wage labourers but of the peasants as well?

“Universal compulsory school attendance. Free instruction”. The former exists even in Germany, the latter in Switzerland and in the United States in the case of elementary schools. If in some states of the latter country “upper” educational institutions are also “free”, that only means in fact defraying the cost of the education of the upper classes from the general tax receipts. Incidentally, the same holds good for “free administration of justice” demanded under A, 5. The administration of criminal justice is to be had free everywhere; that of civil justice is concerned almost exclusively with conflicts over property and hence affects almost exclusively the propertied classes. Are they to carry on their litigation at the expense of the national coffers?

The paragraph on the schools should at least have demanded technical schools (theoretical and practical) in combination with the elementary school.

“*Education of the people by the state*” is altogether objectionable. Defining by a general law the expenditures on the elementary schools, the qualifications of the teaching staff, the subjects of instruction, etc., and, as is done in the United States, supervising the fulfilment of these legal specifications by state inspectors, is a very different thing from appointing the state as the educator of the people! Government and Church should rather be equally excluded from any influence on the school. Particularly, indeed, in the Prusso-German Empire (and one should not take refuge in the rotten subterfuge that one is speaking of a “state of the future”; we have seen how matters stand in this respect) the state has need, on the contrary, of a very stern education by the people.

But the whole programme, for all its democratic clang, is tainted through and through by the Lassallean sect’s servile belief in the state, or, what is no better, by a democratic belief in miracles, or rather it is a compromise between these two kinds of belief in miracles, both equally remote from socialism.

“Freedom of science” says a paragraph of the Prussian Constitution.⁴ Why, then, here?

“*Freedom of conscience*”! If one desired at this time of the *Kulturkampf*¹¹⁷ to remind liberalism of its old catchwords, it surely

⁴ *Verfassungs-Urkunde für den preußischen Staat vom 31. Januar 1850*, Art. 20. In: *Gesetz-Sammlung für die Königlichen Preußischen Staaten*, Berlin, 1850, Nr. 3.—Ed.

could have been done only in the following form: Everyone should be able to attend to his religious as well as his bodily needs without the police sticking their noses in. But the workers' party ought at any rate in this connection to have expressed its awareness of the fact that bourgeois "freedom of conscience" is nothing but the toleration of all possible kinds of *religious unfreedom of conscience*, and that for its part it endeavours rather to liberate the conscience from the witchery of religion. But one chooses not to transgress the "bourgeois" level.

I have now come to the end, for the appendix that now follows in the programme does not constitute a *characteristic* component part of it. Hence I can be very brief here.

2. "Normal working day."

In no other country has the workers' party limited itself to such a vague demand, but has always fixed the length of the working day that it considers normal under the given circumstances.

3. "Restriction of female labour and prohibition of child labour."

The standardisation of the working day must include the restriction of female labour, insofar as it relates to the duration, breaks, etc., of the working day; otherwise it could only mean the exclusion of female labour from branches of industry that are especially unhealthy for the female body or are morally objectionable to the female sex. If that is what was meant, it should have been said.

"*Prohibition of child labour*"! Here it is absolutely essential to state the *age limit*.

A *general prohibition* of child labour is incompatible with the existence of large-scale industry and hence an empty, pious wish.

Its implementation—if it were possible—would be reactionary, since, with a strict regulation of the working time according to the different age groups and other precautionary stipulations for the protection of children, an early combination of productive labour with education is one of the most potent means for the transformation of present-day society.

4. "State supervision of factory, workshop and domestic industry."

In consideration of the Prusso-German state it should definitely have been demanded that the inspectors are to be removable only

by a court of law; that any worker can have them prosecuted for neglect of duty; that they must belong to the medical profession.

5. "Regulation of prison labour."

A petty demand in a general workers' programme. In any case, it should have been clearly stated that there is no intention from fear of competition to allow ordinary criminals to be treated like beasts, and especially that there is no desire to deprive them of their sole means of betterment, productive labour. This was surely the least one might have expected from Socialists.

6. "An effective liability law."

It should have been stated what is meant by an "effective" liability law.

Let it be noted, incidentally, that in speaking of the normal working day the part of factory legislation that deals with health regulations and safety measures, etc., has been overlooked. The liability law only comes into operation when these regulations are infringed.

In short, this appendix too is distinguished by slovenly editing.

Dixi et salvavi animam meam.^a

^a I have spoken and saved my soul (Ezekiel 3:18 and 19).—Ed.

Frederick Engels

[INTRODUCTION TO THE PAMPHLET
ON SOCIAL RELATIONS IN RUSSIA]¹¹⁸

The following lines^a were written on the occasion of a debate in which I became involved with a Mr. Peter Nikitich Tkachov. In an article about the Russian periodical *Forward*, published in London (*Volksstaat*, 1874, Nos. 117 and 118),^b I had cause to mention this gentleman's name quite in passing, but in such a way as to draw his esteemed hostility down upon myself. Without delay Mr. Tkachov issued an "Offener Brief an Herrn Friedrich Engels", Zurich, 1874, in which he attributes all manner of odd things to me and then, in contrast to my crass ignorance, treats his readers to his own opinion on the state of things in general and the prospects for social revolution in Russia. Both form and content of this concoction bore the usual Bakunist stamp. As it had been published in German, I thought it worth the effort to reply in the *Volksstaat* (cf. *Refugee Literature*, Nos. IV and V, *Volksstaat*, 1875, No. 36, et seq.). The first part of my reply dealt mainly with the Bakunist approach to literary debate, which is simply to accuse your opponent of telling a pack of direct lies.^c By virtue of being published in the *Volksstaat* this predominantly personal part has been given a sufficient airing. It is for that reason that I now set it aside and for this separate impression, which has been requested by the publishing house, leave only the second part intact, the part which deals mainly with the social conditions in Russia as they have taken shape since 1861, since what has become known as the emancipation of the peasants.

Developments in Russia are of the greatest importance for the German working class. The existing Russian Empire represents

^a See this volume, pp. 39-50.—*Ed.*


^b *Ibid.*, pp. 19-28.—*Ed.*

^c *Ibid.*, pp. 29-38.—*Ed.*

Soziales aus Rußland.

Von

Friedrich Engels.



Leipzig.

Druck und Verlag der Genossenschaftsbuchdruckerei.

1875.

The title-page of Engels' pamphlet *On Social Relations in Russia*, Leipzig, 1875

the last great mainstay of all West European reaction. That was demonstrated with striking clarity in 1848 and 1849. Because Germany neglected to stir up revolt in Poland in 1848 and to wage war on the Russian Tsar^a (as the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* had demanded from the outset¹¹⁹) that same Tsar was able in 1849 to put down the Hungarian revolution, which has advanced to the gates of Vienna, to sit in judgement over Austria, Prussia and the minor German states at Warsaw in 1850, and to restore the old Federal Diet.¹²⁰ And only a few days ago at the beginning of May 1875—just the same as 25 years ago, the Russian Tsar^b received the homage of his vassals in Berlin and proved that he is still today the arbiter of Europe's fate.¹²¹ No revolution can achieve ultimate success in Western Europe whilst the present Russian state exists alongside it. But Germany is its closest neighbour, and it will therefore be Germany that will feel the first impact of the Russian armies of reaction. The overthrow of Tsarist Russia, the elimination of the Russian Empire, is therefore one of the first conditions of the German proletariat's ultimate triumph.

It is by no means essential, however, for this overthrow to be brought about from outside, although a foreign war could accelerate it considerably. Within the Russian Empire itself there are elements which are working energetically to bring about its ruin.

First there are the *Poles*. A century of oppression has placed them in a position where they must either be revolutionary, supporting every truly revolutionary uprising in the West as a first step towards the liberation of Poland, or they must perish. And at this very moment they are in a position where they can seek West European allies only in the camp of the proletariat. For a century now they have been continually betrayed by all the bourgeois parties of the West. The bourgeoisie in Germany has only been a force to be reckoned with since 1848, and since that time it has been hostile towards Poland. As for France, Napoleon betrayed Poland in 1812, and, as a consequence of that betrayal, lost his campaign, his crown and his empire; in 1830 and 1846 the bourgeois royalty followed his example, as did the bourgeois republic in 1848, and the Second Empire during the Crimean campaign and in 1863. Each betrayed Poland as contemptuously as the other. And even today the radical bourgeois republicans of France grovel before the Tsar, seeking in reward for a renewed betrayal of Poland to bargain on a revanchist alliance against

^a Nicholas I.—*Ed.*

^b Alexander II.—*Ed.*

Prussia, in just the same way as the German imperial bourgeois idolise that same Tsar as the protector of peace in Europe, i.e. of German-Prussian annexations. Only amongst the revolutionary workers do the Poles find sincere and unreserved support, because the two share the same interest in the overthrow of their common enemy, and because the liberation of Poland is synonymous with that overthrow.

But the activity of the Poles is confined to a particular locality. It is limited to Poland, Lithuania, and Little Russia; the actual core of the Russian Empire, Great Russia, remains practically untouched by their efforts. The forty million inhabitants of Great Russia constitute much too large a people and have had far too unique a development to force a movement on them from outside. That is not at all necessary, however. Of course, the mass of the Russian people, the peasants, have gone on for centuries, from generation to generation, living their dull, unimaginative lives in a sort of ahistorical torpor; and the only changes that occurred to interrupt this desolate condition were isolated and fruitless uprisings and new waves of repression carried out by nobility and government. The Russian government itself put an end to this ahistorical existence (in 1861) with the abolition of serfdom which could not be delayed any longer and the redemption of the *corvée*—a measure which was introduced with such amazing cunning that it is leading the majority of both the peasants and the nobility towards certain ruin. The very conditions themselves, therefore, which the Russian peasant is now obliged to face, force him into the movement, a movement which, of course, is still in its very initial stages, but which is bound to advance thanks to the daily worsening economic situation of the mass of the peasants. The rumbling dissatisfaction of the peasants is already a fact which must be acknowledged by the government, by all those who are disaffected, and by the opposition parties alike.

It follows from this that, if below the discussion centres on Russia, then what is meant is not the whole of the Russian Empire but Great Russia alone, i.e. the territory whose westernmost gubernias are Pskov and Smolensk, and whose southernmost gubernias are Kursk and Voronezh.

Written in the latter half of May 1875

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Printed according to the pamphlet, checked with the 1894 edition

Published in English for the first time

Frederick Engels

[LETTER TO THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION IN NEW YORK]

London, August 13, 1875
122 Regent's Park Road, NW

TO THE GENERAL COUNCIL
OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION

Citizens!

The circulars¹²² sent to me with the letter from Secretary Speyer (June 4, received 21st) have been put into circulation according to the instructions, and I have been able to do the following in the interests of the cause:

1. On account of its amalgamation with the Lasselleans and its over-generous policy in accepting new members—roughly 120—the Working Men's Society (German section) here¹²³ would not be suitable for *confidential* communications, unless one wished them to be *published immediately*. I therefore gave circulars to Lessner and Frankel, who agreed with me that the content was not suitable for official release to the Society, and that we should have to confine ourselves to communicating it to suitable persons, and work behind the scenes in other ways to promote the matter in question. Since it is fairly certain that no *German* workers will be sent to Philadelphia from here, it will not affect the practical consequences in any way.

2. Our friend Mesa from Madrid, who now lives in Paris, happened to be here when the circular arrived. He showed a keen interest in the matter; I translated the circular for him, and as he knows members of the committee that administers the subscriptions in Paris to the workers' donations to Philadelphia, I dare say that, with his well-known energy, he will be able to get something done. He is also sending it to Spain.

3. I could not send it to Belgium, as the whole Belgian International supports the Alliancists,¹²⁴ and it is not in our interests to communicate the plan to *them*. I have no addresses for

Portugal and Italy. The *Plebe* of Lodi has virtually joined the Alliancists and would be quite capable of publishing the story straightaway.^a

4. As Germany, Austria and Switzerland are not mentioned in the instructions, and the General Council has plenty of direct contacts with these countries,¹²⁵ I have taken *no* steps there, so as not to frustrate any action that may have been taken directly on the spot.

5. The circular has been very well received by all who have seen it, and the just proposal for a conference is universally regarded as the sole practical one. It appears impossible to us here, however, to hold a ballot on the issue. The Society here has already been mentioned. Other sections in England have all fizzled out; the best people have mostly left. In Denmark, France and Spain, where the International is officially prohibited, there can be no question of a ballot. In Germany there has never been a vote on anything like this and, after uniting with the Lassalleans, they have totally renounced the already loose connection with the International. In these circumstances, the American votes should be enough to cover the General Council if it tables the motion for a decision, especially since we know from a reliable source that the Alliancists are not holding a congress this year either (and probably never will again).

6. Would it not be a good thing if a brief announcement were placed in the European party newspapers around the time the exhibition opens, to the effect that: "Socialist workers visiting the exhibition in Philadelphia are asked to go to ... (address), where they will be put in touch with the Philadelphia party comrades", or if we founded a "committee for the accommodation of socialist workers, or to protect them against trickery" and published its address? The latter, in particular, would look very innocent, but a few private letters would suffice to make the true state of affairs known.

Fraternal greetings,

F. Engels

First published in *Briefe und Auszüge aus Briefen von Joh. Phil. Becher, Jos. Dietzgen, Friedrich Engels, Karl Marx u. A. an F. A. Sorge und Andere*, Stuttgart, 1906

Printed according to the manuscript

Published in English for the first time

^a See this volume, pp. 174-78.—Ed

Frederick Engels

[SPEECH AT THE MEETING HELD TO COMMEMORATE THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE POLISH UPRISING OF 1863]¹²⁶

Citizens! The role of Poland in the history of Europe's revolutions is a role that stands apart. Any revolution in the West which does not succeed in involving Poland and ensuring its independence and liberty is doomed to defeat. Let us take the revolution of 1848 as an example. It covered an area more extensive than any previous revolution; it swept along in its current Austria, Hungary, Prussia. But it came to a halt at the borders of Poland occupied by the armies of Russia. When Tsar Nicholas received the news of the February Revolution, he said to his entourage: Gentlemen, we shall mount our horses.¹²⁷ At this he promptly mobilised his troops and concentrated them in Poland, in order to let them overrun rebellious Europe at the opportune moment. For their part, the revolutionaries knew perfectly well that the ground where the decisive battle would be fought was Poland. On May 15 the people of Paris, to cries of "Long Live Poland!", invaded the National Assembly to force it to go to war for Polish independence. At the same time, in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, Marx and I demanded that Prussia should immediately declare war on Russia in order to set Poland free, and we were supported by all advanced democrats in Germany.¹²⁸ Thus in France and Germany they knew perfectly well where the decisive point was: with Poland, revolution was assured; without Poland, it was bound to fail. But in France M. Lamartine, in Prussia Frederick William IV, the Tsar's^a brother-in-law, and his bourgeois minister Mr. Camphausen, had no intention whatever of themselves breaking the power of Russia, in which they saw quite

^a Nicholas I.— Ed.

rightly their last safeguard against the revolutionary tide. Nicholas was able to do without getting on his horse; his troops, for the time being, could confine themselves to containing Poland and threatening Prussia, Austria and Hungary until the moment when the progress of the Hungarian insurgents threatened Austrian reaction, victorious in Vienna. This was when the Russian armies overran Hungary, and by crushing the Hungarian revolution ensured the victory of reaction throughout the West. Europe was at the Tsar's feet because Europe had abandoned Poland. In truth, Poland is not like any other country. As far as revolution is concerned, it is the keystone of the European edifice; whichever is able to hold its ground in Poland, revolution or reaction, will end up by dominating the whole of Europe. And it is this quite special character which gives to Poland the importance which it has for all revolutionaries and which elicits from us, to this day, the cry: "*Long Live Poland!*"

Speech delivered on January 22, 1876

First published in the newspaper *Bne-
peds!* (London), No. 27, February 15,
1876

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script, verified with the newspaper

Translated from the French

Published in English for the first
time

Frederick Engels

PRUSSIAN SCHNAPPS
IN THE GERMAN REICHSTAG ¹²⁹

Written in February 1876

First published in *Der Volksstaat*, Nos. 23,
24 and 25, February 25 and 27 and
March 1, 1876

Printed according to the news-
paper

Published in English for the first
time

I

On February 4, Mr. von Kardorff questioned the Imperial government about the high taxes imposed on German "*Sprit*"^a in England and Italy. He drew the attention of the honourable gentlemen to the fact that (as reported by the *Kölnische Zeitung*)^b

"in our eastern and northern provinces vast stretches of somewhat infertile, sterile land, covering hundreds of square miles, have, as a result of potato cultivation on a very large scale, successfully developed into arable land with a relatively high crop yield, and that the reason for growing potatoes here lies in turn in the fact that scattered throughout these regions are numerous distilleries where *Sprit* is manufactured as an agricultural side-line. Whereas in earlier times there used to be roughly 1,000 people to the square mile living in these parts, the land is now able to support roughly 3,000 people per square mile as a result of *Sprit* manufacture, because the distilleries provide an essential market for the potatoes which, on account of their bulk, are difficult to transport and cannot be transported at all in winter due to the frost. Secondly, the distilleries convert the potatoes into valuable and easily transportable alcohol, and, ultimately, make the land more fertile thanks to the numerous residues which can be used for fodder. Just how important the interests in question are, will be clear to anyone who considers that the taxation on spirits provides us with some 36 million marks of state revenue, despite the fact that Germany levies the lowest tax on spirits in the world, one fifth of that imposed in Russia, for example".

The Prussian Junkers must really have been getting above themselves recently, daring, as they have, to draw the attention of the world to their "*Sprit* industry", commonly known as schnapps distilling.

In the last century only small quantities of schnapps were distilled in Germany, and from grain only. Although they did not

^a Spirit.— Ed.

^b *Kölnische Zeitung*, No. 36, February 5, 1876 (in the section *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Reichstages*).— Ed.

know how to remove the fusel oil which the schnapps also contained (we shall be returning to this point later), as they were still completely ignorant of the fusel oil's existence; they did know from experience that the quality of the schnapps improved considerably after it was stored for some time, that it lost its burning taste, and that when consumed it was less intoxicating and less damaging to one's health. The petty-bourgeois conditions under which it was distilled at that time and the still undeveloped demand, which was more concerned with quality than quantity, made it possible almost everywhere to store the product in cellars for years, thus giving it a less harmful character as the more damaging constituent parts were converted in a gradual chemical process. At the end of the last century we thus find distilling being carried out on a fairly wide scale mainly restricted to a few towns—Münster, Ulrichstein, Nordhausen and others—and their products usually bearing the epithet "old".

About the beginning of this century the distilleries increased in number in the countryside as side-lines of the larger landed proprietors and tenants, especially in Hanover and Brunswick. They found a market, on the one hand, due to the steady increase in the consumption of schnapps, and, on the other hand, due to the needs of the ever-growing and ever-warring armies which, for their part, again carried the taste for schnapps constantly further afield. Thus after the peace of 1814¹³⁰ the distilling industry was able to extend further and further and, in the form already described, quite different from that of the old town distilleries, to gain a firm foothold as a side-line run by the managers of large estates on the Lower Rhine, Prussian Saxony, Brandenburg and Lusatia.

However, the turning-point for the distilling industry was the discovery that one could produce schnapps profitably not only from grain but also from *potatoes*. That revolutionised the whole industry. On the one hand, the main activity of the distilling industry shifted once and for all from the town to the countryside, and the petty-bourgeois producers of the good old drink were ousted more and more by the infamous producers of potato rot-gut, the big landowners. On the other hand, and this is historically of much greater significance, the big grain-distilling landowner was displaced by the big potato-distilling landowner; the distilling industry moved increasingly from the fertile grain-growing land to the infertile potato-growing land, in other words from North-West Germany to North-East Germany—to *Old Prussia* east of the Elbe.

This turning-point came at the time of the harvest failure and famine of 1816. Despite the improved harvests of the two succeeding years, grain prices remained so high as a consequence of the continuing export of grain to England and other countries that it became almost impossible to use grain for distilling purposes. A hogshead of schnapps, which had only cost 39 talers in 1813, was sold in 1817 for 70 talers. At this point potatoes replaced grain and in 1823 a hogshead of schnapps was to be had for as little as 14 to 17 talers!

How was it, then, that the poor Junkers from the east of the Elbe, allegedly totally ruined by the war and the sacrifices they had made for their fatherland, obtained the means with which to convert their pressing mortgage debts into lucrative schnapps distilleries? It is true that the favourable trading conditions of the years 1816 to 1819 brought them very good returns and increased their credit as a result of the generally rising price of land, but this was far from sufficient. On top of that our patriotic Junkers received, in the first instance, state aid in various direct and indirect forms, and, secondly, there was a further factor at work, to which we must devote our particular attention. It will be remembered that in Prussia in 1811 the commutation of statute labour, and the dispute between the peasants and the landlords in general, were settled in law in such a way that payment in kind could be transformed into money payment.^a This could be turned into capital and commuted either in cash in specific instalments, or by the peasant ceding a piece of land to the lord, or in a combination of cash and of land. This law remained a dead letter until the high grain prices of 1816 to 1819 put the peasants in a position to proceed with commutation. From 1819 onwards commutation went ahead rapidly in Brandenburg, more slowly in Pomerania, and slower still in Posen and Prussia. The money thus lawfully but unjustly misappropriated from the peasants (for they had had statute labour unjustly forced upon them), in so far as it was not immediately squandered according to traditional aristocratic custom, was employed mainly to finance the setting-up of distilleries. The distilling industry also expanded to the same extent in the three other provinces mentioned, as the peasants provided the financial means for it through the commutation of their statute labour. The schnapps industry of the Prussian

^a *Edikt die Regulirung der gutsherrlichen und bäuerlichen Verhältnisse betreffend, vom 14. September, 1811.* In: *Gesetz-Sammlung für die Königlichen Preussischen Staaten*, No. 21, Berlin, 1811.—*Ed*

Junkers was thus founded literally on the money taken from the peasants. And business boomed, particularly after 1825. Just two years later, in 1827, 125 million quarts of schnapps were distilled in Prussia, that is $10\frac{1}{2}$ quarts per head of the population, at an overall value of 15 million talers; in contrast to this, Hanover, fifteen years earlier Germany's first schnapps state, produced a mere 18 million quarts.

It will be evident that from now on the whole of Germany was caught in a veritable tidal wave of Prussian potato rot-gut, at least wherever the single states or customs unions of single states did not manage to stem the flow by raising customs barriers against it. Fourteen talers an awm consisting of 180 quarts, that is a quart for 2 groschen and 4 pfennigs on the wholesale market! Drunkenness, which previously had cost three and four times as much, was something available, day in day out, even to the very poorest now that a man could stay deeply under the influence for a whole week at a cost of 15 silver groschen.

The effects of these quite unprecedentedly low schnapps prices, which were felt at different places at different times but almost always completely without warning, were quite incredible. I can still well remember how, at the end of the twenties, the low cost of schnapps suddenly overtook the industrial area of the Lower Rhine and the Mark. In the Berg country particularly, and most notably in Elberfeld-Barmen, the mass of the working population fell victim to drink. From nine in the evening, in great crowds and arm in arm, taking up the whole width of the street, the "soused men" tottered their way, bawling discordantly, from one inn to the other and finally back home. Given the level of education of the workers at that time and the utter hopelessness of their situation, it was not surprising. Especially in blessed Wuppertal, where for sixty years one industry has given way to another, and where as a result one section of the workers was constantly oppressed if not unemployed, whilst another section (at that time the dye-workers) was well paid by the prevailing standards. And if, as was the case at that time, the workers of Wuppertal had only a choice between the earthly schnapps of the public houses and the divine schnapps of the pietistic priests—is it any wonder that they preferred the former, as bad as it was?

And it was very bad. It was sent out and drunk new, just as it emerged from the cooling apparatus, without further purification and containing all its fusel oils. All schnapps that is distilled from the husks of pressed grapes, from beet, grain or potatoes contains this fusel oil, which is a mixture of higher alcohols, i.e., of liquids

of a similar composition to that of ordinary alcohol but containing more carbon and hydrogen (including primary propyl alcohol, isobutyl alcohol, but overwhelmingly amyl alcohol). All these types of alcohol are more noxious than the normal spirits of wine (ethyl alcohol), and the dose required to produce a toxic effect is much lower than with the latter. Professor Binz at Bonn proved recently,^a after conducting numerous experiments, that the intoxicating effects of our alcoholic beverages, as well as the unpleasant after-effects they produce in the form of a laudable hangover or the more serious symptoms of illness and poisoning, are attributable much less to the usual spirits of wine, or ethyl alcohol, than to the higher alcohols, in other words fusel oil. Nor do they simply have a more intoxicating and more destructive effect, they also determine the nature of the intoxication. Everyone knows from his own observations, if not from experience, what the different effects on the brain are from getting drunk on wine (even different sorts of wine), on beer and on schnapps. The more fusel oil in the drink and the more unwholesome the composition of that fusel oil, the more excessive and wild the intoxication. But it is well known that of all distilled spirits new, unpurified potato schnapps contains the greatest quantity of fusel oil with the least favourable composition. The effect of such unusually large quantities of that drink on such an excitable and volatile population as that to be found in the Berg country was therefore just what one might have expected. The drunkenness proved to be of a totally different nature. That merry-making which previously ended in good-natured tipsiness and only seldom in excess, where of course it was then not uncommon for the knife to be involved, that kind of merry-making now degenerated into a riot and inevitably ended in a brawl, there never being any lack of knife wounds, and the fatal stabbings constantly increasing in their frequency. The priests put it down to increasing godlessness, the lawyers and other philistines to the dances held in public houses. The real cause was Prussian fusel oil flooding onto the scene, simply having its normal physiological effect and dispatching hundreds of poor souls off to prison, to work on fortress construction.

The acute effect of cheap schnapps continued to be felt for years, until it gradually more or less petered out. But its influence

^a See Carl Binz's speech on the intoxicating effect of alcoholic beverages, *Berliner klinische Wochenschrift*, No. 4, January 24, 1876 (in the section *Niederrheinische Gesellschaft in Bonn. Sitzung vom 3. Juni 1875*).—Ed.

on people's morals lingered on; for the working class schnapps was more of a need in life than it had been before, and its quality, even if it did improve a little, stayed well below that of the old grain spirit.

And what happened in the Berg country also happened elsewhere. At no time were the lamentations of the philistines about an increase in excessive schnapps consumption among the workers more widespread, more unanimous and more clamorous than during the period from 1825 to 1835. It is even open to question whether or not that state of dullness in which the North German workers passively witnessed the events of 1830, without being affected by them, was not due largely to schnapps, which at that time had them more than ever in its grip. Serious and especially successful uprisings occurred only in wine-producing regions, or in those German states which had more or less protected themselves against Prussian schnapps by means of tariffs.¹⁹¹ That was not the first time that schnapps had saved the Prussian state.

The only industry to have had more devastating direct effects—and even then not on its own people, but on foreigners—was the Anglo-Indian opium industry used to poison China.

In the meantime schnapps production continued on its merry way, expanding further and further eastwards, and forcing acre upon acre of the North-East German desert of sand and marshes to surrender to the potato. Not content with bestowing its favours on its own country, it strove to make the blessings of old-Prussian fusel oil available to foreign lands. Ordinary schnapps was distilled once more, so that part of the water contained in it could be removed, and the aqueous and impure spirit of wine thus obtained was called *Sprit*, which is the Prussian translation of the word *Spiritus*. The higher alcohols all have higher boiling points than ethyl alcohol. Whilst the latter boils at $78\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ on the centigrade thermometer, the boiling point of primary propyl alcohol is 97° , that of isobutyl alcohol 109° and that of amyl alcohol 132° . Now one would think that with careful distillation at least the major part of the latter, the main constituent of fusel oil, would be left behind along with a part of the isobutyl alcohol, and that at the very most a part of the latter would be distilled along with most of the primary propyl alcohol, which, however, is present in fusel oil in only very small quantities. But even the scientific chemists forgo using distillation to separate the three lower alcohols concerned here, and can only extract amyl alcohol from fusel oil by a process of fractionated distillation, which

cannot be applied in a distillery. As it is, distilling in a schnapps factory in the country is a pretty unsophisticated business. No wonder then that the *Sprit* produced at the beginning of the forties still contained considerable amounts of fusel oil, as anyone could easily tell by smelling it; pure or only aqueous spirit of wine is almost odourless.

This *Sprit* went mainly to Hamburg. What happened to it? Part went to countries which did not bar its entry by means of tariffs—Stettin was also involved in this export trade; but the major portion was used in Hamburg and Bremen for the adulteration of rum. Distilled in the West Indies partly from sugar cane itself, but mainly from the waste products of the cane during the sugar-making process, this was the only spirit still able to compete, because of its low production costs, with potato schnapps as a sort of luxury drink for the masses. Now to produce a "fine" but also cheap rum, they would take, for example, a barrel of really fine Jamaica rum, three to four barrels of cheap, bad Barbary rum and two to three barrels of Prussian potato *Sprit*—and this or a similar mixture produced the required result. This "poison", as merchants themselves involved in the adulteration have called it in my presence, was shipped to Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Russia. To a very significant extent, however, it also made its way up the Elbe or via Stettin to the regions from which the noble *Sprit* had originally come, and was partly drunk there as rum, and partly smuggled into Austria and Poland.

The Hamburg merchants did not stop at producing adulterated rum. It was their own peculiar kind of ingenuity which made them the first to see the world-shaking role that Prussian schnapps was destined to play in the future. They had already tried their hands at all sorts of other drinks, and even at the end of the thirties nobody in the North German territories outside Prussia who knew anything about wine would take French white wines from Hamburg, because it was generally claimed that they were sweetened there with lead acetate and thus contaminated. Nevertheless, potato *Sprit* soon became the basis for an ever-growing liquor adulteration business. Rum was followed by cognac, which required somewhat more skill in its treatment. Soon they began treating wine with *Sprit*, and finally they got round, without using any wine at all, to producing port and Spanish wines from *Sprit*, water and vegetable juices, which were often displaced by chemicals. Business flourished all the more when such practices were either directly forbidden in many countries, or came so close

to breaking the law that it was not considered advisable to try one's hand at them. But Hamburg was the centre of unrestricted free trade, and so "for Hamburg's health and happiness" they went on adulterating to their heart's content.

However, the adulteration business did not remain a monopoly for long. After the revolution of 1848, when in France the exclusive domination of big finance capital and a few prominent industrial magnates was temporarily replaced by the rule of the whole bourgeoisie, the French producers and traders began to realise what magic powers lay dormant in such a barrel of Prussian potato *Sprit*. They began to adulterate their cognac whilst it was still at home instead of sending it abroad in its pure state, and even more to ennoble the cognac (which is what, for the sake of brevity, I call all schnapps distilled from the husks of pressed grapes) intended for home consumption by adding considerable quantities of Prussian potato *Sprit*. This made cognac—the only spirit to be consumed on a large scale in France—significantly cheaper. The Second Empire supported this manoeuvre, of course, in the interests of the suffering masses, and thus we find on the fall of the Napoleonic dynasty that, thanks to the merciful effects of old Prussian schnapps, drunkenness, almost unknown there previously, had grown to significant proportions in France.

An unprecedented series of bad vintages and finally the commercial treaty of 1860, which opened up England to the French wine trade,¹³² gave rise to a new advance. The weak wines from bad years, whose acidity was not to be removed with sugar, needed to have alcohol added to them so that they would keep. They were therefore mixed with Prussian *Sprit*. Furthermore, the English palate was accustomed to strong wines—the natural French country wines, which were now sent for export in great quantities, were too weak and too cold for the English. What better to give them robustness and warmth than Prussian *Sprit*? Bordeaux increasingly became the centre for the adulteration of French, Spanish and Italian wines, which were transformed there into "fine Bordeaux", and—for the use of Prussian *Sprit*.

Indeed, Spanish and Italian wines. Since the consumption of French red wines—and no bourgeois will drink any other—has increased so enormously in England, North and South America, and the colonies, even the almost inexhaustible abundance of wines in France no longer suffices. Almost all the useful vintage from Northern Spain, including the whole of the vintage from Rioja in the Ebro valley, which is rich in wines, goes to Bordeaux. And Genoa, Leghorn and Naples send whole shiploads of wine to

the same place. Whilst Prussian *Sprit* makes these wines capable of withstanding transport by sea, the export trade forces up the price of wine in Spain and Italy to such an extent that it is way beyond the means of the working population, who used to drink it every day. In its place they drink schnapps, and the main ingredient of that schnapps is once again—Prussian potato *Sprit*. Indeed, Mr. von Kardorff complains in the Reichstag that in Italy this is not yet happening on a large enough scale.

Wherever we turn we find Prussian *Sprit*. Prussian *Sprit* extends incomparably further than the arm of the imperial German government. And wherever we find this *Sprit* it serves one main purpose—that of adulteration. It is used to make Southern European wines suitable for shipment and thus to deprive the indigenous working population of them. And just as Achilles' lance heals the wounds which it has made,¹³³ so Prussian *Sprit* at the same time offers the working classes who have been robbed of their wine a substitute in the form of adulterated schnapps! Potato *Sprit* is to Prussia what iron and cottons are to England, the article which represents her on the world market. The latest adept and, at the same time, regenerator of socialism, Mr. Eugen Dühring, may well therefore extol the virtues of distilling as “primarily a ... natural link (of industry) with agriculture”, and proclaim triumphantly:

“The production of spirits is of such significance that it will tend to be underrated rather than overrated!”^a

To be sure, the Prussian for “Anch'io son pittore” (I too am a painter, as Correggio said¹³⁴) is “I too am a schnapps distiller”.

However, we have by no means exhausted the wondrous exploits of Prussian potato schnapps.

“Whereas in earlier times,” says Mr. von Kardorff, “there used to be roughly 1,000 people to the square mile living in these parts, the land is now able to support roughly 3,000 people per square mile as a result of *Sprit* manufacture.”^b

And on the whole that is correct. I do not know what period Mr. von Kardorff refers to when he quotes the population as being a thousand per square mile. There must certainly have been such a period. If, however, we exclude the provinces of Saxony and Silesia, where distilling has a less conspicuous part to play

^a E. Dühring, *Cursus der National- und Socialökonomie*, Berlin, 1873, pp. 263-64.—*Ed.*

^b See this volume, p. 111.—*Ed.*

alongside other industries, and also Posen, the greater part of which frustrates all government efforts by continuing to display no especial desire to be anything other than Polish, then we are left with the three provinces of Brandenburg, Pomerania and Prussia. Together these three provinces cover a surface area of 2,415 square miles. In 1817 they had a total population of 3,479,825, or 1,441 per square mile; in 1871 it was 7,432,407, or 3,078 per square mile. We quite agree with Mr. von Kardorff in regarding the growth in population mainly as a consequence, direct or indirect, of schnapps distilling. If we add the Altmark, northern agricultural Lower Silesia, and the predominantly German part of Posen, where the population will have developed in a similar way, then we have the actual schnapps-producing area, and at one and the same time the *heart of the Prussian monarchy*. And this opens up an entirely new perspective. Distilling now reveals itself as being the real material basis of present-day Prussia. Without it the Prussian Junkers would have perished; their estates would have been bought up in part by large land magnates who would have formed a less numerous aristocracy along English lines¹⁸⁵; in part they would have been broken up and would have formed the basis for an independent peasantry. Without it the heart of Prussia would have remained a land with a population of about 2,000 inhabitants to the square mile, incapable of playing any part in history, either good or bad, until bourgeois industry developed sufficiently to rule the roost socially and perhaps politically here as well. Distilling has given a different turn to developments. On ground which produces practically nothing except potatoes and clod-hopping Junkers, and the latter en masse, it was able to defy the competition of the world. Favoured more and more by demand—for reasons already explained—it was able to elevate itself to the position of the world's central schnapps-producing factory. Under the prevailing social relations, this meant nothing other than the development, on the one hand, of a class of medium-size landowners whose younger sons provided the main material for the army officers and for the bureaucracy, i.e., a new lease of life for the Junkers, and, on the other hand, the development of a relatively rapidly growing class of semi-bondsmen, from which the mass of the "core regiments" of the army are recruited. If anyone is interested in the situation of this mass of workers, who are free in name, but for the most part kept almost completely in bondage to the squire by means of annual contracts, through payments in kind, through housing conditions, and finally by the manorial police, which with the

advent of the new district regulations¹³⁶ only assumed a different form, he can consult the writings of Professor von der Goltz.¹³⁷ In short, then, the question is: What was it that enabled Prussia more or less to digest the morsels west of the Elbe that it swallowed in 1815,¹³⁸ to stifle the revolution in Berlin in 1848, to assume the leadership of German reaction in 1849 despite the uprisings in Rhenish Westphalia,¹³⁹ to wage war with Austria in 1866, and in 1871 to get the whole of Little Germany¹⁴⁰ to accept the leadership of this most backward, most stable, least educated, still semi-feudal part of Germany? It was the distilling of schnapps.

II

Meanwhile let us return to the Reichstag.^a The protagonists in the debate are Mr. von Kardorff, Mr. von Delbrück and the Hamburg representative in the Federal Council¹⁴¹ Krüger.^b Listening to this debate, it seems almost as if we are doing a shameful wrong to Prussian potato spirits. It is not Prussian but rather Russian *Sprit* which is causing all the trouble. Mr. von Kardorff complains that Hamburg industrialists are converting Russian schnapps (which, as Mr. Krüger expressly emphasises, is distilled from *grain*, not potatoes) into *Sprit*, "sending it out as German *Sprit*, and thus damaging the reputation of German *Sprit*". Mr. Delbrück "has been told that passing it off as *Sprit* in this way would involve great difficulties, since as yet no one has succeeded in producing *odourless Sprit* from Russian schnapps as has been done with German schnapps". However, he added cautiously: "Of course, gentlemen, I am in no position to judge."

So, it is not Prussian potato spirit but Russian grain spirit which is causing all the trouble. Prussian potato *Sprit* is "odourless", i.e. free from fusel oil; no one has as yet managed to produce an odourless Russian *Sprit* from grain, and it therefore contains fusel oil, and if it is sold as Prussian *Sprit*, then it detracts from the reputation that the latter has as being free from fusel oil. If we accept this, however, then we have, in a roguish and most disloyal

^a See this volume, p. 111.—*Ed*

^b See the speeches made by W. von Kardorff, M. F. R. von Delbrück and D. Ch. F. Krüger in the German Reichstag on February 4, 1876, *Kölnische Zeitung*, No. 36, February 5, 1876 (in the section *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Reichstages*).—*Ed*

manner, slandered Prussian *Sprit*, free from fusel oil as it is. Let us examine the position as it really is.

Indeed a process exists for removing fusel oil from schnapps by treating it with red-hot charcoal. As a consequence of this the *Sprit* which has come onto the market recently has generally contained less fusel oil. However, there is the following difference between the two kinds of *Sprit* that we are concerned with here: grain spirit can be freed of fusel oil *completely* without any great effort, whilst, on the other hand, removing fusel oil from potato *Sprit* is a much more difficult process, and is actually impossible in large-scale production, so that even the purest spirit distilled from potato schnapps always leaves behind a smell of fusel oil when rubbed onto the hand. Therefore it is a rule that only spirit distilled from grain is used by dispensing chemists and in the making of fine liqueurs, and never *Sprit* distilled from potatoes, or at least this should be the case (for adulteration takes place here too!).

And a few days after the *Kölnische Zeitung* reported on the above schnapps debate it carried (February 8, first page) in its miscellaneous reports the following plaintive cry from a tippler on the Rhine:

"It would be particularly desirable now to prove that *potato Sprit* is being added to weak wine as well. A disconcerting dazed feeling in the head afterwards does indeed point to it, too late however. Potato *Sprit* still has fusel oil in it, the otherwise unpleasant smell of which is concealed by the wine's own particular taste. This kind of adulteration is among the most common."^a

Finally, in order to pacify the old-Prussian schnapps distillers, Mr. Krüger lets the doubtful fact be known that Russian spirit distilled from grain is fetching *four marks more* on the Hamburg market than Prussian potato *Sprit*. On February 7 the latter was quoted in Hamburg at 35 marks for 100 litres, and that means that Russian spirit fetches a price which is 12% better than that paid for Prussian *Sprit*, the reputation of which it is allegedly damaging!

And now, after hearing all these facts, look at the expression of injured innocence of this maligned, "odourless", reputation-conscious and virtuous Prussian product, allegedly so completely free of fusel oil, and which costs only 35 pfennigs a litre, cheaper than beer! If one examines that debate in the light of these facts,

^a *Kölnische Zeitung*, No. 39, February 8, 1876 (in the section *Vermischte Nachrichten*).—Ed.

is one not tempted to ask: Just exactly who is making a fool of whom?

The benign influence of Prussian fusel oil is world-embracing, for it finds its way, with potato *Sprit*, into every kind of drink. From the sour, weak and badly seasoned Mosel wine and Rhine wine, which is magically transformed with the aid of potato sugar and potato *Sprit* into Brauneberger and Niersteiner, from the bad red wine which has been flooding England since Gladstone's commercial treaty,¹⁴² and which is called "Gladstone" there, to the Château Lafitte and champagne, port and Madeira, which the bourgeois drink in India, China, Australia and America, there is not a drink in whose composition Prussian fusel oil does not play a part. The production of these drinks is flourishing wherever wine is grown and wherever wine is stored in great quantities, and the producers hail potato *Sprit* with dithyrambic shouts of joy. But what about the consumers? Well, the consumers become aware of it when they suffer that "disconcerting dazed feeling in the head", which is how fusel oil confers its blessings on one, and they try to avoid suffering its blessings. In Italy, as Mr. von Kardorff says, the commercial treaty¹⁴³ is applied in such a way as to make Prussian *Sprit* pay far too high a tariff. Belgium, America and England make it impossible to export *Sprit* to them by levying high tariffs. In France the customs officials stick red labels on barrels of *Sprit*, so as to distinguish them as Prussian—which is really quite the first time that the French customs officials have done anything beneficial to the community! In short, things have gone so far that Mr. von Kardorff cries out in desperation:

"Gentlemen, if you visualise the position of the German *Sprit* industry you will find that all countries are closing their borders to our *Sprit* in the greatest of fear!"

Naturally enough. The gracious effects of this *Sprit* have gradually become known the world over, and the only way to avoid that "disconcerting dazed feeling in the head" is not to allow the confounded rot-gut into the country in the first place.

And now, on top of this, a storm cloud is rising from the East, heavy and moist, above the heads of the hard-pressed schnapps Junkers. Their big brother in Russia, the last refuge of all time-honoured institutions for combatting modern destructive mania, has also begun to distill schnapps and to export it, and it is grain schnapps, and, what is more, he is supplying it just as cheaply as the Prussian Junkers their potato schnapps. The production and export of this Russian schnapps is increasing year by year, and, though it may so far have been purified into *Sprit* in Hamburg, Mr. Delbrück now tells us that

"in the Russian ports ... already in the process of being constructed are a number of plants, equipped with first-rate apparatus for the purification of Russian schnapps",^a

and he tells the Junker gentlemen to expect Russian competition to outstrip them with every passing year. Mr. von Kardorff is only too well aware of this and he demands that the government forbid the transporting of Russian spirits across Germany forthwith.

As a free conservative member of parliament, Mr. von Kardorff really ought to be in a better position to appreciate the attitude of the German imperial government with respect to Russia. After the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, and the scandalous war reparations of five thousand million,¹⁴⁴ as a result of which France was bound to become an ally of *each and every* enemy of Germany, and given the policy of seeking to be respected, or rather feared, but never looked on with affection by others, there remained only *one* choice: either quickly to defeat Russia as well, or to secure the alliance with Russia (in as much as Russia can be depended upon) by becoming the obedient servant of Russian diplomacy. As they were unable to decide in favour of the first alternative, they were obliged to choose the second. Prussia, and with it the empire, is once more as dependent on Russia as it was after 1815 and 1850; and just as in 1815 the "Holy Alliance"¹⁴⁵ serves as the cloak for this dependence. The result of all those glorious victories is that Germany continues, as before, to be the fifth wheel on the coach of Europe. And then Bismarck is surprised that the German public should continue to be concerned about affairs abroad where the really crucial decisions are being taken, instead of being concerned about the doings of the imperial government, which is of no consequence in Europe, and about the speeches in the Reichstag, which is of no consequence in Germany! Forbid the transporting of Russian *Sprit* across Germany! I should like to see the Imperial Chancellor who would dare such a thing without at the same time having a declaration of war against Russia safely in his pocket! And with Mr. von Kardorff making such a curious demand of the imperial government one might almost be led to believe that not only *drinking* schnapps but even the very act of *distilling* it was sufficient to cloud the mind. For indeed more famous distillers of schnapps than Mr. von Kardorff have lately made up their minds to do things for which, from their own point of view, there has been absolutely no rational explanation.

^a See this volume, p. 122.—Ed.

For the rest, nothing is easier to understand than the fact that the Russian competition should be filling our schnapps Junkers with an uncanny feeling of dread. In the interior of Russia there are great tracts of land where grain is to be had just as cheaply as potatoes are in Prussia. In addition to that, fuel is mostly cheaper in Russia than in our distilling districts. All the necessary material conditions are on hand. Small wonder then that a section of the Russian nobility should do just as the Prussian Junkers do and invest in distilleries the money advanced by the state as credit to the peasants for commutation of statute labour. Nor is it any wonder that these distilleries should spread rapidly, given the constantly growing market and the preference that there will be for schnapps distilled from grain costing the same or slightly more than schnapps distilled from potatoes, and that even now the time can be envisaged when their product pushes Prussian potato *Sprit* off the market completely. Complaining and moaning will be to no avail. The laws of capitalist production, as long as it continues to exist, are just as unrelenting for Junkers as for Jews. Thanks to the Russian competition, the day is fast approaching when Holy Ilion will collapse, when the glorious Prussian schnapps industry will vanish from the world market and continue at most to befuddle the home market. But on the day that the distiller's helmet is wrested from the Prussian Junkers and they are left only with their coats of arms or at most their army helmets, on that day Prussia is finished. Irrespective of the course that world history might otherwise take, and disregarding the possibility, probability or even inevitability of fresh wars or upheavals—the competition from Russian schnapps alone is bound to ruin Prussia by destroying the industry which keeps the agriculture of the eastern provinces at its present level of development. In so doing, it also destroys the conditions essential for the life of the Junkers east of the Elbe and of their 3,000 bondsmen to the square mile; and in doing that, it destroys the basis of the Prussian state: the material that goes to make up the officers as well as the non-commissioned officers and the soldiers who obey their orders whatever happens, and in addition to that the material that goes to make up the core of the bureaucracy, the material that stamps its specific character on present-day Prussia. With the collapse of schnapps distilling, Prussian militarism collapses, and without it Prussia is nothing. Then those eastern provinces will sink back into that station in Germany that befits them in accordance with their low population density, their industry, which is enslaved to agriculture, their semi-feudal conditions, and their lack of bourgeois development

and general culture. Then, relieved of the pressure of this semi-medieval rule, the remaining regions of the German Empire will heave a sigh of relief and assume the position befitting them in accordance with their industrial development and more advanced culture. The eastern provinces themselves will seek out other industries, less dependent on agriculture and conceding less ground to the feudal mode of production, and in the intervening period they will place their army at the disposal not of the Prussian state but of Social-Democracy. The rest of the world will rejoice to see the end at last of Prussian fusel-oil poisoning; but the Prussian Junkers and the Prussian state, then at last "dissolved into Germany",^a will have to console themselves with the words of the poet:

Surviving immortal in song,
In life it must perish.^b

^a Frederick William IV, "An mein Volk und die deutsche Nation, am 21. März 1848". In: *Reden, Proklamationen, Botschaften, Erlasse und Ordres*, Berlin, 1851, p. 10.— *Ed.*

^b F. Schiller, *Die Götter Griechenlands*.— *Ed.*

Frederick Engels

WILHELM WOLFF ¹⁴⁶

Written between June and September
1876

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time

If I am not mistaken it was towards the end of April 1846. Marx and I were then living in a Brussels suburb; we were engaged in a joint piece of work^a when we were informed that a gentleman from Germany wished to speak to us. We found a short but very stockily built man; the expression on his face proclaimed both goodwill and quiet determination; the figure of an East German peasant in the traditional clothes of an East German provincial bourgeois. It was Wilhelm Wolff. Persecuted for infringing the press laws,¹⁴⁷ he had been fortunate enough to evade the Prussian prisons. We did not suspect at first sight what a rare man lay concealed under this inconspicuous exterior. A few days were enough to put us on terms of cordial friendship with this new comrade in exile and to convince us that it was no ordinary man we were dealing with. His cultured mind schooled in classical antiquity, his wealth of humour, his clear understanding of difficult theoretical problems, his passionate hatred of all oppressors of the masses, his energetic and yet tranquil nature soon revealed themselves; but it took long years of collaboration and friendly association in struggle, victory and defeat, in good times and bad, to prove the full extent of his unshakable strength of character, his absolute, unquestionable reliability, his steadfast sense of duty equally exacting towards friend, foe and self.

^a K. Marx and F. Engels, *The German Ideology*.—Ed.

1

Wilhelm Wolff was born on June 21, 1809 in Tarnau, near Frankenstein in Silesia. His father was an hereditary serf and also kept the court *kretscham* (the inn—Polish *karczma*—where the village assizes took place), which did not save him from having to perform statute labour with his wife and children for his worthy lord. Wilhelm was thus not only familiar with the frightful plight of the East German bondsmen from early childhood, but also suffered it himself. But he learnt more besides. His mother, of whom he always spoke with particular affection and who possessed an education unusual for her station, roused and nursed in him anger at the shameless exploitation and disgraceful treatment of the peasants by the feudal lords. And we shall see how this anger fermented and seethed in him all his life when we reach the period when he was finally able to give vent to it in public. This peasant lad's talents and lust for knowledge soon attracted attention; if possible he was to go to grammar school, but what obstacles there were to be surmounted before this could be achieved! Quite apart from financial difficulties there was the worthy lord and his steward, without whom nothing could be done. Although serfdom had been abolished in name in 1810,¹⁴⁸ feudal tributes, statute labour, patrimonial jurisdiction and the manorial police remained in existence, thus preserving serfdom in practice. And the worthy lord and his officials were far more inclined to make peasant lads into swineherds than students. However, all barriers were successfully negotiated. Wolff gained admission to the grammar school at Schweidnitz and then went to university in Breslau. At both of these institutions he had to earn the greater part of his living by giving private lessons. At

university he preferred to devote his energies to classical philology; but he was not one of those hair-splitting philologists of the old school; the great poets and prosaists of the Greeks and Romans were received by him with genuine understanding and remained his favourite reading as long as he lived.

He had almost concluded his university studies when the persecution of the Demagogues¹⁴⁹ by the Federal Diet¹⁵⁰ and the Austrian and Prussian governments, which had died down in the twenties, was resumed. A member of the Students' Association,¹⁵¹ he too was arrested in 1834, dragged from prison to prison for years while inquiries proceeded, and finally sentenced. For what? I do not think that he ever found it worth the trouble of saying. Suffice it to say that he was taken to the fortress at Silberberg. There he found comrades in suffering, Fritz Reuter among others. A few months before Wolff's death, the latter's *Ut mine Festungstid* came into his hands, and no sooner had he discovered the author to be his old fellow-sufferer than he sent news to him through the publisher.¹⁵² Reuter answered him straightaway in a long and very friendly letter, which I have here in front of me and which proves that on January 12, 1864, at least, the old Demagogue was certainly not the kind of man to knuckle under meekly:

"I've been sitting here now for nearly thirty years," he writes, "until my hair has turned grey, waiting for a thorough-going revolution, documenting the people's will energetically once and for all, but to what avail? ... If only the Prussian people would at least refuse to pay taxes; it is the only means of getting rid of Bismarck and Co. and worrying the old king to death."¹⁵³

At Silberberg Wolff experienced the many sufferings and few joys of the incarcerated Demagogues which Fritz Reuter has described so vividly and with such humour in the above book. It was pitiful compensation for the damp casemates and bitterly cold winters that the old cliffside castle had a garrison of old invalids, so-called *Garnisöner*, who were not unduly harsh and were sometimes approachable at the price of a schnapps or a four groschen piece. Be that as it may, by 1839 Wolff's health had suffered so much that he was pardoned.¹⁵⁴

He went to Breslau and tried to make his way as a teacher. But he had reckoned without his host, and his host was the Prussian government. Interrupted in the middle of his studies by his arrest, he had not been able to complete the prescribed three years at the university, let alone take his examinations. And in Prussian China only someone who had done all this in accordance with the rules and regulations was considered to be a competent scholar. Anyone

else, however learned he might be in his field, as Wolff was in classical philology, was outside the guild and prevented from making public use of his knowledge. There remained the prospect of struggling through as a private tutor. But a government permit was needed for that, and when Wolff applied for one it was *denied* him. The Demagogue would have had to starve to death or return to do statute labour in his native village if there had been no Poles in Prussia. A landowner from Posen^a took him on as a domestic tutor; he spent several years here, of which he always spoke with particular pleasure.¹⁵⁵

Having returned to Breslau, after much tribulation and contention he finally obtained the permission of a highly esteemed royal government to give private lessons, and could now at least earn a modest living. Being a man of very few needs, he did not ask for more. This was when he resumed the struggle against the prevailing oppression, as far as this was possible under the dreadful conditions of the time. He had to restrict himself to bringing to public attention isolated instances of the despotism of civil servants, landowners and manufacturers, and even then encountered obstacles with the censors. But he refused to be diverted from his purpose. The newly established High Court of Censorship had no more regular and persistent client than Wolff, the private tutor from Breslau. Nothing afforded him greater pleasure than to dupe the censors, which, given the stupidity of most of them, was not all that difficult as soon as one became somewhat familiar with their weak spots. Thus it was he who scandalised pious spirits to the limit by discovering the following popular "song" of the repentant sinner in an old hymn book which was still in use in some places, and publishing it in the Silesian local newspapers:

I really am a gallows-bird,
One of the truly bad ones,
And gobble up my sins unheard
As Russians eat up onions.

A cringing dog, I pray to Thee,
Lord, cast the bone of grace to me,
Do take me by the ear and throw
Me to Thy Heaven, though I be low.^b

This song spread throughout Germany like wildfire, provoking the resounding laughter of the godless and the indignation of

^a Tytus Adam Działyński.— *Ed.*

^b *Gesangbuch*. See *Schlesische Provinzial-Blätter*, Breslau, Vol. 112, 1840.— *Ed.*

those "that are quiet in the land".¹⁵⁶ The censor received a harsh reprimand, and the government once again began to keep a watchful eye on this private tutor Wolff, this turbulent hare-brain whom five years' fortress had failed to tame. And it was not long before another pretext was found to put him on trial. After all, the old Prussian legislation¹⁵⁷ was spread out over the country like an ingeniously contrived system of traps, snares, pitfalls and nets which not even loyal subjects could always avoid, while the disloyal ones were all the more certain to get caught in them.

The press offence with which Wolff was charged at the end of 1845 or early 1846 was so trifling that none of us can now recall the exact circumstances.¹⁵⁸ But the persecution attained such dimensions that Wolff, who had had quite enough of Prussian prisons and fortresses, evaded imminent arrest by leaving for Mecklenburg.* Here he found a safe refuge amongst friends until his unimpeded passage from Hamburg to London could be arranged. In London, where he participated for the first time in a public association—the still existing German Communist Workers' Educational Society¹⁶⁰—he did not remain long but then came, as we have already related, to Brussels.

* According to Wermuth-Stieber: *Die Communisten-Verschwörungen des 19. Jahrhunderts*, II, p. 141,¹⁵⁹ Wolff was sentenced to three months' confinement in a fortress by the Breslau Supreme Court in 1846 for "offences against the press laws". [Added by Engels in 1886.]

II

In Brussels he soon found employment in a correspondence agency¹⁶¹ which had been set up there, supplying German newspapers with French, English and Belgian news, edited, as far as circumstances permitted, along Social-Democratic lines. When the *Deutsche-Brüsseler-Zeitung* placed itself at the disposal of our party Wolff worked for that too. In the Brussels German Workers' Society,¹⁶² which was founded by us at this time, Wolff was soon among the favourite speakers. He would give a weekly survey of current events which was always a masterpiece of popular presentation, both humorous and powerful, in which he castigated in particular, and quite rightly, the pettiness and meanness of both masters and subjects in Germany. These political surveys were such a favourite theme of his that he would deliver them to any society in which he took part, and always with the same mastery of popular presentation.

The February Revolution broke out and found an immediate response in Brussels. Every evening crowds of people gathered in the Great Market place in front of the City Hall, which was occupied by the civil guard and gendarmerie; the numerous public houses around the market place were packed. People were shouting, "Vive la République!", and singing the *Marseillaise*,^a pushing and shoving and being shoved back. The government was apparently keeping as quiet as a mouse, but called up the reserves and men on leave in the provinces. It had the most respected Belgian republican, Mr. Jottrand, secretly informed that the King^b

^a Claude Joseph Rouget de Lisle, *Chant de guerre de l'armée du Rhin (Marseillaise)*.—Ed

^b Leopold I.—Ed

was prepared to abdicate should the people so wish, and that he could hear this from the King himself as soon as he liked. Jottrand was in fact told by Leopold that he was himself a republican at heart and would never stand in the way if Belgium should wish to constitute itself a republic; his only wish was that everything should take place properly and without bloodshed, and he hoped incidentally to receive a decent pension. The news was swiftly and secretly put out and had such a soothing effect that no attempt at insurrection was made. But scarcely were the reserves gathered together and the majority of troops concentrated around Brussels—three or four days were enough in that tiny country—when there was no more talk of abdication; suddenly one evening the gendarmerie went into action with the flats of their swords against the crowds in the market place, and arrests were made right, left and centre. Among the first to be beaten and arrested was Wolff, who had been quietly proceeding home. Dragged into the City Hall, he was given a further beating by the raging and drunken city militia, and, after several days' imprisonment, dispatched over the border to France.

He did not stay long in Paris. The March Revolution in Berlin and the preparations for the Frankfurt Parliament and the Berlin Assembly prompted him first to go to Silesia to campaign for radical elections there.¹⁶³ As soon as we had started a newspaper, whether in Cologne or in Berlin, he wanted to join us. His general popularity and his powerful vernacular eloquence succeeded in getting radical candidates elected, particularly in the rural constituencies, who without him would not have stood a chance.

In the meanwhile the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* appeared on June 1 in Cologne, with Marx as editor-in-chief, and Wolff soon came to take over his duties on the editorial board.¹⁶⁴ His inexhaustible energy, his scrupulous, unswerving conscientiousness had the drawback for him that the young people, of whom the entire editorial board consisted, sometimes took an extra break in the certitude that "Lupus^a will see that the paper comes out", and I cannot claim to have been wholly innocent of this myself. Thus it was that in the early days of the paper Wolff had less to do with leading articles than with the day-to-day jobs. But he soon found a way of turning these, too, into an independent activity. Under the regular heading "Aus dem Reich" the news from the small states of Germany was assembled; the small-state and small-town narrow-mindedness and philistinism of both the rulers and the

^a Nickname of Wilhelm Wolff (Latin *Lupus* means "wolf").—Ed.

ruled were treated with incomparable humour. At the same time he gave his survey of current events in the Democratic Society¹⁶⁵ every week, which soon made him one of the most popular and effective speakers here too.

The stupidity and cowardice of the bourgeoisie, which had been rising ever higher since the June battle in Paris,¹⁶⁶ had again allowed reaction to summon up its strength. The camarillas of Vienna, Berlin, Munich, etc., were working hand in hand with the noble Imperial Regent^a and behind the scenes was Russian diplomacy, pulling the strings on which these puppets danced. Now, in September 1848, the moment for action was approaching for these gentlemen. Under direct and indirect Russian pressure (conveyed by Lord Palmerston) the first Schleswig-Holstein campaign was decided by the ignominious Malmö ceasefire. The Frankfurt Parliament stooped so far as to ratify it, thus publicly and unquestionably renouncing the revolution. The Frankfurt uprising of September 18 was the response; it was put down.¹⁶⁷ Almost simultaneously the crisis between the Constitutional Agreement Assembly¹⁶⁸ and the Crown had broken out. On August 9, the Assembly had requested the government in an extremely mild, indeed timid resolution to be so good as to do something to prevent the reactionary officers from indulging in their shameless conduct so publicly and offensively.¹⁶⁹ When it demanded in September that this resolution be put into effect, the response was the appointment of the openly reactionary Pfuël ministry with a general at its head (September 19) and the appointment of the notorious Wrangel as Supreme General of Brandenburg: two broad hints to the Berlin Agreers either to go down on their knees or to expect a rude dispersal. General excitement set in. In Cologne, too, public meetings were held and a Committee of Public Safety appointed.¹⁷⁰ The government decided to deliver the first blow in Cologne. Consequently on the morning of September 25, a number of democrats were arrested, including the present Mayor,^b then generally known as "Red Becker".^c The excitement mounted. In the afternoon a public meeting was held on the Altenmarkt. Wolff presided. The civic militia were formed up on all sides, not objecting to the democratic movement but giving first priority to their own welfare. In response to an inquiry, they stated that they were there to protect the public. Suddenly people crowded into the market place with the cry: "The Prussians are coming!" Joseph Moll, also arrested

^a Archduke John.—*Ed.*

^b In the 1886 edition: "the recently deceased, subsequent Mayor".—*Ed.*

^c Hermann Heinrich Becker.—*Ed.*

the same morning but freed by the people, who was then speaking, shouted: "Citizens, do you intend to run away from the Prussians?" "No, no!" was the answer. "Then we must build barricades!" and they set to work at once.—The outcome of the day of barricades in Cologne is well known. Provoked by a false alarm, without encountering any resistance, without any arms—the civic militia went prudently home—the whole movement came, quite bloodlessly, to nothing; the government achieved its purpose: Cologne was declared in a state of siege, the civic militia disarmed, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* banned and its editorial staff compelled to go abroad.

III

The state of siege in Cologne was short-lived. It ended on October 4. On the 12th the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* resumed publication.¹⁷¹ Wolff had gone to Dürrkheim in the Palatinate where he was left in peace. There was a warrant out for his arrest as for several others of the editorial staff, for conspiracy, etc.; but our Wolff did not bide long in the Palatinate, and when the grape harvest was over he suddenly turned up in the editorial office again, 17 Unter Hutmacher. He managed to find rooms next door, from where he was able to cross the yard into the office without setting foot in the street. However, he soon tired of captivity; disguised in a long overcoat and a cap with a long peak, he sallied out into the darkness nearly every evening on the pretext of buying tobacco. He believed that no one recognised him, although his curiously gnarled figure and determined gait were absolutely unconcealable; anyway he was not betrayed. Thus he lived for several months while the warrants out for the rest of us were gradually lifted. Finally on March 1, 1849 we were informed that there was no longer any danger, and Wolff now went before the examining magistrate, who also declared that, being based on exaggerated police reports, the whole case had been dropped.¹⁷²

Meanwhile the Berlin Assembly had been sent packing and Manteuffel's period of reaction had set in.¹⁷³ One of the first measures of the new government was to reassure the feudal lords of the Eastern Provinces regarding their disputed right to unpaid peasant labour. After the March days the peasants of the Eastern Provinces had ceased to perform statute labour, and in places even forced the worthy lords to give them a written disclaimer

concerning such labour. It was thus merely a matter of declaring this existing state of affairs legal, and the long oppressed peasant east of the Elbe would be a free man at last. But the Berlin Assembly, a full 59 years after August 4, 1789, when the French National Assembly had abolished *all* feudal burdens without compensation, had still not been able to summon up the courage to take the same step. It somewhat eased the terms for the commutation of statute labour; but only a few of the most scandalous and infuriating feudal rights were to be abolished without compensation. Yet before this Bill¹⁷⁴ was finally passed the Assembly was broken up, and Mr. Manteuffel declared that *this* Bill would not be passed into law by the government.^a This destroyed the hopes of the Old Prussian peasants subject to statute labour, and the need now was to influence them by explaining to them the position they were facing. And Wolff was just the man for this. Not only was he the son of a bondsman and had himself been forced to do statute labour as a child; not only had he retained the full fervour of his hatred towards the feudal oppressors which this childhood had aroused in him; no one knew the feudal method of enslavement so well in all its details as he did, and this in the very province that provided a complete pattern-card of all its manifold forms—Silesia.^b

^a [Declaration of the Prussian ministry regarding "Entwurf eines Gesetzes betreffend die unentgeltliche Aufhebung verschiedener Lasten und Abgaben vom 10. Juli 1848."] *Preussischer Staats-Anzeiger*, No. 223, December 13, 1848 (in the section *Nichtamtlicher Theil, Deutschland. Preußen*).—Ed.

^b In place of the following text, up to "Few of the many inflammatory articles in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*..." (see this volume, p. 146), Engels wrote in 1886: "Thus Wolff opened the campaign against the feudal lords, which culminated in the *Silesian Milliard* and to which I refer below. It was a campaign which by right ought to have been waged by the bourgeoisie. It was, after all, precisely the struggle against feudalism that was the mission of this class in world history. But as we have seen, it failed to wage it, or only pretended to do so. Thanks to the social and political backwardness of Germany, the German bourgeoisie everywhere left its own political interests in the lurch, because the proletariat was already looming up behind it. The vague hopes and desires of the Parisian workers in February, but even more their four-day battle of desperation in June 1848, terrified not only the bourgeoisie of France but of all Europe. And in Germany even simple democratic demands, such as they had themselves long since carried out legally in Switzerland, seemed to the quaking bourgeois to be attacks on their property, their security, their lives, etc. As cowardly as ever, the German bourgeois sacrificed their common, i.e., political interests so that each might save his private interest, his capital. Rather a return to the old bureaucratic-feudal absolutism than a victory of the bourgeoisie as a class, than a modern bourgeois state attained in a revolutionary way and strengthening the revolutionary class, the proletariat! That was the German bourgeoisie's cry of anguish, in the midst of which reaction triumphed all along the line."

In the issue of December 17, 1848 he opened the campaign in an article on the above-mentioned statement by the ministry.^a On December 29 there followed a second, more blunt one on the imposed "Decree concerning the interim settlement of seigniorial-peasant relations in Silesia".^b

This decree, says Wolff,

"is an invitation to our lords the princes, counts, barons, etc., to make haste 'in the interim' to rob and plunder the rural population under the semblance of law to an extent that will enable them, after this fat year, to survive the lean ones all the more easily. Before March Silesia was the promised land of the worthy landowners. By the redemption laws since 1821¹⁷⁵ the feudal Junkers had made themselves as comfortable as they conceivably could. As a result of the redemptions, which were always and everywhere passed and put into effect for the benefit of the privileged and the ruination of the rural people, the Silesian Junkers had obtained the tidy sum of about 80 millions in hard cash, arable land, and interest from the hands of the rural population. And the redemptions were still far from being completed. Hence their rage at the godless revolution of 1848. The country people refused to go on doing statute labour for the worthy lords like docile cattle, and to go on paying the terrible impositions, interest and dues of all kinds. The amounts of money flowing into the coffers of the landowners underwent a serious decline."

The Berlin Assembly took the settlement of these relations in hand.

"There was danger in delay. This was understood by the camarilla of Potsdam, which is equally adept at filling its money-bags from the sweat and blood of the country folk. So, away with the Assembly! Let us make the laws ourselves as they seem most lucrative to us!—And so it happened. The decree for Silesia published in the *Staats-Anzeiger* is nothing but an entangled snare with all the trimmings, in which the rural population, should it once venture in, will be irrevocably lost."

Wolff then demonstrates that the decree essentially marks the restoration of the pre-March conditions, concluding:

"Only what's the use? The worthy lords need money. Winter is here with its balls, masquerades, enticing gambling-tables, etc. The peasants who have furnished the funds for amusement hitherto, must go on supplying them. The Junkers wish to enjoy at least one more merry carnival and exploit the November achievements

"Thus the party of the proletariat had to take up the struggle at the point where the bourgeoisie had absconded from the battlefield. And Wolff took up the struggle against feudalism in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. But not in such a way as to afford the bourgeois any joy, no, in truly revolutionary fashion, in such a manner that the bourgeoisie was just as appalled at these articles exhaling the spirit of the great French Revolution as the feudal lords and the government themselves."—*Ed.*

^a See Wolff's article on Manteuffel's statement against the abolition of feudal duties, *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, No. 171, December 17, 1848 (in the section *Deutschland. Köln*).—*Ed.*

^b Here and below Engels quotes Wolff's article ["Decree on the Abolition of Feudal Duties without Compensation in Silesia".] *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, No. 181, December 29, 1848 (in the section *Deutschland. Köln*).—*Ed.*

of absolutism to the utmost. They are right to make haste, dancing and celebrating with defiant arrogance. For soon these divinely favoured aristocratic orgies may be mingled with scenes of Galician fury."¹⁷⁶

There followed on January 20 a new article by Wolff^a which dealt with this field. The party of reaction had got a village mayor, Krengel from Nessin near Kolberg, and a number of day labourers to address an inquiry to the King^b whether it was true that His Majesty really intended to *split up landed property* and *turn it over to the propertyless*.

"One can imagine", says Wolff, "the mortal terror and sleepless nights of the day labourers of Nessin when they heard of such intentions. What? The King wants to split up landed property? We day labourers who have up till now tilled the field of our worthy lords so joyously for 5 silver groschen a day—are we supposed to cease being day labourers and work on our own fields? Our worthy lord, who owns 80 to 90 domains and a mere few hundred thousand *morgen*^c—is he to be forced to give up so and so many *morgen* to us?—No, at the mere thought of such a frightful disaster our day labourers were atremble in every limb. They had never a peaceful moment until they were reassured that they were not to be pitched into this bottomless misery, that the menacing *morgen* of land were to be warded off and the worthy lords left in peace just as before."

^a "(Das königl. Patent an die Bauern)", *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, No. 200, January 20, 1849 (in the section *Deutschland Köln*).—Ed.

^b See [An Inquiry from the Electors of Nessin to Frederick William IV, "Berlin, 12. Januar"], *Preußischer Staats-Anzeiger*, No. 14, January 14, 1849.—Ed.

^c *Morgen* = 0.6 or 0.9 of an acre depending on local variations.—Ed.

IV

All that, however, was still only skirmishing. Around the beginning of 1849 the French Social-Democrats started with increasing frequency to raise the proposal made earlier that the thousand million francs given by the state to the aristocrats returning from emigration in 1825 as compensation for estates lost in the Great Revolution should be demanded back and employed in the interest of the working masses.^a On March 16, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* carried a leading article on this question and on the very next day Wolff published a piece called *The Prussian Milliard*.

"The knight Schnapphanski" (Lichnowski) "is dead.¹⁷⁷ But highwaymen we still have in plenty. The Junkers of Pomerania and Brandenburg have joined forces with the other Prussian Junkers. They have donned the holy coat of the respectable bourgeois and call themselves 'Association for the Protection of Property of All Classes of the People', feudal property naturally... Their intention is nothing less than to cheat the Rhine Province, among others, out of some 20 million talers and to pocket the money. The plan is not a bad one. The Rhinelanders may particularly pride themselves on the fact that the Junkers of Thadden-Trieglaff in Eastern Pomerania, the von Arnims and the von Manteuffels as well as a few thousand cabbage Junkers wish to do them the honour of paying their debts in Rhenish money."

The fact of the matter was that Mr. von Bülow-Cummerow, then known as Bülow-Kummervoll,^b had hit on a little plan^c and got it accepted by the above association of Junkers—or as Wolff

^a See K. Marx and F. Engels, "The Milliard" (present edition, Vol. 9, pp. 79-83).—*Ed.*

^b A play on words: *Cummerow* is a proper name, *Kummervoll*—woeful.—*Ed.*

^c [E. G. G. von] Bülow-Cummerow, *Die Grundsteuer und Vorschläge zu ihrer Ausgleichung*.—*Ed.*

called it, the Junker Parliament—and sent to the government and the chambers as a petition, a plan for settling the question of land tax in Prussia. On the one hand, the landowning peasants, especially of the Western Provinces, were complaining that they had to pay *too much* land tax; on the other, the aristocratic big landowners of the Eastern Provinces were paying *no* land tax *at all*, although the law of October 27, 1810^a had imposed it on them along with all other landowners. The Junker Parliament had found a way of alleviating *both* evils. Let us listen to Wolff:

"The Junkers are willing 'to make sacrifices in order to eliminate the discord now prevailing'.^b So they say. Who would have expected such magnanimity of them? Of what do these sacrifices consist, however? They propose that the revenue from all land-holdings should be fixed by a rough assessment, and then the land tax distributed throughout the state at the same percentage of this revenue. Well, their generosity is by no means large, since they are now simply intending to do what they have been legally obliged to do for the last 38 years. But to continue! Do they demand that the Junkers and the landowning knights who have hitherto illegally refused to pay tax—should repay this tax, perhaps? No: since from now on they are to have the grace to pay their taxes, they should be *compensated by an appropriate capital payment*",—namely, 25 times the amount of the future tax. "On the other hand, those who have hitherto been unfairly debited an excessive land tax should—not, for instance, have the excess refunded to them—but, on the contrary, they should be enabled to *discharge the surplus*", by buying themselves out with a single payment of 18-20 times the amount involved, according to the circumstances.—"The higher taxes will be paid by the peasants in the Eastern Provinces and, apart from them, particularly by the Rhine Province. The peasants of Altland and the Rhinelanders are thus now expected to pay for this with their capital too. Hitherto the noble landowners of the Eastern Provinces have been paying no land taxes at all, or very little.... And they, then, are to receive the money which the Rhinelanders and the peasants are supposed to raise."

There follows a survey of the land tax paid by the various provinces in 1848 and their land areas, from which it emerges:

"The Rhineland pays for every square mile on average approximately five times as much land tax as Prussia, Posen and Pomerania, and four times as much as the March of Brandenburg."

Admittedly the land is better; however,

"at a conservative estimate, the Rhine Province probably has to pay about a million talers more in land tax than would be its due according to the average valuation. According to the Bill proposed by the Junker Parliament the Rhinelanders would thus have to pay as a punishment for this another 18 to 22 million talers in cash, which would flow into the pockets of the Junkers of the Eastern Provinces! The state would simply act as the banker. These are the tremendous sacrifices which

^a *Edikt über die Finanzen des Staats und die neuen Einrichtungen wegen der Abgaben u.s.w.* In: *Gesetz-Sammlung für die Königlichen Preussischen Staaten*, No. 2, Berlin, 1810.—*Ed.*

^b [E. G. G. von] Bülow-Cummerow, *Die Grundsteuer...*, Berlin, 1849, p. 36.—*Ed.*

these cabbage Junkers and pigs are inclined to make; that is the protection which they wish to extend to property. Just as every pickpocket protects property....

"The Rhinelanders, especially the Rhenish peasants, and no less the Westphalian and Silesian ones, would do well to look around without delay to see where they can raise the money to pay the Junkers. A hundred million talers are not so easy to come by these days.

"So whilst in France the peasants are demanding a thousand million francs from the aristocracy, in Prussia the aristocracy is demanding five hundred million francs from the peasants!

"Three cheers for the Berlin March Revolution!"

Mere defence, however, was not sufficient to counter the insolence of the Prussian Junkers. The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* sought and found its strength in attack, and thus in the issue of March 22, 1849 Wolff commenced a series of articles called *The Silesian Milliard*, in which he calculated what sums of money, money-value and landed property the Silesian aristocracy alone had wrested from the peasants since the redemption of feudal dues began. Few of the many inflammatory articles in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* had such an effect as these, eight in number, which appeared between March 22 and April 25. Orders for the newspaper from Silesia and the other Eastern Provinces increased at a furious rate; individual issues were requested and eventually, since the exceptional freedom of the press allowed us by Rhenish law was lacking in the other provinces, and there was no question of a reprint under their noble local law, someone came up with the idea of secretly reprinting in Silesia the entire eight issues as near to the original in appearance as possible and disseminating them in thousands of copies—a procedure to which the editorial board was naturally the last to object.

V^a

In the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* of March 22, 1849 Wolff opened his attack on the Silesian Junkers as follows:

"Scarcely had the Chamber of the Court and cabbage junkers" (which met on February 26, 1849 on the basis of the imposed constitution and the imposed electoral law¹⁷⁸) "been constituted when a motion for the settlement, i.e. redemption of feudal dues, was proposed. The worthy lords are in a hurry. They wish to squeeze enough out of the rural population before closing-time to be able to put by a tidy sum for any hard times that may be on the way and send it abroad in advance of their persons.

"For the terror, for the nameless dread which they suffered during the period after the March 'misunderstanding' in Berlin and its immediate consequences, they are now seeking to extract a doubly dear balsam out of the pockets of their beloved village subjects.

"Silesia, particularly, hitherto the golden land of feudal and industrial barons, is to be thoroughly rifled once again in order that the splendour of its land-owning knights may shine on, enhanced and fortified.

"Immediately after the appearance of the imposed provisional Redemption Law in December last year, we demonstrated^b that it is solely calculated to benefit the worthy landowners, that the so-called little man is entirely at the mercy of the whims and caprices of the powerful, even in the composition of the court of arbitration. Nevertheless, the knights are still not content with it. They are demanding a law bestowing yet more concessions on the knightly purse.

"In March and April 1848, many noble lords in Silesia made out written documents to their peasants renouncing all tithes and duties previously required of those subject to the estate. To save their manors from burning and themselves from becoming strange adornments on many a stately lime or courtly poplar, they gave away their so-called well-earned rights with a stroke of the pen. Luckily for them, paper was very patient at that time too.

^a Sections V-VIII and part of Section IX up to the words: "On May 19 the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* was suppressed..." (see this volume, p. 164) are omitted in the 1886 edition.—*Ed.*

^b See this volume, p. 142.—*Ed.*

"When, instead of marching forward, the revolution got stuck in the bog of philistinism and complacent temporising, these gentlemen pulled out their deeds of renunciation, not in order to fulfil them but to submit them to the criminal court as evidence in the inquiry into the rebellious peasant mob."

Wolff now relates how the bureaucracy, under the leadership of the Oberpräsident Pinder and with the aid of mobile military columns, forced the peasants to perform their old duties; how the peasants were left with no other hope but the Berlin Agreement Assembly; how Messrs. Agreeers, instead of declaring first and foremost all feudal tithes abolished without compensation, frittered away the time with inquiries into the nature, origins, etc. of these admirable feudal duties and tithes, until the reactionaries had regained sufficient strength to send the entire Assembly packing before it had reached any decision at all about the abolition of feudal burdens; how the new Redemption Law was imposed and how even this arch-reactionary law failed to satisfy the worthy lords and they made even more extravagant demands.

But our lord knights had reckoned without their host, this host being

"the Silesian peasant, not the bourgeois peasant with three, four or more hides of land but that mass of smaller peasants, estate gardeners and free gardeners, cottagers and livers-in,¹⁷⁹ who have hitherto been the real beasts of burden of the big landowners and who, according to the plans of the latter, should continue as such in future in a different form.

"In 1848 this mass would have been content with abolition of feudal burdens without compensation.... After the bitter apprenticeship of the final months of 1848 and those that have elapsed of 1849, the Silesian agrarian population, the 'little man', is increasingly coming to realise that the knightly landowners, instead of seizing new riches by means of a cleverly devised Redemption Law, should by right return at least that part of the booty with which they lined their pockets with the aid of the previous redemption laws.... From village to village people are now occupied with the question of how much our lords the robber knights have stolen from the rural people over the last thirty years alone."

The situation is not as simple as in France, where compensation of 1,000 million francs in round figures—almost 300 million talers—was extorted from the nation, so that "the French peasant knows how much he must be refunded in capital and interest". In Prussia the exploitation took place year in, year out, and up till now only the individual peasant knew what he and his village had paid.

"But now a rough estimate has been made for the whole province, showing that in the guise of redemption the rural population has paid the worthy lords more than 80 million talers, partly in land and partly in hard cash and interest. In addition to this there are the annual tithes and duties of the hitherto non-emancipated. For the last thirty years this sum amounts to at least 160 million talers, yielding together with the above a total of approximately 240 million talers.

"Now that these calculations have come to their knowledge, the country people have seen the light, and its brightness is causing the feudal accomplices to cower in fear. They have devoured 240 million from the pockets of the country people and 'we must get back our 240 million at the first opportunity'—that is now the idea circulating among the Silesian country people; it is the demand which is already being spoken aloud in thousands of villages.

"The ever-growing awareness that if there is to be any talk of compensation for feudal burdens then it is the *peasants* who must be compensated for the knightly robbery perpetrated on them—this is an 'achievement' which will soon bear fruit. It will not be overthrown by any dictatorial wiles. The next revolution will bring it to bear in practice, and the Silesian peasants will then probably be able to devise a 'Compensation Law' restoring not only the stolen capital but also the 'customary interests' to the pockets of the people."

By what "legal title" the Junker gentlemen appropriated this sum is the lesson of the second article in the issue of March 25, 1849.^a

"With regard to the manner in which the 'rights' of the robber knights were acquired, eloquent testimony is provided not only by every page of mediaeval history but by every year right up to recent times. The mediaeval knightly sword managed splendidly to ally itself with the goose-quill of the lawyer and the civil service horde. Force was transformed with a fortune-teller's sleight of hand into 'rights', into 'well-earned rights'. An example from last century. In the eighties in Silesia at the initiative of the aristocracy, commissions were created for the establishment of land registers,¹⁸⁰ the mutual duties and obligations of landowner and peasant.... The commissions, composed of nobles and their creatures, worked in exemplary fashion—in the interest of the aristocracy. Nevertheless these gentlemen by no means succeeded everywhere in producing land registers that were 'confirmed' (recognised by the peasants). "Where they did, though, it was solely by force or trickery.... It is rather naively stated in the introduction to a number of such deeds that the peasants had not consented to put their crosses to them (at that time only very few were able to write) and that they had been forced partly by threats and partly by the actual use of armed force to sign these documents defrauding themselves and their descendants. On the basis of such 'well-earned rights' the worthy knights of Silesia have been able over the last thirty years to distil that tidy little sum of 240 million talers from the sweat and blood of the peasant estate into their ancestral coffers."

^a [Wilhelm Wolff,] "Die schlesische Milliarde", *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, No. 255, March 25, 1849.—Ed.

VI

From the direct exploitation of the peasants by the aristocracy, Wolff proceeds to the various indirect forms, in which the participation of the state plays a major role.

Firstly, *land tax*, which was still levied in Silesia in 1849 according to a land register devised in 1749.¹⁸¹ In this land register the acreage entered for the land of the nobles was less than the real amount, and for the peasants more, right from the outset; the yield of a *morgen* of pasture or arable land was assessed at one taler and the land tax levied on this basis. Woods and pastures were exempt. Since then the nobles had cleared whole stretches of forestland and brought considerable areas of wasteland under cultivation. Tax continued to be paid according to the acreage of cultivable land entered in the land register of 1749! The tax remaining constant for both parties, the peasant with no wasteland to bring under cultivation was thus considerably overburdened, or to put it bluntly: swindled. Furthermore:

"A large section of the knights, precisely that section which *owns the largest and most lucrative estate complexes*, has hitherto, under the style of 'well-earned rights' as mediatised peers¹⁸² *not yet paid a penny in land tax*.

"If we estimate the land tax which the worthy knights have failed to pay (either too little or none at all) over the last thirty years at about 40 million talers—and that is probably letting them off lightly—and add to it the 240 million talers stolen directly from the pockets of the Silesian country people, we arrive at a total of 280 million" (*Neue Rheinische Zeitung* of March 25, 1849).

Then follows the graduated tax. A Silesian peasant, whom Wolff singles out of the masses,

"owns 8 *morgen* of land of medium quality, paying a host of tithes annually to his 'worthy' lord, is obliged to perform a large amount of statute labour every year, and still has to pay graduated tax of 7 Sgr. 6 Pf. per month, making 3 talers per

annum. Contrasted with him we have a worthy lord with the most extensive estates, with forests and meadows, iron-works, zinc ore mines, coal mines, etc., e.g. arch-wailer,¹⁸³ Russophile, democrat-eater and Deputy to the Second Chamber, Count Renard. This man has an annual income of 240,000 talers. He pays on the highest grade 144 talers graduated tax annually. Compared with the above peasant owner with 8 *morgen* he should have been paying at least 7,000 talers per year in graduated tax, making 140,000 talers over 20 years. Thus in 20 years he has paid 137,120 talers too little."

Wolff then compares the amount of graduated tax paid by the same Count Renard with the tax paid by a farmhand with a wage of 10 talers per year, paying $\frac{1}{2}$ taler or 5 per cent of his cash income, and with that of a farm-maid who out of a wage of 6 talers per year also pays $\frac{1}{2}$ taler in graduated tax, or $8\frac{1}{3}$ per cent of her income. The result is that over 20 years the noble count has paid 237,120 talers graduated tax too little compared with the farmhand and even 397,120 talers too little compared with the maid.

"According to the sovereign will of Frederick William IV, Eichhorn-Ladenberg and the rest of the Christian-Germanic fellowship, primary school" (cf. the Eichhorn rescripts until the beginning of 1848) "should be restricted purely to reading, writing and the most elementary arithmetic. The first four rules of arithmetic, then, would still be allowed to the peasants. There was no need for the primary school, however, to teach the peasant the various rules, particularly subtraction, or deduction and extraction. In Silesia, at least, the divinely favoured robber knights have subtracted so much from around him and out of him that he for his part now ought to succeed at the first possible opportunity with flying colours in this form of subtraction applied to the worthy lords."

Wolff then gives another example of this subtraction practice of the Silesian nobility: The waste hides.

"Wherever rustic hosts" (i.e. peasants) "were ruined by war, epidemics, conflagrations or other disasters, the seigneur was swiftly at hand in order to absorb the land of the farm concerned, either wholly or partly, into his dominion as a 'waste hide'. But you lords were careful not to take over land tax, house tax and the other burdens. These had to be borne either by the whole community or by the subsequent owner, who often only received a third, a sixth or an eighth of the previous land area in the bill of sale, but all the previous taxes, tithes and services. You did the same with common grazing and arable land when, for example, the above-mentioned causes had led to a more or less complete depopulation of the village. You seized these and other opportunities to combine as many lands as possible. But the communities and the individual peasants had to bear communal, school, church, district and other burdens unextenuated, as if they had never been deprived of a whit.... The yardstick with which you seek to measure us, shall be used to measure you, the peasant will reply to you.

"In your raging appetite for compensation, you have blindly rushed into a veritable hornets' nest of popular damages; if, provoked as they are, they one day fly out, you may easily find yourselves suffering scrupulously accurate damages as well as a good helping of damage!"² (*Neue Rheinische Zeitung* of March 27).

² A play on words in the original: *Entschädigung*—compensation, damages, *Beschädigung*—damage, injury.—*Ed.*

In the next article (in the issue of March 29) Wolff describes the procedure during redemption of the actual feudal dues. Under the notorious General Commissions, which were charged with the execution of this business throughout the province, there were the Royal Landed Estate Commissaries and their aides, the Royal Conductors of Surveying and the actuaries. As soon as the application for redemption had been made by the landowner or the peasant, these officials appeared in the village, where they were straightaway lavishly entertained and suborned by the worthy lord up at the manor-house.

"Often this suborning had already taken place earlier, and since the worthy knights do not spare the champagne if anything may be thereby achieved, the seigniorial efforts to please were generally successful."

Certainly there were incorruptible officials here and there, yet they were exceptions and even then the peasants were not helped.

"In cases in which the Landed Estate Commissary himself observed the letter of the law, it was of little benefit to the peasants as soon as the Conductor or his officials were won over by the lord of the dominion. It was even worse for the peasants if, as was generally the case, the most cordial understanding prevailed between Landed Estate Commissary, Conductor and sovereign. Then the knightly heart was gay and rejoiced.

"In all the plenitude of power with which the Old Prussian bureaucracy was adept at decking out its dependents, the Royal Commissary would now enter the district *kretscham** where the peasants were assembled. He would never fail to remind the peasants that he was here 'in the name of the King' to negotiate with them.

"'In the name of the King!' At this phrase all the sombre figures such as gendarmes, executors, seigniorial judges, district councillors, etc. appear simultaneously in front of the peasant's eyes. Had he not always been oppressed and exploited by them all in that name! 'In the name of the King!' That sounded to him like the stocks and prison, it sounded like taxes, tithes, statute labour and fees.¹⁸⁴ For he was obliged to pay all these 'in the name of the King'. If the Commissary's introduction did not do the trick, if the community or the individual peasant proved to be refractory and went against the plans of the lord of the domain and Commissary, then the latter would be transmogrified into the Olympian Thunderer, hurling one holy hell and damnation after the other into the midst of the nonplussed peasant throng, then adding more mildly: If you persist in such foolish excesses, I tell you that you will *pay* for it in full. This symbolic seizure of the peasant's purse would then generally decide the issue: obligations and counter-obligations could now be adjusted to suit the wishes of the lord."

Now came the surveying, and in the process the corrupt Conductor would cheat the peasants for the benefit of the landowner. For the assessment of usufruct, land quality, etc. the district mayors were brought in as experts, and these too would usually deliver judgment in favour of the landowner. After all this had been settled and the size in *morgen* of the land left for the

* See this volume, p. 132.—*Ed.*

peasants after the deduction of the area to be relinquished to the worthy lord as compensation for the loss of feudal dues had finally been established, the worthy knights generally prevailed on the Landed Estate Commissary to place the fields of the little man, if at all possible, on the worst side. The good land was added to that of the estate, and in return the peasants would be allocated estate fields which were regularly flooded in wet years. And then again, the peasants would be tricked out of another part of their fields by the Conductor during the final survey. In the vast majority of cases the peasants were helpless; as a rule anyone who brought a court case was ruined by it; only in quite exceptionally favourable circumstances was a peasant able to obtain his rightful dues.

The end of the business came with the drafting and signing of all the recesses and documents of settlement by the General Commission and—the general expenses account, which betokened the real beginning of the countryman's distress.

"To characterise these accounts there is no other epithet than: shameless. No matter how the peasant protested or tore his hair: it was all to no avail. After all, it was his purse they were after; the exchequer took its share of stamp duty in advance, and the rest went to pay the General Commission, the Landed Estate Commission etc. This veritable swarm of officials lived in ease and plenty. Through their position as Landed Estate Commissary, poor lads have with the aid of knightly nefariousness risen very quickly to become the owners of knightly estates themselves. It scarcely needs pointing out that the power in the General Commission lay in the hands of the nobles. Without them the little deals of our worthy knights would not have prospered so well."

In good Old Prussian fashion, no account of the total expenses of the General Commission has ever been published, so the people even do not know how much the redemption of feudal dues, insofar as it had been effected by 1848, actually cost them. But the individual communities and peasants will never forget how much they were forced to "cough up" at this time.

"For instance, a small village, whose peasants did not even own 30 *morgen* between them, had to pay recess expenses of 137 talers; in another, a peasant with 7 *morgen* of fields incurs costs of no less than 29 talers... The robber-knights' compensation dish was so delicious that, spiced with a few Christian-Germanic ingredients, it will not be missing from the table of the high and noble lords in days to come, either. This tastes of more!—say the Silesian robber-knights, wiping their whiskers with a chuckle and smacking their chops as the cabbage Junkers do."

Wolff wrote this 27 years ago, and the events he describes belong to the period 1820-48; but on reading them today one seems to be reading an account of the procedure by which the serfs of Russia were emancipated and became so-called free

peasants after 1861. It agrees to the finest detail. In one feature after another this cheating of the peasants in favour of the worthy lords is the same. And just as in all official and liberal accounts the Russian redemption is described as an enormous benefit for the peasants, as the greatest step forward in Russian history, in the same way official and national-servile historiography describes to us that piece of Old Prussian peasant-swindling as a world-liberating event which puts the great French Revolution—which in fact was the cause of the redemption business—in the shade!

VII

The Silesian nobility's list of sins is still not exhausted. In the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* of April 5, Wolff recounts how the introduction of freedom of trade in Prussia^a offered the robber-knights a new opportunity to swindle the country folk.

"As long as he was still under the obligation to join a guild, the rural artisan or tradesman paid the worthy landowner an annual fee, as a rule quite high, for his craft or business. In return he enjoyed the advantage of being protected by the landowner against competition from others through refusal of trading permits; and in addition, the landowner had to bring his work to him. This was precisely the position faced by the millers, brewers, butchers, smiths, bakers, *kretscham-* or inn-keepers, shopkeepers, etc."

When freedom of trade was introduced, the protection afforded to the privileged artisans ceased and everywhere competition sprang up. In spite of this the landowners continued to exact the fee paid up till then, under the pretext that it did not relate to the craft but to the land, and the courts, likewise overwhelmingly on the side of the nobility, recognised these preposterous claims in the great majority of cases. Yet this was not enough. In time the worthy lords had their own water mills and windmills constructed, and later steam-powered mills too, thus constituting unbeatable competition for the previously privileged miller, and yet they still forced him to go on paying the old tax for the former monopoly, under the pretext that it was either ground rent or compensation for certain insignificant repairs to the watercourse incumbent on the landowner, or such like. Thus Wolff quotes the case of a

^a *Edikt über die Einführung einer allgemeinen Gewerbe-Steuer. Vom 28. Oktober 1810. In: Gesetz-Sammlung für die Königlichen Preussischen Staaten, No. 4, Berlin, 1810.—Ed.*

water mill with two conduits, without any arable land, which had to pay 40 talers per annum to the landowner, although he had built a rival mill so that one miller after the other went bankrupt at the first mill. All the better for the landowner: the mill had to be sold and at every change of hands the worthy lord levied 10% of the purchase sum in fees for himself! Similarly, a windmill to which belonged no more than the ground on which it stood had to pay the landowner 53 talers per annum. Such was also the situation of the blacksmiths, who had to continue to pay or redeem the old monopoly fee, although not only was the monopoly abolished but the same landowner who pocketed the fee was competing with them with his own smithy—and likewise with the other artisans and tradesmen: the fee was either discharged by "recess" or still paid, although the other part of the agreement, protection against outside competition, had long since been dropped.

So far we have considered only the various forms of exploitation which the feudal nobility employed against the landowning country people, peasants with two or more hides down to free gardeners, free cottagers and meadow cottagers and whatever all the people may be called who possess at least a little cottage and generally a garden as well. There remained a numerically strong class neither in the service of the worthy lord nor owning a cottage or even a square foot of land.

"This is the class of lodgers, the livers-in, in short the *tenants*; people who have rented a room, usually a wretched hovel, for 4-8 talers per year from the peasants, gardeners, landless cottagers. Either they are movers, i.e. people who, having passed on their farms to relatives or sold them to strangers, have retired into a small room there, with or without retaining 'a share' in their former property, or—and these are the majority—they are poor day-labourers, village artisans, weavers, miners, etc."^a

How to get at these people? Patrimonial jurisdiction, that splendid state of affairs (only now due to be abolished by the district regulations) whereby the landowner exercises jurisdiction over his ex-subjects, had to provide the pretext. It stipulated that when the worthy lord delivered one of the subjects of his jurisdiction into gaol, then he had to bear the cost of the prisoner's keep as well as that of the inquiry. For this the worthy lord received all the fees which were payable under patrimonial jurisdiction. If the arrested person was a peasant, the worthy lord made him pay back all the costs, and in extreme cases had his

^a [Wilhelm Wolff,] "Zur schlesischen Milliarde (Das Schutzgeld)", *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, No. 270, April 12, 1849.—Ed.

house and farm sold. But in order to cover the costs which any arrested lodgers might cause him, the landowner imposed an annual *caution money*, called by the more genteel name of jurisdiction money, on all persons of this class under his jurisdiction.

"Some of the worthy lords," says Wolff (*Neue Rheinische Zeitung* of April 12), "contented themselves with one taler a year; others imposed $1\frac{1}{2}$ talers, and others took their impertinence so far as to demand 2 talers per year from this section of the rural proletariat. With this blood money gathered in there was all the more gambling and whoring in the capital and at the spas.

"When there was no money whatsoever to be squeezed out, the worthy lord or his bailiff would convert the caution money into 6, 10 or even 12 gratis days' labour" (which the lodger had to work gratis for the worthy lord). "Cash laughs! So if the lodger could not pay, the executor was usually set on him to take away his last remaining rags, the last bed, table and chair. A few of the worthy lords refrained from this barbarism and demanded no caution money, not because it was an arrogant right but because in their patriarchal clemency they did not care to make use of this alleged right.

"In this way then, with few exceptions, the lodger has been shamefully plundered year in, year out for the benefit of the landowner's purse. The poor weaver, for instance, exploited by the factory-owner on the one hand, with a wage of 3-4 silver groschen a day, with $\frac{1}{2}$ taler of graduated tax for the state, with dues to the school, Church and community, was nevertheless forced to pay the worthy lord one or two talers caution money, which should be properly called blood money. It was the same for the miner, and for all the other landless people.

"What benefit does he, the lodger, derive from this? The fact that if he has been driven by poverty, misery and brutality to stealing or other crimes and is brought to justice, then he may remain in prison or house of correction happy in the knowledge that he and the class of lodgers to which he belongs have already paid the prison costs into the landowner's purse a hundredfold in advance.... The lodger who has paid caution money—let us put it at $1\frac{1}{3}$ talers per year on average—for thirty years *without* going to gaol has been obliged to throw 40 talers cash into the landowner's purse, not counting interest and interest on interest. For this the landowner pays interest on capital of more than 1,000 talers borrowed from the *Landschaft*" (the credit association of the knightly landowners).

"What a lucrative source of income the robber-knights found in caution money may be deduced from the fact that in most villages there are as many if not more lodgers than householders. We recollect one of the smallest robber-knights who owned three domains and extorted from the lodgers in his three villages 240 talers per year in caution money, with which he paid off the interest on capital borrowed from the *Landschaft*" (raised on his estate) "of 6,000 talers..

"After all this the naive may believe that the worthy knights really do pay any criminal costs which may arise out of their prenumerando" (by prepayment) "filled purses. Such naive faith will be utterly shattered by knightly speculation. Many cases are known to us from the twenties and from later years in which the knights in their insolence not only raised the caution money from the lodgers but forced their beloved village subjects to meet partly $\frac{1}{3}$, partly $\frac{1}{2}$ and in several villages $\frac{2}{3}$ of any inquiry and gaol expenses."

VIII

In the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* of April 14, Wolff deals with the *hunting right*, which was abolished without compensation in 1848 and whose restoration or purchase with "damages" the noble Junkers were then vociferously demanding.

"The *sanctification of game* had the consequence that they preferred to shoot down a confounded peasant rather than a hare, partridge or similar protected creatures. When hunting with drovers, taken from among their beloved village subjects, they were not unduly inhibited; even if one of the drovers was shot at or stretched out dead there was at most an inquiry and no more was said. Moreover, several cases from that patrimonial heyday are known to us in which the noble knight fired a charge of buckshot into the legs or hindparts of one drover or another—purely for his private delectation. Even beyond the actual hunt the worthy knights would indulge in such pastimes with passion. We always recall in this connection the baron who fired a round of buckshot into the thigh of a woman gleaning corn in one of his harvested fields despite his prohibition, and then recounted his heroic exploit at the dinner table in select robber-knightly company with undisguised self-satisfaction.... On the other hand, the beloved village subjects had the pleasure of 'roboting' (doing service) as drovers at the great noble hunt. Every farmer, i.e. every owner of a field and every cottager, was directed to provide a drover 'first thing in the morning' for the great noble hunt for so and so many days. It must certainly have made the worthy knights' hearts beat with ecstasy to have a mob of ill-clad, often barefoot, starving villagers trotting along beside them on cold, wet October and November days. The whip hung by the hunting bag for the good and edification of hounds and drovers. It was usually the latter who received the lion's share.... Other knights started large pheasant farms.... Woe to the woman or girl who through carelessness or lack of tracking sense came too close to one of the count's pheasant nests or alarmed the hen.... I have myself in my youth been an eye-witness to how a peasant's wife for the said reason was thrashed in a most barbaric and bestial manner and crippled by a young robber-knight, without even a cock crowing afterwards. They were a poor people, and protesting, i.e. bringing a court-case, requires money, and also some confidence in justice, things which in the majority of the Silesian peasants are found sparingly, if at all.

"Seething with rage, the peasant had to watch as the knightly gentlemen, with or without their hunters, or as these alone chased across the field which he had cultivated with toil and trouble, trampling and putting to waste, sparing no fruit of the field, high or low, thick or thin. Right through the middle or over and away they galloped with the hunters and hounds. If the peasant presumed to object, a laugh of derision was his answer, in the mildest case; many are those who have suffered worse, with beaten bodies to show for it. The cabbage in the peasant's field was sought out by the divinely favoured and protected hare as fodder, and the peasant planted his trees so as to still the hunger of the hare in winter.... But this damage cannot compare with that inflicted on him by deer and wild boar, which were protected throughout most of Silesia. Wild boar, red deer and roe deer often rooted up, devoured and trampled in a single night what was supposed to serve the peasant or the 'little man' as food and payment of taxes and tithes for a whole year. Of course, the injured party was free to sue for damages. Indeed, individuals and whole communities have tried it. The outcome of such cases will be self-evident to anyone who has acquired during his life even a remote idea of the old Prussian civil service, judiciary and trial procedure.... After interminable writing and petitioning the peasant would obtain judgement in a few years, if fortune favoured him, against the noble lord, and if he viewed it in broad daylight and added it all up, he would find that he had been cheated to the extreme.... But the number of villages on whose rustic fields the divinely favoured wild boar, red deer and roe deer have harried and ravaged for thirty years, more severely every year, amounts to over a thousand. We know several of them, by no means among the largest, which have suffered 200-300 talers worth of damage annually solely on account of the protected big game."

And if the nobility now demands compensation for the abolition of this hunting right, then Wolff counters that demand with this one:

"Full compensation for all damage done by game, for all the ravages which have been inflicted on our lands for the last thirty years by the divinely favoured roe deer, red deer, wild boar and by the worthy knights themselves; to put it in round figures:

"Compensation of at least 20 million talers!"

The conclusion of the whole thing (*Neue Rheinische Zeitung* of April 25, 1849) is an article on the Polish part of the province, Upper Silesia, which in autumn 1847 was struck by a famine as severe as that which was simultaneously depopulating Ireland. As in Ireland, famine typhus also broke out in Upper Silesia and spread like the plague. The following winter it broke out once again, yet without any failure of the harvest, flooding or other calamity having occurred. What is the explanation? Wolff replies:

"The greater part of the land is in the hands of big landowners, the *fiscus*" (state) "and in mortmain.¹⁸⁵ Only $\frac{2}{5}$ of the total landed property is in the hands of the peasants, and is overloaded with statute labour and tithes to the landowners, as well as taxes to the state, the Church, school, district and community to the most incredible and shameless extent, whereas the worthy lords, compared with the peasants, pay the state a mere pittance at the most.... When rent-day arrives the silver interest is wrung out of the peasant with the knout, should he fail to pay

voluntarily. And so lack of capital and credit and an excess of tithes and services to the robber-knights as well as to the state and Church, forced the peasant to throw himself into the arms of the Jew and perish helplessly struggling in the toils of the artful usurer.

"In the age-old humiliation and servitude to which the rural population of Upper Silesia has been subjected by the Christian-Germanic government and its robber-knights, the peasant has found his only solace, as well as a restorative and half his nourishment, in *alcohol*. One must give the worthy lords their due: they supplied the peasants with ample quantities of this commodity from their distilleries at ever cheaper prices.... Alongside the mud-huts of the Water-Polack¹⁸⁶ peasants where famine, typhus and brutishness have made their abode, the sumptuous palaces, castles and other properties of the Upper Silesian magnates appear all the more romantic.... On the one hand, the incredibly rapid accumulation of riches and colossal annual revenues of their 'lordships'. On the other, the advancing impoverishment of the masses.

"The day wage for agricultural labourers is mean in the extreme: for a man 5-6 silver groschen, for a woman $2\frac{1}{2}$ -3 silver groschen may even be regarded as a high rate. Many are compelled to work for a day wage of 4 and 2 silver groschen respectively, and even less. Their diet consists almost solely of potatoes and schnapps. If only the labourer had even had these two items in sufficient quantity, then at least starvation and typhus would have spared Upper Silesia. When, however, the staple food became steadily dearer and scarcer as a result of potato blight, and the day wage not only failed to rise but actually fell—people had resort to plants which they picked in the fields and woods, couch grass and roots, making soup with stolen hay and eating the flesh of dead animals. Their strength evaporated. Schnapps became more expensive—and even worse than before. *Schenker* is the name given to those persons, most often Jews, who in return for an enormous rent to the worthy lords sell the schnapps to the public. The *Schenker* was already accustomed to diluting the schnapps with appropriate amounts of water and then strengthening it again with all kinds of ingredients, chief among which being *oil of vitriol*. This poisonous adulteration increased from year to year, being carried to an extreme after the outbreak of potato blight. The stomach of the peasant, weakened by hay and couch-grass soups, could no longer take such medicine. Considering the poor clothing, the filthy, unsanitary housing, the cold in winter, and the lack either of work or of strength to work, one realises how, no more and no less than in Ireland, these famine conditions very soon gave rise to typhus. 'The people had nothing in reserve!' There we have the explanation of it all. They were continually exploited and drained dry by the state and the robber-knights to such an extent that at the slightest increase in their misery they were bound to perish.... The robber-knights, the civil servant caste, and the whole divinely favoured royal Prussian government horde did business, drew salaries, distributed gratuities, while down below in the common strata of the people, lashed by famine and typhus, they started to die off in their hundreds like animals and went on dying.

"Not much better off than the day-labourers are the farmers, or those who possess a house with a plot of land, whether larger or smaller. They too derive their main sustenance from potatoes and schnapps. They have to sell what they produce to raise the tithes payable to the landowner, the state, etc.... And to be forced to perform estate service" (for the worthy lord), "to be barbarically maltreated by the lord or his officials with the knout, to be forced, toiling, starving and beaten, to witness and endure the luxury and arrogance of the robber-knights and a snarling caste of officials—this was and is the lot of a great part of the Water-Polack population....

"The sort of treatment meted out to the estate servants, the farmhands and maids of the lords may be readily gauged from what the village subjects liable to labour service and the so-called wage-labourers had to endure. Here, too, the knout is the Alpha and Omega of the robber-knights' gospel....

"The robber-knights rule and dispose as they please. From their ranks are taken the *Landrats*; they train the domanial and district police, and the entire bureaucracy works in their interests. Then there is the fact that the Waier-Polack peasant does not have German officialdom over him—which might be too humane—but an old Prussian one, with its Prussian language and its own provincial law. Exploited, maltreated, derided, whipped and cast into fetters by all quarters, the Upper Silesian peasant was bound eventually to reach the point he has reached. Starvation and plague were bound to ripen as the final fruits in this genuine Christian-Germanic soil. Whoever still has the power to steal, does so. That is the only form for the Irishised Upper Silesian to actually put up opposition to Christian Teutonism and the robber-knights. The next step is beggary; the pauperised figures may be seen moving from one place to another in droves. In the third rank we discover those who lack the strength or aptitude for either stealing or begging. It is to their beds of mouldering straw that the epidemic angel of death pays his most productive visits. These are the fruits of a century of divinely favoured monarchist government and the robber knighthood and bureaucracy allied with it."

And as before, Wolff now demands that the knights compensate the peasants, that all statute labour and money dues be abolished without compensation, and finally that all the large estates of the Upper Silesian magnates be broken up. This would naturally not occur, he notes, under the Manteuffel-Brandenburg government, and thus "the Upper Silesians would continue as before to fall prey to famine and famine typhus in huge numbers", which proved to be literally true, until the tremendous upsurge of Upper Silesian industry in the fifties and sixties entirely revolutionised the living conditions of the whole region, and increasingly replaced brutal feudal exploitation with civilised, but even more thorough, modern bourgeois exploitation.

IX

We have deliberately quoted large extracts from *The Silesian Milliard*, not only because it conveys with the utmost clarity the character of Wolff, but also because it gives a true picture of the conditions which prevailed until 1848 throughout rural Prussia, with the exception of the Rhine Province, in Mecklenburg, Hanover, and a few other small states, as well as the whole of Austria. Where redemption had taken place the peasant had been defrauded; but for half to two-thirds of the peasant population—according to locality—feudal service and tithes to the landowner remained, with little prospect of a more rapid rate of redemption until the thunderbolt of 1848 and the ensuing period of industrial development all but swept away these relics of the Middle Ages as well. We say “all but” because in Mecklenburg feudalism continues to exist with undiminished power, and also in other backward areas of Northern Germany there are as likely as not districts where redemption has not yet been effected. In 1849 caution money and a few other less important feudal dues were abolished without compensation in Prussia; the other burdens were redeemed more rapidly than before because the nobility, after the experiences of 1848 and with the constant difficulty of extracting profitable labour from the recalcitrant peasants, was now itself pressing for redemption. Finally, with the district regulations, there disappeared the landowners’ seigniorial jurisdiction, eliminating, at least formally, feudalism in Prussia.

But only formally. Wherever large-scale landed property is prevalent, the big landowners retain a semi-feudal dominance, even under otherwise modern bourgeois conditions of management. Only the forms of this dominant position vary. They are

different in Ireland, where the land is cultivated by small tenant farmers, and different in England and Scotland, where moneyed tenants run large leasehold farms with the aid of wage labourers. The domination of the nobility prevalent in Northern Germany, especially in the East, approaches the latter form. The large estates are mostly run by the owners themselves and more rarely by large tenants, with the aid of servants and day labourers. The servants are subject to the Regulations for Servants, which in Prussia date from 1810 and are so clearly designed for feudal conditions that they *expressly permit* "minor acts of violence" by the nobility against the servants, while *expressly forbidding* the latter on pain of criminal punishment to offer active resistance to assault from their master, except if their life or health be endangered! (General Regulations for Servants, §§ 77, 79).^a Partly by their contracts but partly by the predominant system of payment in kind—which also includes housing—the day labourers are reduced to a state of dependence on the landowner quite equal to that of the servants; and so even today there flourishes east of the Elbe the patriarchal treatment of farm labourers and domestic servants, with the punches in the face, blows from the stick and cuts of the whip which Wolff has described to us in Silesia. Unfortunately the common people are getting more and more rebellious and are in some places already refusing to tolerate any longer these paternal measures for their betterment.

Since Germany is still preponderantly an agricultural country, and the mass of the population therefore gain their livelihood from farming and live in the country, it remains the chief but also the most difficult task of the workers' party to make the agricultural workers' interests and position clear to them. The first step towards this is that the party should itself become familiar with the interests and position of the agricultural workers. Those party comrades whom circumstances permit would be doing the cause a great service by comparing Wolff's accounts with present conditions, collating the changes which have occurred and describing the present situation of the agricultural workers. In addition to the day labourer proper, the small peasant should not be ignored either. How have the redemptions progressed since 1848? Has the peasant had his ears boxed as soundly as before in the process? Such questions, among others, emerge on their own from reading *The Silesian Milliard*, and if the business of answering them were

^a *Gesinde-Ordnung für sämtliche Provinzen der Preussischen Monarchie. Vom 8. November 1810.* In: *Gesetz-Sammlung für die Königlichen Preussischen Staaten*, No. 5, Berlin, 1810.—Ed.

undertaken seriously and the resulting material published in the party organ, this would be a greater service to the workers' cause than any number of articles about the organisation in detail of the society of the future.¹⁸⁷

One more point is raised by the conclusion of Wolff's articles. Since 1849 Upper Silesia has developed into one of the focal points of German industry. As in the rest of Silesia, this industry is situated mainly in the countryside, in large villages or newly emerging towns, far from the urban centres. If we are concerned with spreading Social-Democracy in the countryside, Silesia, and particularly Upper Silesia, offers the most suitable locality for use as a lever. In spite of this, Upper Silesia, at least, seems to have been virgin soil for socialist propaganda up till now. The language cannot amount to an obstacle; on the one hand, the use of German has greatly increased there with the growth of industry, on the other, there are surely enough socialists who speak Polish.

But back to our Wolff. On May 19 the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* was suppressed after the last issue had appeared printed in red. Apart from 23 pending press trials the Prussian police had so many other pretexts for seizing each individual member of the editorial board that they all left Cologne and Prussia immediately. Most of us went to Frankfurt, where the decisive point seemed near at hand. The victories of the Hungarians provoked the Russian invasion; the conflict between the governments and the Frankfurt Parliament on account of the Imperial Constitution had given rise to various insurrections, of which those in Dresden, Iserlohn and Elberfeld had been suppressed, while those in the Palatinate and in Baden were still in progress. Wolff had an old Breslau mandate in his pocket as the substitute for that old distorter of history, Stenzel; they had only got wailer Stenzel through by including the agitator¹⁸⁸ Wolff as his substitute. Like all good Prussians, Stenzel had naturally obeyed the Prussian government's order of recall from Frankfurt. Wolff now took his place.¹⁸⁹

The Frankfurt Parliament, having sunk through its own idling and stupidity from the position of the most powerful assembly that had ever convened in Germany to the most utter impotence, now evident to all the governments, even to the Imperial Government it had appointed itself and to the very Parliament itself, was at a loss what to do, caught between the governments which had massed their forces, and the people who had risen to defend the Imperial Constitution. There was still everything to be gained if only the Parliament and the leaders of the South German

movement showed courage and determination. A parliamentary decision calling the armies of Baden and the Palatinate to Frankfurt to defend the Assembly would have sufficed. The Assembly would thereby have regained the confidence of the people at a stroke. The defection of the troops of Hesse and Darmstadt, and the accession of Württemberg and Bavaria to the movement could then have been anticipated with certainty; the small states of central Germany would likewise have been brought in; Prussia would have had its hands full, and, in the face of such a mighty movement in Germany, Russia would have been compelled to retain in Poland part of the troops subsequently employed with success in Hungary. Thus Hungary could have been saved at Frankfurt, and moreover there was every likelihood that with the spread of a victorious revolution in Germany, the outbreak that was daily expected in Paris would not have dissolved into the uncontested defeat of the radical philistines which occurred on June 13, 1849.¹⁹⁰

The prospects were as favourable as they could be. The advice to summon the guard of Baden and the Palatinate was given^a in Frankfurt, that to march to Frankfurt even without a summons, in Mannheim.^b But neither the Baden leaders nor the Frankfurt parliamentarians had the courage, energy, intelligence or initiative.^c

^a In the 1886 edition Engels added: "by all of us".— *Ed*

^b In the 1886 edition Engels added: "by Marx and myself".— *Ed*

^c See also Engels' "The Campaign for the German Imperial Constitution" (present edition, Vol. 10).— *Ed*

X

Instead of acting, the Parliament decided—as if it had not spoken too much already—to speak again, namely, in a “Proclamation to the German Nation”. A commission was appointed which produced two drafts, the one approved by the majority having been prepared by Uhland. Both of them were feeble, bloodless and powerless; expressing nothing but their own helplessness and dejection and the bad conscience of the Assembly itself. At the debate on May 26, they gave our Wolff the opportunity to speak his mind to the honourable parliamentarians once and for all. The shorthand record of this speech runs^a:

“Wolff of Breslau:

“Gentlemen! I have registered my name against the Proclamation to the Nation that has been composed by the majority and read out here, because I think it utterly inadequate in the present conditions, because I find it too weak—suitable solely as an article for publication in those newspapers which represent the party that has conceived it, but not as a Proclamation to the German Nation. Since a second has now been read out, I shall only remark in passing that I would oppose this one even more strongly, for reasons that I do not need to give here.’ (Voice from the Centre: ‘Why not?’) ‘I am speaking only of the majority proclamation; it is after all so moderate that even Mr. Buss could not object to it too much, and that is certainly the worst recommendation for any proclamation. No, gentlemen, if you wish to retain any influence whatsoever over the people, you must not speak to the people in the way you do in the Proclamation: you must not speak of legality, of legal grounds and so on, but of illegality, in the same way as the governments, as the Russians, and by Russians I mean Prussians, Austrians, Bavarians and Hanoverians.’ (Commotion and laughter.) “These are all included under the

^a W. Wolff [Speech in the Frankfurt National Assembly on May 26, 1849], *Stenographischer Bericht über die Verhandlungen der deutschen constituirenden Nationalversammlung zu Frankfurt am Main*, No. 229, May 28, 1849, Vol. 9, Frankfurt am Main, 1849, p. 6749.—Ed.

common name of Russians.' (Great amusement.) 'Yes, gentlemen, in this Assembly, too, the Russians are represented. You must say to them: just as you adopt the legal point of view, so shall we. This is the viewpoint of *force*, and in parenthesis you ought to explain that legality means opposing the cannons of the Russians with force, with well-organised storming-parties. If you have to issue a proclamation at all, then issue one in which you declare from the very outset *the first traitor to the people, the Imperial Regent,^a an outlaw.*' ('Order!' Vigorous applause from the gallery.) '*And all the ministers too!*' (Renewed commotion.) 'Oh no, I will not be intimidated. He is the first traitor to the people.'

"President Reh: 'I think that Mr. Wolff has discarded all respect. He cannot describe the Archduke Imperial Regent as a traitor to the people before this House, and I must therefore call him to order...'

"Wolff: 'For my part, I accept the call to order and declare that I *intended* to be out of order, that he and his ministers *are traitors.*' (From all sides of the House: 'Order, this is scandalous!')

"President: 'I must deny you leave to speak.'

"Wolff: 'Well, I *protest*; it was my intention to speak here in the name of the people and to say what the people are thinking. I protest against every proclamation which is worded in this spirit.'

These few words descended like a thunderbolt on the terrified Assembly. For the first time the real state of affairs had been clearly and openly expressed to its members. The treachery of the Imperial Regent and his ministers was a public secret; every one of those present saw it occurring before their very eyes; but no one dared to put into words what he saw. And now comes this disrespectful little Silesian and all at once demolishes their whole conventional house of cards! Even the "determined Left" could not help protesting energetically against the unforgivable breach of all parliamentary decorum which this simple statement of the truth constituted, through the mouth of their worthy representative Mr. Karl Vogt (Vogt—the man who was sent a remittance of 40,000 francs in August, 1859, according to the lists of sums paid by Louis Napoleon to his agents, published in 1870¹⁹¹). Mr. Vogt enriched the debate with the following shabbily embarrassed and infamously mendacious^b protest^c:

"Gentlemen, I have requested leave to speak in order to defend the crystal-clear stream that has flowed from a poetic soul into this proclamation against the unworthy filth that has been thrown into the same or' (!) 'hurled at the same' (!), 'to defend these words against the muck which has piled up in this latest movement, threatening to swamp and defile everything there. Yes, gentlemen! It is

^a Archduke John.—*Ed.*

^b A play on words in the original: *verlegen* (embarrassed) and *verlogen* (mendacious).—*Ed.*

^c K. Vogt [Protest against Wolff's speech in the Frankfurt National Assembly on May 26, 1849], *Stenographischer Bericht über die Verhandlungen der deutschen constituirenden Nationalversammlung zu Frankfurt am Main*, No. 229, May 28, 1849, Vol. 9, Frankfurt am Main, 1849, p. 6751.—*Ed.*

muck and filth which are being cast in this' (!) 'way at all that may be considered pure, and I express my most profound indignation that such a thing' (!) 'could have happened.' "

Since Wolff had not mentioned Uhland's *editing* of the proclamation at all, but simply found its content too weak, one is at a loss to understand to what Mr. Vogt is actually referring with his indignation and his "filth" and "muck". But on the one hand there was the memory of the ruthless way in which the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* had always treated false brethren of Vogt's sort; on the other, rage at Wolff's straight language, which made the time-serving game of these false brethren henceforth impossible. Forced to choose between real revolution and reaction, Mr. Vogt declares himself in favour of the latter and the Imperial Regent and his ministers—of "all that may be considered pure". Unfortunately, the reactionaries wanted nothing to do with Mr. Vogt.

The very same day Wolff challenged Mr. Vogt to a duel with pistols through the deputy Würth from Sigmaringen, and when Mr. Vogt declined to shoot it out, threatened him with physical chastisement. Mr. Vogt, although physically a giant compared with Wolff, now fled under the protection of his sister, not showing his face anywhere except in her company. Wolff let the loudmouth go.

Everyone knows how a few days after the scene, the Assembly itself recognised the correctness of Wolff's utterances by fleeing from its own Imperial Regent and his government to Stuttgart.¹⁹²

XI

We are nearing the end. Wolff remained at his post in Stuttgart even when the National Assembly was dispersed by the troops from Württemberg, then going to Baden and finally to Switzerland with the other refugees. He chose Zurich as his place of residence, where he immediately established himself as a private tutor, but naturally encountered fierce competition from the many other graduate refugees living there. In spite of the indigent life which ensued, Wolff would have stayed in Switzerland. But it became increasingly obvious that the Swiss Federal Council,¹⁹³ obedient to the voice of European reaction, was determined little by little to harry all these refugees out of Switzerland, as Wolff put it. For most of them, this meant emigrating to America, and this was what the governments wanted. Once the refugees were on the other side of the ocean there was no being pestered by them.

Wolff too often pondered on the idea of emigrating to America, which the many friends of his who had gone there urged him to do. When the "harrying" became too much for him, he arrived, half-decided, in London in June 1851, where we gave him a place of abode for the time being. Here too the competition as a private tutor was very keen. Wolff was scarcely able to earn the paltriest living despite the greatest exertions. He did his utmost to keep his position a secret from his friends, as always when things were going badly for him. Nonetheless, he had been obliged by the end of 1853 to run up debts of about £37 (750 marks), which weighed very heavily on him; he wrote in his diary the same summer:

"On June 21, 1853 I had to spend my birthday in almost horrible DISTRESS."

His intention of going to America would probably have been put into effect, had not a likewise fugitive German doctor in Manchester,^a who was a friend of Wolff's from Breslau, obtained him enough private lessons in Manchester through his connections to enable him at least to live off them. And so he made the move in early January 1854.¹⁹⁴ In the beginning, certainly, things were rather touch-and-go. But his livelihood was assured, and then Wolff, with his extraordinary flair for getting on with children and winning their affection, was able to count on gradually extending his sphere of activities just as soon as he was known among the Germans there. This did not fail to happen. After a few years he found himself in a fairly comfortable material position for his demands, adored by his pupils, universally popular and respected by young and old, Englishmen and Germans on account of his uprightness, sense of duty and his cheerful amiability. It was in the nature of things that he mainly came into contact with bourgeois, in other words, more or less politically hostile elements; but although he never compromised either his character or his convictions in the slightest, only very rarely did he have to weather any conflicts, and this he did honourably. At that time we were all cut off from public political activity; we were silenced by the reactionary legislation, utterly ignored by the daily press and hardly honoured by a refusal from the publishers in response to any of our offers; Bonapartism seemed to have triumphed over socialism forever. For several years Wolff was the only comrade I had in Manchester with the same views as myself; no wonder that we met almost daily and that I then again had more than ample opportunity of admiring his almost instinctively correct assessment of current events.

Suffice it to take a single instance to illustrate Wolff's conscientiousness. He set one of his pupils a sum in arithmetic from a textbook. He compared the answer with the one given in the so-called key, and found it wrong. But when the boy always arrived at the same answer after repeated attempts Wolff did the sum himself and discovered that the boy was right; the key contained a printer's error. At once Wolff sat down and worked through every sum in the book in order to make sure that there were no more such errors in the key: "That's never going to happen to me again!"

This conscientiousness was, in fact, the cause of his death, not even 55 years old. In the spring of 1864 he started suffering from

^a Louis Borchardt.— *Ed.*

severe headaches due to overwork, which gradually resulted in almost total insomnia. His doctor had gone away; he refused to consult any other. All pleas for him to cancel or limit his lessons for a while were in vain; whatever he had taken on, he wanted to see through. Only when he simply could not endure it any more did he occasionally cancel his lessons. But it was too late. The headaches caused by saturation of the brain with blood went from bad to worse, the insomnia became ever more unremitting. A blood-vessel in the cerebrum burst, and after repeated cerebral haemorrhages death occurred on May 9, 1864. With him, Marx and I lost our most faithful friend, and the German revolution a man of irreplaceable worth.

Frederick Engels

[LETTER TO ENRICO BIGNAMI
ON THE GERMAN ELECTIONS OF 1877]¹⁹⁵

My dear Bignami,

Your Berlin correspondent^a will have given you all the details of the German elections.¹⁹⁶ Our triumph has been such as to strike terror into the hearts of the bourgeoisie both in Germany and abroad; here in London the shock wave has rippled throughout the press. The most significant thing is not the number of new electoral colleges we have won, although it is worth noting that the Emperor William, the King of Saxony^b and the most petty princeling in Germany (the prince of Reuss)^c all now reside in colleges represented by socialist workers and are, consequently, themselves represented by socialists. What is important, as well as these majorities, are the strong minorities obtained both in the cities and the countryside. In Berlin, 31,500; in Hamburg, Barmen-Elberfeld, Nuremberg and Dresden, 11,000 votes each city; not only in the countryside of Schleswig-Holstein, Saxony and Brunswick but even in the fortress of feudalism, in Mecklenburg, we had strong minorities of agricultural workers. On January 10, 1874 we had 350,000 votes; on January 10, 1877 we had at least 600,000.¹⁹⁷ The vote enables us to reckon our forces; the battalions are now able to tell you what are the army corps of German socialism passing in review on election day. The moral effect—on the socialist party which registers its progress with delight, on the workers who are still indifferent, and on our enemies—is enormous; and it is a good thing that once every three years the

^a E. Dörenberg.— *Ed.*

^b Albert.— *Ed.*

^c Heinrich XXII.— *Ed.*

mortal sin of going to the polls is committed. The abstentionists¹⁹⁸ can say what they like; a single event like the elections of January 10 is worth more than all their "revolutionary" phrases. And when I say *battalions and army corps* I am not speaking metaphorically. At least half if not more of these men of 25 (the minimum age) who voted for us spent two to three years in uniform and they know perfectly well how to handle a needle gun and a rifled cannon, and they belong to the army reserve. A few years more of this sort of progress and we shall have the reserves and the *Landwehr*¹⁹⁹ (three quarters of the war army) with us in such a way as to immobilise the armed forces as a whole and make any kind of offensive war impossible.

Some people will say: But why not have the revolution right away? Because, not having more than 600,000 votes out of 5 and a half million, and these votes being scattered in many areas, we would certainly be defeated, and we would see ruined by foolhardy uprisings and senselessness a movement which only requires a little time to lead us to certain victory. It is obvious that our adversaries will not let themselves be beaten easily, that the Prussians are not going to let their war army become infected with socialism without reacting against it. But the more reaction and repression there is, the higher the flood will mount, until it sweeps away the flood gates. Do you know what happened in Berlin? On the night of January 10, all the streets surrounding the socialist Committee²⁰⁰ rooms were packed with a crowd which even the police put at 22,000. Thanks to our party's perfect organisation and discipline, this Committee was the first to have the definitive election result. When it was declared, the whole crowd shouted an enthusiastic *hurrah*—for whom?—those elected?—no: "*for our most active agitator, the King's prosecutor Tessorff*". The latter was always renowned for his judicial proceedings against the socialists; through his violence he doubled our numbers.

This is how our people respond to the measures of violence: they are not worried by them, rather they provoke them as the best means of agitation.

A fraternal greeting from your

F. Engels

Written on February 13, 1877

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Central Organ der Sozialdemokratie Deutschlands.

Nr. 32

Donnerstag, 16. März

1877.

Frederick Engels

FROM ITALY²⁰¹

The socialist movement in Italy too has at last been placed on a firm foundation and shows every sign of developing rapidly and successfully. But to enable the reader to fully grasp the turnabout that has taken place, we have to retrace the history of how Italian socialism emerged.

The beginnings of the movement in Italy can be traced back to Bakuninist influences. While a passionate but extremely muddled class hatred against their exploiters was dominant among the working masses, an army of young lawyers, doctors, writers, clerks, etc., under Bakunin's personal command, seized the leadership in every place where the revolutionary proletarian element appeared. All of them, albeit with varying degrees of initiation, were members of the secret Bakuninist "Alliance,"²⁰² whose aim was to impose its leadership on the entire European workers' movement, and thus enable the Bakuninist sect surreptitiously to gain dominance in the coming social revolution. A detailed account of this can be found in the pamphlet *Ein Complot gegen die Internationale* (published by Bracke in Brunswick).^a

This worked splendidly as long as the workers' movement itself was still in the process of formation. The extravagant Bakuninist revolutionary phrases aroused the desired applause everywhere; even the elements which stemmed from earlier political revolutionary movements were swept along in the current, and alongside Spain, Italy became, in Bakunin's own words, "the most revolutionary country in Europe."²⁰³ Revolutionary in the sense of there

^a See K. Marx and F. Engels, *The Alliance of Socialist Democracy and the International Working Men's Association* (present edition, Vol. 23).—Ed.

being much ado about nothing. In contrast to the essentially political struggle by which the English workers' movement, followed by the French and finally the German movement, had become big and powerful, here all political activity was rejected since it implied recognition of "the State", and "the State" was the epitome of all evil. Hence, the ban on the formation of a workers' party; the ban on the fight for safeguards against exploitation, e.g., a standard working day, limitation of female and child labour; and above all a ban on participation in any elections. On the other hand, we have the command to agitate, organise and conspire for the coming revolution, which, when it drops from the skies, should be carried through without any provisional government and with the total destruction of all state and state-like institutions, solely by the initiative (secretly directed by the Alliance) of the working masses. "But do not ask me how!"^a

As we have already said, as long as the movement was in its infancy this all went splendidly. The vast majority of Italian towns are still largely isolated from world traffic, which they know only in the shape of tourist traffic. These towns supply the local peasants with handicraft products and facilitate the sale of agricultural produce over a larger area; moreover, the landowning nobility live in these towns and spend their revenue there; and, finally, a multitude of foreigners bring their money there. The proletarian elements in these towns are not very numerous, still less advanced, and moreover include a strong admixture of people who have no regular or steady jobs, as is favoured by tourism and the mild climate. Ultra-revolutionary phrases, which tacitly implied dagger and poison, fell upon fertile soil here to begin with. But there are also industrial towns in Italy, especially in the north, and as soon as the movement gained a foothold among the truly proletarian masses of these towns such a hazy diet could no longer suffice, nor could these workers allow those failed young bourgeois—who had thrown themselves into socialism because, to use Bakunin's words, their "career had reached a deadlock"—to patronise them in the long run.

And so it happened. The dissatisfaction of the North Italian workers at the ban on all political action, i.e., on all real action which went further than idle talk and conspiratorial humbug, grew with every passing day. The German electoral victories of 1874²⁰⁴ and the unification of the German socialists achieved in their wake did not go unnoticed in Italy either. The elements

^a H. Heine, *Buch der Lieder. Junge Leiden, Lieder VIII.*—Ed.

which stemmed from the old republican movement and had only reluctantly submitted to the "anarchistic" clamour increasingly began to find the opportunity to stress the necessity of political struggle and to voice the rising opposition in the newspaper *La Plebe*. This weekly, republican during the first years of its existence, had soon joined the socialist movement and kept aloof as long as possible from all "anarchical" sectarianism. When, finally, the working masses in Northern Italy outgrew their obtrusive leaders and created a real movement in place of the fantastic one, they found in the *Plebe* a willing organ prepared from time to time to publish heretical hints about the necessity of political struggle.

Had Bakunin been alive, he would have fought this heresy in his usual manner. He would have imputed "authoritarianism", a craving for domination, ambition and so on to the people connected with the *Plebe*; he would have made all manner of petty personal criticisms against them and would have had this repeated time and again in all organs of the Alliance in Switzerland, Italy and Spain. Only as a secondary thought would he have demonstrated that all these crimes were simply the inevitable consequences of that original deadly sin—the heresy of recognising political action; for political action implied recognition of the State, and since the State was the embodiment of authoritarianism, of domination, it followed that everybody who stood for working-class political action must logically stand for political domination for himself, and hence be an enemy of the working class—stone him! Bakunin used this method, which he borrowed from the late Maximilien Robespierre, with great skill, but applied it far too often and far too uniformly. This was nevertheless the only method which promised at least momentary success.

But Bakunin had died^a and the secret world government had passed into the hands of Mr. James Guillaume of Neuchâtel in Switzerland. The cunning man of the world was superseded by a strait-laced pedant who applied the fanaticism of the Swiss Calvinists to the anarchist doctrine. The true faith had to be asserted at all costs and the narrow-minded schoolmaster of Neuchâtel had in any case to be recognised as the Pope of this true faith. The *Bulletin of the Jura Federation*^b—a Federation with an avowedly hardly 200 members as against the 5,000 of the Swiss Workers' Association²⁰⁵—was designated as the official gazette of

^a On July 1, 1876.—Ed.

^b *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne de l'Association internationale des travailleurs*.—Ed.

the sect and began bluntly to "rebuke" those who were vacillating in their faith. But the workers of Lombardy who had formed the North Italian Federation²⁰⁶ were no longer willing to tolerate these rebukes. And when last autumn the Jurassic bulletin even presumed to *order* the *Plebe* to get rid of a Paris correspondent who had incurred Mr. Guillaume's displeasure,^a the friendship came to an end. The bulletin continued to accuse the *Plebe* and the North Italians of heresy, but the latter now knew what was what; they knew that the preaching of anarchy and autonomy served to conceal the claim of a few plotters to dictate their orders to the whole workers' movement.

"Four short and very calm lines in the note have greatly irritated the Jura bulletin, and it tries to make out that we were enraged by it, whereas we were merely *amused*. Indeed, one would have to be very childish to swallow the bait of people who, ill with envy, knock at all doors and by means of vilification seek to solicit a bit of malice against us and our friends. The hand which has long been going around, sowing the seeds of *discord and strife*, is too well known for anyone to be still deceived by its Jesuit (Loyolite) machinations" (*La Plebe*, January 21, 1877).^b

And in the issue of February 26^c these same people are called "a few narrow-minded *anarchistic* and—what a monstrous contradiction!—at the same time *dictatorial* minds"; this is the best proof that these gentlemen have been seen for what they are in Milan and that they can cause no more mischief there.

The finishing touches were made by the German elections of January 10 and by the concomitant turnabout in the Belgian movement—the abandonment of the previous policy of political abstention and its replacement by agitation for universal suffrage and factory legislation. The North Italian Federation held a congress in Milan on February 17 and 18.^d In its resolutions the congress refrains from all unnecessary and misplaced hostility towards the Bakuninist groups of the Italian members of the International. They even expressed willingness to send delegates to the congress called for in Brussels which will attempt to unite the various components of the European workers' movement. But at the same time they express three points with the utmost firmness which are of decisive importance for the Italian movement, namely:

^a "Nouvelles de l'extérieur. Italie", *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne de l'Association internationale des travailleurs*, No. 51, December 17, 1876.—*Ed.*

^b "Quattro piccole righe...", *La Plebe*, No. 3, January 21, 1877.—*Ed.*

^c "Abbiamo ricevuto...", *La Plebe*, No. 7, February 26, 1877.—*Ed.*

^d "Congresso Socialista di Milano", *ibid.*—*Ed.*

1. that *all* available means—hence also political means—must be used to promote the movement;

2. that the socialist workers must set up a socialist *party*, which is to be independent of any other political or religious party;

3. that the North Italian Federation, without prejudice to its own autonomy, and on the basis of the *original* Rules of the International,^a considers itself a member of this great association and moreover *independent* of all other Italian associations which, however, will as before continue to receive proof of its solidarity.^b

And so—political struggle, organisation of a political party and separation from the anarchists. By adopting these resolutions, the North Italian Federation has definitively broken with the Bakuninist sect and taken its stand on the common ground of the great European workers' movement. And since it embraces the industrially advanced regions of Italy—Lombardy, Piedmont and Venetia—it is bound to be successful. Against the rational means of agitation which experience has shown to be effective in all other countries, the cliquishness of the Bakuninist quacks will quickly reveal its impotence, and in the South of the country too the Italian proletariat will throw off the yoke imposed by people who derive their mission to lead the workers' movement from their position as down-and-out bourgeois.

Written between March 6 and 11, 1877

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March 16, 1877

^a See present edition, Vol. 20, pp. 14-16.—*Ed.*

^b "Congresso Socialista di Milano", *La Plebe*, No. 7, February 26, 1877.—*Ed.*

Frederick Engels

[BRITISH AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE POLITICAL LIFE OF THEIR COUNTRY]²⁰⁷

London, June 5

At a meeting of delegates of the agricultural associations which took place a few days ago at Exeter Hall, Joseph Arch spoke out forcefully against the war²⁰⁸ and received rapturous applause. The leader of the farm labourers' party revealed himself to be an uninhibited advocate of peace, especially because the sacrifices which war entails weigh increasingly heavily on the workers more than on the other social classes. The agricultural labourers in Britain do not yet participate officially in the political life of their country, but these impressive demonstrations of opposition to war cannot help having a certain influence also on those classes upon which the politics of the nation depends. The agricultural labourers are beginning to feel the need of playing a direct part in this political life themselves, and therefore at their meeting at Exeter Hall they also dealt in particular with the extension of franchise.²⁰⁹ They still constitute a caste of poor pariahs, not only in economic terms but politically too. They therefore hammer at the door of Parliament and ask to go in: they no longer want to be what they have been up till now. One can easily imagine that their claims are not viewed favourably by all those—and they are many, particularly among the clergy—who consider the subjection of the agricultural labourers to be the basis of the whole British politico-economic system. On the other hand, the members of the bourgeois parliamentary opposition are coming forward to take control of this farm labourers' movement themselves and use it to destroy their political opponents currently in government. At the head of this bourgeois opposition stands Mr. Bright, who also spoke at the Exeter Hall meeting and, deftly leaving out the big economic-social issue, made a resounding political accusation

against the men who are at present in power. This is understandable: the economic-social terrain is a highly arduous and tricky one for the bourgeoisie. In fact the aristocracy in Britain has always shown itself to be far less inhibited on this terrain because its social position does not force it to speculate, as the bourgeoisie does, on everything and everyone in order to get rich. The workers understand this state of affairs perfectly and so when they want to wrest concessions they turn more hopefully to the aristocracy than to the bourgeoisie, as they have demonstrated in a recent appeal to Lord Beaconsfield.²¹⁰ So long as this situation continues, so long as the workers can play see-saw with some small profit between bourgeoisie and aristocracy, Britain will certainly not experience violent socialist agitations such as occur in other countries, where the ruling classes simply constitute, in relation to the workers, a great, reactionary, compact and inexorable mass. But once the working classes are no longer able to draw any profit from the rival competition between the interests of the landed aristocracy and the interests of the industrial bourgeoisie, because that competition will no longer exist, then we shall have in Britain too the start of the real revolutionary period. Up till now the aristocracy mollified the working masses with philanthropic concessions; now the bourgeoisie is trying its hand by lending support to the workers' political tendencies and taking possession of them in order to direct them. We are on the brink of the period of universal suffrage: and on this terrain the bourgeoisie is hastening to display all its skills and wiles, in other words to make political concessions in order to safeguard its own economic interests and leave the aristocracy behind. Nevertheless, this whole mechanism of relations between the three social elements—proletarians, bourgeoisie and aristocrats—has had the effect on the proletarians of making them feel no longer like children or sentimentalists but of realising—as a speaker at Exeter Hall aptly put it—that their relations with the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy can only be *business relations*.

The social movement in Britain—as you can see—is slow, it is evolutionist, not revolutionary, but it is nonetheless a movement forwards.

Written on June 5, 1877

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Frederick Engels

[BRITISH AGRICULTURAL UNION AND THE COLLECTIVIST MOVEMENT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE]

London, June 14

I realised that my last article^a was incomplete, and therefore feel it to be my due to write the present one. I spoke there about the Agricultural Union,²¹¹ founded 6 years ago by citizen Arch, who is now famous throughout Britain for this initiative and for the quality of his public speaking: he is a real tribune, somewhat unrefined, but powerful in his lack of refinement.

The Union began its propaganda over the wages question. The farm workers earned no more than the equivalent of 16 lire (Italian) a week. Arch, with the help of some able friends, increased the membership of the Agricultural Union by over 50 thousand in 3 or 4 years and was able to organise a strike of 30 thousand men. The strike was successful, and wages rose by two and a half lire a week in the Eastern counties. At the same time provisions were adopted to let farm workers emigrate to America and Australia or move from one English county to another. These transfers obtained the desired effect of raising wages where manpower decreased. This struggle was conducted to good effect until 1874.²¹² But after this date things changed. There was an attempt to tackle the question of an expropriation of the land in favour of the State, as the famous economist Stuart Mill had already proposed.^b The questions of universal suffrage and popular education were also raised. Note, however, a very significant circumstance, namely that the movement in favour of collective property was almost exclusively the work of those who broke away from citizen Arch, whose constant

^a See this volume, pp. 179-80.— *Ed.*

^b J. S. Mill, *Principles of Political Economy with Some of Their Applications to Social Philosophy*, London, 1848.— *Ed.*

predilection was for those issues which did not touch the holy altar of the individual ownership of land. Indeed, in the presence of the collectivist movement, he felt disposed to preach a sort of conciliation between agricultural labourers and their exploiters; in the presence, in other words, of the revolutionary idea of collectivism he felt himself to be a conservative: he reserved all his hostility for the upper aristocracy. He thought it useful to woo the tenant farmers a little, to avoid having them as avowed enemies in the parliamentary elections. It is therefore not unlikely that we shall see citizen Arch in the House of Commons: there is already a certain amount of agitation in this direction and Arch is willing to stand as a candidate for membership. All this does not stop the collectivist movement from making headway: indeed even at the recent MEETING of the Agricultural Union²¹⁸ something was said about it. After recognising the need for great improvements in agriculture, the desire was expressed for a law which would place all cultivable land in the hands of a representative body and indemnify the owners. This expropriation would be intended to benefit the working people—those people, in other words, in whose hands the future prosperity of agriculture lies.

I have been concerned to set this out for you because I want the Italian socialists to have a clear idea of the spirit of our Agricultural Union and the movement agitating round it.

Written on June 14, 1877

First published in *La Plebe*, No. 19,
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Published in English for the first time

Frederick Engels

KARL MARX²¹⁴

Karl Marx, the man who was the first to give socialism, and thereby the whole workers' movement of our day, a scientific foundation, was born in Trier in 1818. He studied in Bonn and Berlin, at first taking up jurisprudence, but he soon devoted himself exclusively to the study of history and philosophy, and in 1842 was on the point of qualifying as a dozent in philosophy when the political movement which had arisen since the death of Frederick William III directed his life into a different career. With his collaboration, the leaders of the Rhenish liberal bourgeoisie, Messrs. Camphausen, Hansemann, and others had founded in Cologne the *Rheinische Zeitung*, and in the autumn of 1842, Marx, whose criticism of the proceedings of the Rhine Province Assembly^a had attracted very great attention, was put at the head of the paper. The *Rheinische Zeitung* naturally appeared under censorship, but the censors could not cope with it.* The *Rheinische Zeitung* almost always got through the articles which mattered; the censor was first supplied with insignificant fodder for him to strike out, until he either gave way of himself or was compelled to give way by the threat that then the paper would not appear the next day. Ten newspapers with the same courage as the *Rheinische Zeitung* and whose publishers allowed a few hundred talers extra to be expended on typesetting—and censorship would have been made impossible

* The first censor of the *Rheinische Zeitung* was Police Councillor Dolleschall, the same man who once struck out an advertisement in the *Kölnische Zeitung* of the translation of Dante's *Divine Comedy* by Philaethes (later King John of Saxony) with the remark: One must not make a comedy of divine affairs.

^a K. Marx, "Proceedings of the Sixth Rhine Province Assembly".—Ed

in Germany as early as 1843. But the German newspaper owners were petty-minded, timid philistines, and the *Rheinische Zeitung* carried on the struggle alone. It wore out one censor after another; finally it came under a double censorship; after the first censorship the Regierungspräsident^a had once more and finally to censor it. Even that was to no avail. In early 1843, the government declared that it was impossible to cope with this newspaper and suppressed it without further ado.

Marx, who in the meanwhile had married the sister of von Westphalen, later a reactionary minister, moved to Paris, and there, in conjunction with A. Ruge, published the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, in which he opened the series of his socialist writings with a *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law*.^b Further, together with F. Engels, *The Holy Family. Against Bruno Bauer and Co.*,^c a satirical criticism of one of the latest forms assumed by the German philosophical idealism of the time.

The study of political economy and of the history of the Great French Revolution²¹⁵ still allowed Marx time enough for occasional attacks on the Prussian government²¹⁶; the latter revenged itself in the spring of 1845 by securing from Guizot's ministry—Mr. Alexander von Humboldt is said to have acted as intermediary²¹⁷—his expulsion from France. Marx shifted his domicile to Brussels and published there in French in 1848 "Discours sur le libre échange" (Speech on the Question of Free Trade)²¹⁸ and in 1847 *Misère de la philosophie*,^d a criticism of Proudhon's *Philosophie de la misère*^e (Philosophy of Poverty). At the same time he made use of the opportunity to found a German workers' association in Brussels²¹⁹ and so commenced practical agitation. The latter became still more important for him when he and his political friends in 1847 entered the secret Communist League, which had already been in existence for a number of years. Its whole structure was now radically changed; this association, which previously had been more or less conspiratorial, was transformed into a simple organisation of communist propaganda, which was

^a Carl Johann Heinrich Eduard von Gerlach.—Ed.

^b K. Marx, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law. Introduction".—Ed.

^c K. Marx and F. Engels, *The Holy Family, or Critique of Critical Criticism. Against Bruno Bauer and Company*.—Ed.

^d K. Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy. Answer to the "Philosophy of Poverty" by M. Proudhon*.—Ed.

^e P. J. Proudhon, *Système des contradictions économiques, ou la Philosophie de la misère*.—Ed.

1878.

Volks-Kalender.

Braunschweig.
Druck und Verlag von W. Bracke jr.



The title-page of *Volks-Kalender*, Brunswick, 1878

only secret because necessity compelled it to be so, the *first* organisation of the German Social-Democratic Party. The League existed wherever German workers' associations were to be found; in almost all of these associations in England, Belgium, France and Switzerland, and in very many of the associations in Germany, the leading members belonged to the League and the share of the League in the fledgling German workers' movement was very considerable. Moreover, our League was the first to emphasise the international character of the whole workers' movement and implement it in practice, having Englishmen, Belgians, Hungarians, Poles, etc., as members and organising international workers' meetings, especially in London.

The transformation of the League took place at two congresses held in 1847,²²⁰ the second of which resolved on the elaboration and publication of the fundamental principles of the Party in a manifesto to be drawn up by Marx and Engels. Thus appeared *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, which first saw the light of day in 1848, shortly before the February Revolution, and has since been translated into almost all European languages.

The *Deutsche-Brüsseler-Zeitung*, in which Marx participated and which mercilessly exposed the blessings of the police regime of the fatherland, caused the Prussian government to try to effect Marx's expulsion once more, but in vain. When, however, the February Revolution resulted in popular movements also in Brussels, and a radical change appeared to be imminent in Belgium, the Belgian government arrested Marx without ceremony and deported him. In the meantime, the French Provisional Government had sent him through Flocon an invitation to return to Paris, and he accepted this call.

In Paris he came out especially against the swindle, widespread among the Germans there, of wanting to form the German workers in France into armed legions in order to carry the revolution and the republic into Germany. On the one hand, Germany had to make her revolution herself, and, on the other hand, every revolutionary foreign legion formed in France was betrayed in advance by the Lamartines of the Provisional Government to the government which was to be overthrown, as occurred in Belgium and Baden.

After the March Revolution, Marx went to Cologne where he founded the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, which was in existence from June 1, 1848 to May 19, 1849—the only paper which represented the standpoint of the proletariat within the democratic movement of the time, as shown e.g. in its unreserved support for the Paris

June insurgents of 1848,²²¹ which cost the paper the defection of almost all its shareholders. In vain the *Kreuz-Zeitung*^a pointed to the "Chimborazo^b insolence" with which the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* attacked everything sacred, from the King and Imperial Regent^c down to the gendarme, and that, too, in a Prussian fortress with a garrison of 8,000 at that time; in vain was the rage of the Rhenish liberal philistines, who had suddenly become reactionary; in vain was the paper suspended for a lengthy period by martial law in Cologne in the autumn of 1848; in vain the Imperial Ministry of Justice in Frankfurt denounced article after article to the Cologne Public Prosecutor in order that judicial proceedings should be taken; under the very eyes of the police the paper calmly went on being edited and printed, and its distribution and reputation increased with the vehemence of its attacks on the government and the bourgeoisie. When the Prussian coup d'état took place in November 1848,²²² the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* called at the head of each issue upon the people to refuse to pay taxes and to meet force with force. In the spring of 1849, both on this account and because of another article,^d it was made to face a jury, but on both occasions was acquitted. Finally, when the May revolts of 1848 in Dresden and the Rhine Province had been suppressed, and the Prussian campaign against the Baden-Palatinate uprising had been inaugurated by the concentration and mobilisation of considerable masses of troops,²²³ the government believed itself strong enough to suppress the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* by force. The last number—printed in red—appeared on May 19.

Marx again went to Paris, but only a few weeks after the demonstration of June 13, 1849, he was faced by the French government with the choice of either moving his residence to Brittany or leaving France. He preferred the latter and moved to London, where he has lived uninterruptedly ever since.

An attempt to continue to issue the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* in the form of a review (in Hamburg in 1850)^e had to be given up after a while in view of the ever-increasing onslaughts of the reaction. Immediately after the coup d'état in France in December 1851, Marx published *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*

^a *Neue Preussische Zeitung*.—Ed.

^b A peak in the Andes.—Ed.

^c Frederick William IV and Archduke John of Austria.—Ed.

^d "Arrests", *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, No. 35, July 5, 1848.—Ed.

^e *Neue Rheinische Zeitung. Politisch-ökonomische Revue*.—Ed.

(New York, 1852; second edition, Hamburg, 1869, shortly before the war). In 1853 he wrote *Revelations Concerning the Communist Trial in Cologne* (first printed in Basle, later in Boston and again recently in Leipzig).

After the condemnation of the members of the Communist League in Cologne, Marx withdrew from political agitation and for ten years devoted himself, on the one hand, to the study of the rich treasures offered by the library of the British Museum in the sphere of political economy, and, on the other hand, to writing for the *New-York Tribune*, which up to the outbreak of the American Civil War published not only contributions signed by him but also numerous leading articles on conditions in Europe and Asia from his pen. His attacks on Lord Palmerston, based on an exhaustive study of British official documents, were reprinted in London in pamphlet form.^a

As the first fruit of his many years studying economics, there appeared in 1859 *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Part One (Berlin, Duncker). This work contains the first coherent exposition of the Marxian theory of value, including the doctrine of money. During the Italian War²²⁴ Marx, in the German newspaper *Das Volk*, appearing in London, attacked Bonapartism, which at that time posed as liberal and played the part of liberator of the oppressed nationalities, and also the Prussian policy of the day, which under the cover of neutrality was seeking to fish in troubled waters. In this connection it was necessary to attack also Herr Karl Vogt, who at that time, on the commission of Prince Napoleon (Plon-Plon) and in the pay of Louis Napoleon, was carrying on agitation for the neutrality, and indeed the sympathy, of Germany. When Vogt heaped upon him the most abominable and deliberately false calumnies, Marx answered with *Herr Vogt* (London, 1860), in which Vogt and the other gentlemen of the imperial sham-democratic gang were exposed, and Vogt himself on the basis of both external and internal evidence was convicted of receiving bribes from the December Empire.^b The confirmation came just ten years later: in the list of the Bonaparte hirelings, found in the Tuileries in 1870 and published by the September government, there was the following entry under the letter V: "Vogt—in August 1859 there were remitted to him—Fr. 40,000."²²⁵

^a See present edition, Vol. 12, pp. 341-406.— Ed

^b The empire of Napoleon III.— Ed

At last, in 1867, there appeared in Hamburg: *Capital. A Critique of Political Economy*, Volume I, Marx's chief work, which expounds the foundations of his economic and socialist conceptions and the main features of his criticism of existing society, the capitalist mode of production and its consequences. The second edition of this epoch-making work appeared in 1872; the author is engaged in the elaboration of the second volume.

Meanwhile the workers' movement in various countries of Europe had regained strength to the extent that Marx could entertain the idea of realising a long-cherished wish: the foundation of a Workers' Association embracing the most advanced countries of Europe and America, which would demonstrate bodily, so to speak, the international character of the socialist movement both to the workers themselves and to the bourgeois and the governments—for the encouragement and strengthening of the proletariat, for striking fear into the hearts of its enemies. A public meeting in favour of Poland, which had just then again been crushed by Russia, held on September 28, 1864, in St. Martin's Hall, London, provided the occasion for bringing forward the matter, which was enthusiastically taken up. The *International Working Men's Association* was founded; a Provisional General Council, with its seat in London, was elected at the meeting, and Marx was the soul of this as of all subsequent General Councils up to the Hague Congress. He drafted almost every one of the documents issued by the General Council of the International, from the Inaugural Address, 1864, to the Address on the Civil War in France, 1871. To describe Marx's activity in the International is to write the history of this Association itself, which in any case lives on in the memory of European workers.

The fall of the Paris Commune put the International in an impossible position. It was thrust into the forefront of European history at a moment when it had everywhere been deprived of all possibility of successful practical action. The events which raised it to the position of the seventh Great Power simultaneously forbade it to mobilise its fighting forces and employ them in action, on pain of inevitable defeat and the setting back of the workers' movement for decades. In addition, from various sides elements were pushing themselves forward that sought to exploit the suddenly enhanced fame of the Association for the purpose of gratifying personal vanity or personal ambition, without understanding the real position of the International or without regard for it. A heroic decision had to be taken, and it was again Marx

who took it and who carried it through at the Hague Congress. In a solemn resolution, the International disclaimed all responsibility for the doings of the Bakuninists, who formed the centre of those unreasonable and unsavoury elements. Then, in view of the impossibility of also meeting, in the face of the general reaction, the increased demands which were being imposed upon it, and of maintaining its complete efficacy other than by a series of sacrifices which would have drained the workers' movement of its life-blood—in view of this situation, the International withdrew from the stage for the time being by transferring the General Council to America.^a The results proved the correctness of this decision—which was at the time, and has been since, so often censured. On the one hand, it put a stop then and since to all attempts to make useless *putsches* in the name of the International, while, on the other hand, the continuing close intercourse between the socialist workers' parties of the various countries proved that the consciousness of the identity of interests and of the solidarity of the proletariat of all countries evoked by the International is able to assert itself even without the bond of a formal international association, which for the moment has become a fetter.

After the Hague Congress, Marx at last found peace and leisure again for resuming his theoretical work, and it is to be hoped he will be able before long to have the second volume of *Capital* ready for the press.

Of the many important discoveries through which Marx has inscribed his name in the annals of science, we can here dwell on only two.

The first is the revolution brought about by him in the whole conception of world history. The entire view of history hitherto was based on the conception that the ultimate causes of all historical changes are to be sought in the changing ideas of human beings, and that of all historical changes political changes are the most important and dominate the whole of history. But the question was not asked as to whence the ideas come into men's minds and what the driving causes of the political changes are. Only upon the newer school of French, and partly also of English, historians had the conviction forced itself that, since the Middle Ages at least, the driving force in European history had been the struggle of the developing bourgeoisie with the feudal aristocracy for social and political domination. Now Marx has proved that the whole of history hitherto is a history of class

^a See present edition, Vol. 23, pp. 250-52.— *Ed.*

struggles, that in all the manifold and complicated political struggles the only thing at issue has been the social and political rule of classes of society, the maintenance of domination by older classes and the conquest of domination by newly arising classes. To what, however, do these classes owe their origin and their continued existence? They owe it to the particular material, physically sensible conditions in which society in a given period produces and exchanges its means of subsistence. The feudal rule of the Middle Ages rested on the self-sufficient economy of small peasant communities, which themselves produced almost all their requirements, in which there was almost no exchange and which received from the arms-bearing nobility protection from without and national or at least political cohesion. When the towns arose and with them separate handicraft industry and trade, at first internal and later international, the urban bourgeoisie developed, and already during the Middle Ages achieved, in struggle with the nobility, its inclusion in the feudal order as a likewise privileged estate. But with the discovery of the extra-European lands, from the middle of the fifteenth century onwards, this bourgeoisie acquired a far more extensive sphere of trade and therewith a new spur for its industry; in the most important branches handicrafts were supplanted by manufacture, now on a factory scale, and this again was supplanted by large-scale industry, which became possible owing to the discoveries of the previous century, especially that of the steam engine. Large-scale industry, in its turn, had an effect on trade, driving out the old manual labour in backward countries and creating the present-day new means of communication: steam engines, railways, electric telegraphy, in the more developed ones. Thus the bourgeoisie came more and more to combine social wealth and social power in its hands, while it still for a long period remained excluded from political power which was in the hands of the nobility and the monarchy supported by the nobility. But at a certain stage—in France since the Great Revolution—it also conquered political power, and now in turn became the ruling class over the proletariat and small peasants. From this point of view all the historical phenomena are explicable in the simplest possible way—with sufficient knowledge of the particular economic condition of society, which it is true is totally lacking in our professional historians—and in the same way the conceptions and ideas of each historical period are most simply to be explained from the economic conditions of life and from the social and political relations of the period, which are in turn determined by these

economic conditions. History was for the first time placed on its real basis; the palpable but previously totally overlooked fact that men must first of all eat, drink, have shelter and clothing, therefore must *work*, before they can fight for domination, pursue politics, religion, philosophy, etc.—this palpable fact at last came into its historical right.

This new conception of history, however, was of supreme significance for the socialist outlook. It showed that all history hitherto revolved around class antagonisms and class struggles, that there have always existed ruling and ruled, exploiting and exploited classes, and that the great majority of mankind has always been condemned to arduous labour and little enjoyment. Why is this? Simply because in all earlier stages of development of mankind production was so little developed that historical development could proceed only in this antagonistic form, that historical progress on the whole was assigned to the activity of a small privileged minority, while the great mass remained condemned to producing by their labour their own meagre means of subsistence and also the increasingly rich means of the privileged. But the same investigation of history, which in this way provides a natural and reasonable explanation of class rule hitherto, otherwise only explicable from the wickedness of man, also leads to the realisation that, in consequence of the so tremendously increased productive forces of the present time, even the last pretext has vanished, at least in the most advanced countries, for a division of mankind into rulers and ruled, exploiters and exploited; that the ruling big bourgeoisie has fulfilled its historic mission, that it is no longer capable of the leadership of society and has even become a hindrance to the development of production, as the trade crises, and especially the last great crash,²²⁶ and the depressed condition of industry in all countries have proved; that historical leadership has passed to the proletariat, a class which, owing to its whole position in society, can only free itself by abolishing altogether all class rule, all servitude and all exploitation; and that the productive forces of society, which have outgrown the control of the bourgeoisie, are only waiting for the associated proletariat to take possession of them in order to bring about a state of things in which every member of society will be enabled to participate not only in production but also in the distribution and administration of social wealth, and which so increases the productive forces of society and their yield by planned operation of the whole of production that the satisfaction of all reasonable needs will be assured to everyone in an ever-increasing measure.

The second important discovery of Marx is the final elucidation of the relation between capital and labour, in other words, the demonstration how, within present society and under the existing capitalist mode of production, the exploitation of the worker by the capitalist takes place. Ever since political economy had put forward the proposition that labour is the source of all wealth and of all value, the question became inevitable: How is this then to be reconciled with the fact that the wage labourer does not receive the whole sum of value created by his labour but has to surrender a part of it to the capitalist? Both the bourgeois economists and the socialists exerted themselves to give a scientifically valid answer to this question, but in vain, until at last Marx came forward with the solution. This solution is as follows: The present-day capitalist mode of production presupposes the existence of two social classes—on the one hand, that of the capitalists, who are in possession of the means of production and subsistence, and, on the other hand, that of the proletarians, who, being excluded from this possession, have only a single commodity for sale, their labour power, and who therefore have to sell this labour power of theirs in order to obtain possession of means of subsistence. The value of a commodity is, however, determined by the socially necessary quantity of labour embodied in its production, and, therefore, also in its reproduction; the value of the labour power of an average human being during a day, month or year is determined, therefore, by the quantity of labour embodied in the quantity of means of subsistence necessary for the maintenance of this labour power during a day, month or year. Let us assume that the means of subsistence of a worker for one day require six hours of labour for their production, or, what is the same thing, that the labour contained in them represents a quantity of labour of six hours; then the value of labour power for one day will be expressed in a sum of money which also embodies six hours of labour. Let us also assume that the capitalist who employs our worker pays him this sum in return, that is the full value of his labour power. If now the worker works six hours of the day for the capitalist, he has completely replaced the latter's outlay—six hours' labour for six hours' labour. But then there would be nothing in it for the capitalist, and the latter therefore looks at the matter quite differently. He says: I have bought the labour power of this worker not for six hours but for a whole day, and accordingly he makes the worker work 8, 10, 12, 14 or more hours according to circumstances, so that the product of the seventh, eighth and following hours is a product of unpaid labour and finds its way, to

begin with, into the pocket of the capitalist. Thus the worker in the service of the capitalist not only reproduces the value of his labour power, for which he receives pay, but over and above that he also produces a *surplus value* which, appropriated in the first place by the capitalist, is subsequently divided according to definite economic laws among the whole capitalist class and forms the basic stock from which arise ground rent, profit, accumulation of capital, in short, all the wealth consumed or accumulated by the non-labouring classes. But this proved that the acquisition of riches by the present-day capitalists consists just as much in the appropriation of the unpaid labour of others as that of the slaveowner or the feudal lord exploiting serf labour, and that all these forms of exploitation are only to be distinguished by the difference in manner and method by which the unpaid labour is appropriated. This, however, also removed the last justification for all the hypocritical phrases of the possessing classes to the effect that in the present social order right and justice, equality of rights and duties and a universal harmony of interests prevail, and present-day bourgeois society, no less than its predecessors, was exposed as a grandiose institution for the exploitation of the huge majority of the people by a small, ever-diminishing minority.

Modern, scientific socialism is based on these two important facts. In the second volume of *Capital*, these and other hardly less important scientific discoveries concerning the capitalist system of society will be further developed, and thereby those aspects of political economy not touched upon in the first volume will also undergo revolutionisation. May it be vouchsafed to Marx to be able soon to have it ready for the press.

Written in mid-June 1877

Printed according to the text of the first publication

First published in the *Volks-Kalender*,
Brunswick, 1878

Karl Marx

[LETTER TO OTECHESTVENNIYE ZAPISKI]²²⁷Dear Sir,^a

The author^b of the article "Karl Marx Before the Tribunal of Mr. Zhukovsky" is obviously an intelligent man and, had he found a single passage in my account of "primitive accumulation" to support his conclusions, he would have quoted it. For want of such a passage he considers it necessary to seize hold of an annexe, a polemical sortie against a Russian "belletrist"^c printed in the appendix to the first German edition of *Capital*. What do I there reproach this writer for? The fact that he discovered "Russian" communism not in Russia but in the book by Haxthausen,^d the adviser to the Prussian Government, and that in his hands the Russian community serves only as an argument to prove that the old, rotten Europe must be regenerated by the victory of Pan-Slavism. My appreciation of this writer may be correct, it may be wrong, but in neither case could it provide the key to my views on the efforts "русскихъ людей найти для своего отечества путь развитія, отличный отъ того, которымъ шла и идетъ Западная Европа etc."^e

In the Afterword to the second German edition of *Capital*—which the author of the article about Mr. Zhukovsky knows,

^a M. Ye. Saltykov-Shchedrin.— *Ed*

^b N. K. Mikhailovsky.— *Ed*

^c A. I. Herzen.— *Ed*

^d A. Haxthausen, *Studien über die innern Zustände, das Volksleben und insbesondere die ländlichen Einrichtungen Rußlands*— *Ed*

^e "of Russians to find a path of development for their country which will be different from that which Western Europe pursued and still pursues etc."— *Ed*.

Handwritten text, likely a letter or document, written in a cursive script. The text is heavily obscured by a dense, dark, grainy pattern, possibly due to poor reproduction quality or intentional redaction. The visible fragments of text are illegible.

The first page of Marx's "Letter to *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*"

because he quotes it—I speak of “a great Russian scholar and critic”^a with the high esteem which he deserves. In his noteworthy articles^b the latter dealt with the question whether Russia should start, as its liberal economists wish, by destroying the rural community in order to pass to a capitalist system or whether, on the contrary, it can acquire all the fruits of this system without suffering its torments, by developing its own historical conditions. He comes out in favour of the second solution. And my honourable critic would have been at least as justified in inferring from my esteem for this “great Russian scholar and critic” that I shared his views on this question as he is in concluding from my polemic against the “belletrist” and Pan-Slavist that I rejected them.

Be that as it may, as I do not like to leave anything to “guesswork”, I shall speak straight out. In order to reach an informed judgment of the economic development of contemporary Russia, I learned Russian and then spent several long years studying official publications and others with a bearing on this subject. I have arrived at this result: if Russia continues along the path it has followed since 1861, it will miss the finest chance that history has ever offered to a nation, only to undergo all the fatal vicissitudes of the capitalist system.^c

II

The chapter on primitive accumulation does not pretend to do more than trace the road by which in Western Europe the capitalist economic order emerged from the entrails of the feudal economic order. It thus describes the historical movement which by divorcing the producers from their means of production transforms them into wage-workers (proletarians in the modern sense of the word) and the owners of the means of production into capitalists. In this history, “every revolution which acts as a lever for the advancement of the capitalist class in its process of formation marks an epoch; above all that which, by stripping great masses of men of their traditional means of production and subsistence, suddenly hurls them on the labour market. But the basis of this whole development, is the expropriation of the agricultural

^a N. G. Chernyshevsky.—*Ed.*

^b Н. Чернышевский, *Письма без адреса*, Цюрихъ, 1874.—*Ed.*

^c This paragraph is crossed out in Marx's manuscript.—*Ed.*

producer. To date this has not been accomplished in a radical fashion anywhere except in England ... but all the other countries of Western Europe are undergoing the same process etc." (*Capital*, French edition, p. 315). At the end of the chapter the historical tendency of capitalist production is summed up thus: That it "itself begets its own negation with the inexorability which governs the metamorphoses of nature"; that it has itself created the elements of a new economic order, by giving the greatest impulse at once to the productive forces of social labour and to the integral development of every individual producer; that capitalist property, which actually rests already on a collective mode of production, can only be transformed into social property.

I do not give any proof at this point for the very good reason that this assertion itself is nothing but a summary recapitulation of long developments previously set out in the chapters on capitalist production.

Now, in what way was my critic^a able to apply this historical sketch to Russia? Only this: if Russia is tending to become a capitalist nation, on the model of the countries of Western Europe,—and in recent years it has gone to great pains to move in this direction—it will not succeed without having first transformed a large proportion of its peasants into proletarians; and after that, once it has been placed in the bosom of the capitalist system, it will be subjected to its pitiless laws, like other profane peoples. That is all! But this is too little for my critic. It is absolutely necessary for him to metamorphose my historical sketch of the genesis of capitalism in Western Europe into a historico-philosophical theory of general development, imposed by fate on all peoples, whatever the historical circumstances in which they are placed, in order to eventually attain this economic formation which, with a tremendous leap of the productive forces of social labour, assures the most integral development of every individual producer. But I beg his pardon. This does me too much honour, and yet puts me to shame at the same time. Let us take an example. In various places in *Capital* I allude to the destiny of the plebeians of Ancient Rome. They were originally free peasants cultivating their own plots of land on their own account. In the course of Roman history they were expropriated. The same movement which cut them off from their means of production and subsistence involved not only the formation of large landed property but also the formation of large money capital. Thus, one fine morning, there

^a N. K. Mikhailovsky.—*Ed.*

were on the one hand free men stripped of everything except their labour power, and on the other, in order to exploit this labour, the owners of all the acquired wealth. What happened? The Roman proletarians became not wage labourers but an idle "MOB", more abject than the former "POOR WHITES"²²⁸ of the southern states of America; and alongside them there developed a mode of production that was not capitalist but based on slavery. Thus events strikingly analogous, but occurring in different historical milieux, led to quite disparate results. By studying each of these evolutions on its own, and then comparing them, one will easily discover the key to the phenomenon, but it will never be arrived at by employing the all-purpose formula of a general historico-philosophical theory whose supreme virtue consists in being supra-historical.

Written presumably in November 1877

First published in *Vestnik Narodnoi Voli*,
No. 5, Geneva, 1886

Printed according to the manu-
script

Translated from the French

Karl Marx

[TO AN EDITORIAL BOARD IN LONDON]

[London,] December 19, 1877
41 Maitland Park Road, N. W.

Gentlemen,

Herewith a letter sent me from Breslau^a for forwarding to you. The sender, Horovitz, though not known to me, has written saying he is a member of the Breslau section of the Social-Democratic Party.

With kind regards,

Karl Marx

First published in: Marx and Engels,
Works, Second Russian Edition, Vol. 34,
Moscow, 1964

Printed according to the manu-
script

Published in English for the first
time

^a Polish name: Wrocław.— *Ed.*

Frederick Engels

[ON THE SOCIALIST MOVEMENT IN GERMANY, FRANCE, THE UNITED STATES AND RUSSIA]²²⁹

The socialist movement in Germany is making admirable progress. There are currently 62 socialist periodicals, of which 46 are daily newspapers, 1 is a magazine and 15 are organs of *societies of resistance*. Moreover, 4 German-language newspapers and 1 magazine are published in Switzerland, 3 in Austria, 1 in Hungary, 6 in America. The total number of socialist periodical publications in German is:

Germany	62	} 75 ²³⁰
Austria	3	
Hungary	1	
Switzerland	3	
America	6	

and therefore the periodical literature of German socialism has more organs than all the other languages put together. I am not including in these figures the more or less socialist newspapers of the *university professors* (*Kathedersocialisten*)²³¹ but only the recognised organs of the party.

When a bourgeois wrote to me after the attempt on Bismarck's life²³²: "All (bourgeois) Germany is rejoicing that Bismarck was not killed", I replied: "We are pleased too, because he works for us as if he were paid for the job." You know I was right, because without the persecutions and the sufferings, without the militarism and the ever-increasing taxes, we would never have reached this point.

Although the crisis in France has obtained a less than satisfactory result, I believe that a state of affairs will follow from

it which will allow the French socialists to act by means of the press, public meetings and associations, and to organise into a *working-class party*, which is all that we can achieve at present, after the slaughter of 1871. Moreover, it is an accepted fact that France has made two main kinds of progress: the republicanism of the peasants and the formation of a republican army. The coup d'état of Ducrot, Babie and company failed because the soldiers resolutely refused to march against the people.²³³

The worker question has been put on the agenda in America with the bloody strike of the employees of the big railways.²³⁴ This will turn out to have been an epoch-making event in American history: the formation of a *working-class party* is thereby making great strides in the United States. It is advancing rapidly in that country, and we must follow its progress, to avoid being taken by surprise by the important successes which will soon be produced.

Russia, I believe, will play the most important part in the near future. The situation produced by the so-called emancipation of the serfs^a was already intolerable before the war. This great reform had been so well managed that it ended up ruining nobles and peasants. It was followed by another reform which, on the pretext of providing provinces and districts with an administration based on elections that were to be more or less independent from the Central Government, had done nothing except raise the already unbearable levels of taxation.

The provinces were simply lumbered with the expenses of their own administration, so that the state paid less while continuing to receive the same tax revenues; hence there were new taxes for provincial and local expenditure. To this was added the general compulsion of military service, which was equivalent to a new and more severe tax and a new and more numerous army.

In this way financial ruin drew near with great strides. The country was already in a state of bankruptcy before the war. Russian high finance, after taking a lavish part in the fraudulent speculations of the 1871-73 period, plunged the nation into the financial crisis which erupted in 1873²³⁵ in Vienna and Berlin and ruined Russian industry and commerce for years. In this state of affairs the Holy War against the Turk began,²³⁶ and since no foreign loans were obtainable and domestic loans were insufficient, the nation had to resort to the millions held in Bank (reserve funds) and to the printing of credit notes. The result is that the value of paper money is falling daily and will soon reach its

^a See this volume, p. 8.—*Ed.*

minimum levels, in no more than a year or two. In short, we have all the ingredients for a Russian 1789, necessarily to be followed by a 1793.²³⁷ Whatever the outcome of the war, the Russian revolution is ready and it will break out soon, perhaps this year; it will begin, contrary to Bakunin's predictions, from above, in the palace, in the heart of the impoverished and *frondeuse* nobility. But once set in motion, it will sweep over the peasants, and you will then witness scenes in comparison with which those of '93 will pall. Once Russia has been pushed into revolution, the whole face of Europe will change. The old Russia has been up till now the great reserve army of European reaction; it performed this role in 1798, in 1805, in 1815, in 1830, in 1848. Once this reserve army is destroyed—just wait and see what will happen!

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Frederick Engels

THE WORKINGMEN OF EUROPE IN 1877²³⁸

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Devoted to the Organization and Emancipation of the Working People.

The Emancipation of the Working Classes must be achieved by the Working Classes themselves.

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I

The past year has been an eventful and a fruitful one for the Working Class of Europe. Great progress has been made in almost all countries with regard to the organization and extension of a Workingmen's Party; unity, threatened at one time by a small but active sect,^{a 239} has been virtually restored; the working-class movement has forced itself more and more into the foreground of every-day politics, and, a sure sign of approaching triumph, political events, no matter what turn they took, always turned out, in some way or other, favorable to the progress of that movement.

At its very outset, the year 1877 was inaugurated by one of the greatest victories ever gained by workingmen. On the 10th of January, the triennial elections, by universal suffrage, for the German Parliament (Reichstag) took place; elections which, ever since 1867, have given the German Workingmen's Party an opportunity of counting their strength and parading before the world their well organized and ever increasing battalions. In 1874, four hundred thousand votes fell to the candidates of labor; in 1877, more than six hundred thousand. Ten workingmen candidates^b were elected on the 10th, while twenty-four more had to be ballotted for in the supplementary elections which took place a fortnight after. Of these twenty-four, only a few were actually returned,^c all other parties uniting against them. But the important fact remained, that in all the large towns and industrial centres of the Empire the working-class movement had advanced

^a See this volume, p. 213.— *Ed.*

^b I. Auer, W. Blos, W. Bracke, A. Demmler, F. W. Fritzsche, W. Hasenclever, W. Liebknecht, J. Most, J. Motteler (Hasenclever received two mandates).— *Ed.*

^c A. Bebel, A. Kapell, M. Rittinghausen.— *Ed.*

with giant strides, and that all these electoral districts were certain to fall into their hands at the next balloting in 1880. Berlin, Dresden, the whole of the Saxon manufacturing districts, and Solingen had been conquered; in Hamburg, Breslau, Nuremberg, Leipzig, Brunswick, in Schleswig-Holstein and the manufacturing districts of Westfalia and the Lower Rhine, a coalition of all the parties had scarcely sufficed to defeat the working-class candidates by bare majorities. German democratic socialism was a power, and a rapidly growing one, with which henceforth all other powers in the country, governing or otherwise, would have to reckon. The effect of these elections was enormous. The middle class were seized with a perfect panic, all the more so as their press had constantly represented social democracy as dwindling down into insignificance. The working class, elated at their own victory, continued the struggle with renewed vigor and upon every available battlefield; while the workingmen of other countries, as we shall see, not only celebrated the victory of the Germans as a triumph of their own, but were stimulated by it to fresh exertions in order not to be left behind in the race for the emancipation of labor.

The rapid progress of the Workingmen's Party in Germany is not bought without considerable sacrifices on the part of those who take a more active part in it. Government prosecutions and sentences of fine, and oftener of imprisonment, hail down upon them, and they have long since had to make up their minds to passing the greater part of their lives in prison. Although most of these sentences are for short terms, a couple of weeks to three months, long terms are by no means of rare infliction. Thus, in order to protect the important mining and manufacturing district of Saarbrucken from the infection by social democratic poison, two agitators^a have recently been sentenced to two years and a half each, for having ventured upon this forbidden ground. The elastic laws of the Empire offer plenty of pretexts for such measures, and where they are not sufficient, the judges are mostly quite willing to stretch them to the point required for a conviction.

A great advantage to the German movement is that the Trades' organization works hand in hand with the political organization. The immediate advantages offered by the Trades' organization draw many an otherwise indifferent man into the political movement, while the community of political action holds together,

^a H. Kaulitz and R. Hackenberger.— *Ed.*

and assures mutual support to, the otherwise isolated Trades Unions.

The success obtained in the elections to the German Parliament has encouraged our German friends to try their chance on other electoral fields. Thus, in two of the State Parliaments, in the smaller States of the Empire, they have succeeded in electing workingmen, and have also penetrated into a good many Town Councils; in the Saxon manufacturing districts, many a town is governed by a social democratic Council. The suffrage being restricted in these elections, no great result can be hoped for; still, every seat carried, helps to prove to the governments and the middle class that henceforth they will have to reckon with the workingmen.

But the best proof of the rapid advance of conscious working-class organization is in the growing number of its periodical organs in the press. And here we have to overstep the boundaries of Bismarck's "Empire", for the influence and action of German social democracy is in no ways limited by these. There were publishing in the German language on the 31st of December 1877, in all, not less than seventy-five periodicals in the service of the Workingmen's Party. Of these in the German Empire 62 (amongst which 15 organs of as many Trades Unions), in Switzerland 3, in Austria 3, Hungary 1, America 6; 75 in all, more than the number of workingmen's organs in all other languages put together.

After the battle of Sedan,²⁴⁰ in September 1870, the Executive Committee of the German Workingmen's Party told their constituents that by the results of the war the centre of gravity of the European working-class movement had been shifted from France to Germany, and that the German workmen had thus become invested with a higher trust and with new responsibilities which required on their part renewed exertions.^a The year 1877 has proved the truth of this, and has proved, at the same time, the proletariat of Germany to have been in no wise inferior to the task of temporary leadership imposed upon it. Whatever mistakes some of the leaders may have made—and they are both numerous and manifold—the masses themselves have marched onwards resolutely, unhesitatingly and in the right direction. Their conduct, organization and discipline, form a marked contrast to the weakness, irresolution, servility and cowardice so characteristic of

^a "Manifest des Ausschusses der sozial-demokratischen Arbeiterpartei. An alle deutschen Arbeiter" [September 5, 1870]. *Der Volksstaat*, No. 73, September 11, 1870.—Ed.

all middle-class movements in Germany. But while the German middle class has closed its career by sinking down into a more than Byzantine adulation of "William the Victorious"^a and by surrendering itself, bound hand and foot to the wayward will of the one Bismarck,²⁴¹ the working class is marching from victory to victory, helped onwards and strengthened even by the very measures which government and middle class contrive in order to suppress it.

^a William I.—*Ed.*

II

Great as was the effect of the German elections in the country itself, it was far greater abroad. And in the first instance, it restored that harmony to the European working-class movement which had been disturbed, for the last six years, by the pretensions of a small but extremely busy sect.

Those of our readers who have followed the history of the International Workingmen's Association, will recollect that, immediately after the fall of the Paris Commune, there arose dissensions in the midst of the great labor organization, which led to an open split, at the Hague Congress 1872, and to consequent disintegration.²⁴² These dissensions were caused by a Russian, Bakounine, and his followers, pretending to supremacy, by fair means or by foul, over a body of which they formed but a small minority. Their chief nostrum was an objection, on principle, to *all* political action on the part of the working class; so much so, that in their eyes, to vote at an election, was to commit an act of treason against the interests of the proletariat. Nothing, but downright, violent revolution would they admit as means of action. From Switzerland, where these "anarchists", as they called themselves, had first taken root, they spread to Italy and Spain, where, for a time, they actually dominated the working-class movement. They were more or less supported, within the "International", by the Belgians, who, though from different motives, also declared in favor of political abstention. After the split they kept up a show of organization and held congresses,²⁴³ in which a couple of dozen men, always the same, pretending to represent the working class of all Europe, proclaimed their dogmas in its name. But already the German elections of 1874,

and the great advantage which the German movement experienced from the presence of nine^a of its most active members in Parliament, had thrown elements of doubt in the midst of the "anarchists". Political events had repressed the movement in Spain,^b which disappeared without leaving scarcely a trace; in Switzerland the party in favor of political action, which worked hand in hand with the Germans, became stronger every day and soon outnumbered the few anarchists at the rate of 300 to 1; in Italy, after a childish attempt at "social revolution" (Bologna, 1874)²⁴⁴ at which neither the sense nor the pluck of the "anarchists" showed to advantage, the real working-class element began to look out for more rational means of action. In Belgium, the movement, thanks to the abstentionist policy of the leaders, which left the working class without any field for real action, had come to a dead stand. In fact, while the political action of the Germans led them from success to success, the working class of those countries, where abstention was the order of the day, suffered defeat after defeat, and got tired of a movement barren of results; their organizations dropped into oblivion, their press organs disappeared one after the other. The more sensible portion of these workmen could not but be struck by this contrast; rebellion against the "anarchist" and abstentionist doctrine broke out in Italy as well as in Belgium, and people began to ask themselves and each other, why for the sake of a stupid dogmatism they should be deprived of applying the very means of action which had proved itself the most efficacious of all. This was the state of things when the grand electoral victory of the Germans settled all doubts, overcame all hesitation. No resistance was possible against such a stubborn fact. Italy and Belgium declared for political action; the remnants of the Italian abstentionists, driven to despair, attempted another insurrection near Naples; some thirty anarchists proclaimed the "social revolution", but were speedily taken care of by the police.²⁴⁵ All they attained was the complete breakdown of their own sectarian movement in Italy. Thus the anarchist organization, which had pretended to rule the working-class movement from one end of Europe to the other, was again reduced to its original nucleus, some two hundred men in the Jura district of Switzerland, where from the isolation of their mountain recesses, they continue to protest

^a A. Bebel, A. Geib, W. Hasenclever, W. Hasselmann, W. Liebknecht, J. Most, J. Motteier, O. Reimer, J. Vahlteich.—*Ed*

^b See this volume, p. 49.—*Ed*.

against the victorious heresy of the rest of the world, and to uphold the true orthodoxy as laid down by the Emperor Bakounine, now defunct. And when in September last the Universal Socialist Congress met at Ghent, in Belgium²⁴⁶—a congress which they themselves had convoked—they found themselves an insignificant minority, face to face with the delegates of the united and unanimous great working-class organizations of Europe. The Congress, while energetically repudiating their ridiculous doctrines and their arrogant pretensions, and establishing the fact that they repudiated merely a small sect, extended to them, in the end, a generous toleration.

Thus, after a four years' intestine struggle, complete harmony was restored to the action of the working class of Europe, and the policy proclaimed by the majority of the last Congress of the International was thoroughly vindicated by events. A basis was now recovered upon which the workingmen of the different European countries could again act firmly together, and give each other that mutual support which constitutes the principal strength of the movement. The International Workingmen's Association had been rendered an impossi-[...]^a many, which forbade the workmen of these countries to enter into any such international bond. The Governments might have spared themselves all this trouble. The working-class movement had outgrown not only the necessity but even the possibility of any such formal bond; but not only has the work of the great Proletarian organization been fully accomplished, it continues to live itself, more powerful than ever, in the far stronger bond of union and solidarity, in the community of action and policy which now animates the working class of all Europe, and which is emphatically its own and its grandest work. There is plenty of variety of views amongst the workmen of the different countries, and even of those of each country taken by itself; but there are no longer any sects, no more pretensions to dogmatic orthodoxy and supremacy of doctrine, and there is a common plan of action originally traced by the International but now universally adopted because everywhere it has grown consciously or unconsciously out of the struggle of the necessities of the movement; a plan which, while adapting itself freely to the varying conditions of each nation and each locality, is nevertheless the same everywhere in its fundamental traits, and thus secures unity of purpose and general congruence of the means applied to obtain the common end, the emancipation of the working class through the working class itself.

^a One or two lines are missing in the newspaper.—*Ed.*

III

In the preceding article, we have already foreshadowed the principal facts of interest connected with the history of the working-class movement in Italy, Spain, Switzerland and Belgium. Still, something remains to be told.

In Spain, the movement had rapidly extended between 1868 and 1872, when the International boasted of more than 30,000 paying members. But all this was more apparent than real, the result more of momentary excitement, brought on by the unsettled political state of the country than by real intellectual progress. Involved in the Cantonalist (federalist-republican) rising of 1873,²⁴⁷ the Spanish International was crushed along with it. For a time it continued in the shape of a secret society, of which, no doubt, a nucleus is still in existence. But as it has never given any sign of life save sending three delegates to the Ghent Congress,²⁴⁸ we are driven to the conclusion that these three delegates represent the Spanish working class much in the same way as whilom the three tailors of Tooley-street represented the People of England.²⁴⁹ And whenever a political revulsion will give the workmen of Spain the possibility of again playing an active part, we may safely predict that the new departure will not come from these "anarchist" spouters, but from the small body of intelligent and energetic workmen who, in 1872, remained true to the International²⁵⁰ and who now bide their time instead of playing at secret conspiracy.

In Portugal the movement remained always free from the "anarchist" taint, and proceeded upon the same rational basis as in most other countries. The Portuguese workmen had numerous International sections and 'Trades' Unions; they held a very

successful Congress in January 1877,²⁵¹ and had an excellent weekly: "O Protesto" (The Protest). Still, they too were hampered by adverse laws, restrictive of the press and of the right of association and public meeting. They keep struggling on for all that, and are now holding another Congress at Oporto, which will afford them an opportunity of showing to the world that the working class of Portugal takes its proper share in the great and universal struggle for the emancipation of labor.

The workmen of Italy, too, are much obstructed in their action by middle-class legislation. A number of special laws²⁵² enacted under the pretext of suppressing brigandage and wide-spread secret brigand organizations, laws which give the government immense arbitrary powers, are unscrupulously applied to workmen's associations; their more prominent members equally with brigands are subjected to police supervision and banishment without judge or jury. Still the movement proceeds, and, best sign of life, its centre of gravity has been shifted from the venerable, but half-dead cities of Romagna to the busy industrial and manufacturing towns of the North, a change which secured the predominance of the real working-class element over the host of "anarchist" interlopers of middle-class origin who previously had taken the lead. The workmen's clubs and Trades' Unions, ever broken up and dissolved by the government, are ever reformed under new names. The Proletarian Press, though many of its organs are but short-lived in consequence of the prosecutions, fines and sentences of imprisonment against the editors, springs up afresh after every defeat, and, in spite of all obstacles, counts several papers of comparatively old standing. Some of these organs, mostly ephemeral ones, still profess "anarchist" doctrines, but that fraction has given up all pretensions to rule the movement and is gradually dying out, along with the Mazzinian or middle-class Republican party, and every inch of ground lost by these two factions is so much ground won by the real and intelligent working-class movement.

In Belgium, too, the centre of gravity of working-class action has been shifted, and this action itself has undergone an important change in consequence. Up to 1875, this centre lay in the French-speaking part of the country, including Brussels, which is half French and half Flemish; the movement was, during this period, strongly influenced by Proudhonist doctrines, which also enjoin abstention from political interference, especially from elections. There remained, then, nothing but strikes, generally repressed by bloody intervention of the military, and meetings in

which the old stock phrases were constantly repeated. The work-people got sick of this and the whole movement gradually fell asleep. But since 1875 the manufacturing towns of the Flemish-speaking portion entered into the struggle with a greater and, as was soon to be proved, a new spirit. In Belgium there are no factory laws whatever to limit the hours of labor of women or children; and the first cry of the factory voters of Ghent and neighborhood was for protection for their wives and children, who were made to slave fifteen and more hours a day in the Cotton Mills.^a The opposition of the Proudhonist doctrinaires who considered such trifles as far beneath the attention of men occupied with transcendent revolutionism, was of no avail, and was gradually overcome. The demand of legal protection for factory-children became one of the points of the Belgian working-class platform, and with it was broken the spell which hitherto had tabooed political action. The example of the Germans did the rest, and now the Belgian workmen, like those of Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, Portugal, Hungary, Austria and part of Italy, are forming themselves into a political party, distinct from, and opposed to, all other political parties, and aiming at the conquest of their emancipation by whatever political action the situation may require.

The great mass of the Swiss workmen—the German-speaking portion of them—had for some years been formed into a “Workmen’s Confederation” which at the end of 1876 counted above 5,000 paying members. There was, alongside of them another organization, the “Grütli Society”,²⁵³ originally formed by the middle-class radicals for the spread of Radicalism amongst workmen and peasants; but gradually social democratic ideas penetrated into this widely-spread association and finally conquered it. In 1877, both these societies entered into an alliance, almost a fusion, for the purpose of organizing a Swiss political labor party; and with such vigor did they act that they carried, at the national vote, the new Swiss Factory Law, of all existing factory acts the one which is most favorable to the work-people.²⁵⁴ They are now organizing a vigilant supervision to secure its due execution against the loudly proclaimed ill-will of the mill owners. The “anarchists”, from their superior revolutionary standpoint, as a matter of course violently opposed all this action, denouncing it as a piece of arrant treason against what they call “the

^a “Manifest der sozialistischen Partei in Brabant (Belgien)”, *Vorwärts*, Nos. 10 and 11, January 25 and 27, 1878.—*Ed.*

Revolution"; but as they number 200 at the outside and here as elsewhere are but a general staff of officers without an army, this made no difference.—The programme of the Swiss workingmen's Party is almost identical with that of the Germans, only too identical, having adopted even some of its more imperfect and confused passages. But the mere wording of the programme matters little, so long as the spirit which dominates the movement, is of the right sort.

The Danish workingmen entered the lists about 1870 and at first made very rapid progress.²⁵⁵ By an alliance with the small peasant proprietors' party, amongst which they succeeded in spreading their views, they attained considerable political influence, so much so that the "United Left", of which the peasant party formed the nucleus, for a number of years had the majority in parliament.²⁵⁶ But there was more show than solidity in this rapid growth of the movement. One day it was found out that two of the leaders^a had disappeared after squandering the money collected for party purposes from the workingmen. The scandal caused by this was extreme, and the Danish movement has not yet recovered from the discouragement consequent upon it. Anyhow, if the Danish workingmen's party is now proceeding in a more unobtrusive way than before, there is every reason to believe that it is gradually replacing the ephemeral and apparent domination over the masses, which it has now lost, by a more real and more lasting influence.

In Austria and Hungary the working class has the greatest difficulties to contend with. Political liberty, as far as the press, meetings and associations are concerned, is there reduced to the lowest level consistent with a sham constitutional monarchy. A code of laws of unheard-of elasticity enables the Government to obtain convictions against even the mildest expression of the demands and interests of the working class. And yet the movement there, as well as elsewhere, goes on irrepressibly. The principal centres are the manufacturing districts of Bohemia, Vienna, and Pesth. Workingmen's periodicals are published in the German, the Bohemian and the Hungarian languages. From Hungary the movement has spread to Servia, where, before the war, a weekly newspaper was published in the Servian language,^b but when the war broke out the paper was simply suppressed.

Thus, wherever we look in Europe, the working-class movement

^a L. Pio and P. Geleff.—*Ed.*

^b *Народна воля*.—*Ed.*

is progressing, not only favorably but rapidly, and what is more, everywhere in the same spirit. Complete harmony is restored, and with it constant and regular intercourse, in one way or another, between the workmen of the different countries. The men who founded, in 1864, the International Working Men's Association, who held high its banner during years of strife, first against external, then against internal foes, until political necessities even more than intestine feuds brought on disruption and seeming retirement—these men can now proudly exclaim: "The International has done its work; it has fully attained its grand aim—the union of the Proletariat of the whole world in the struggle against their oppressors."

IV

Our readers will have noticed that in the three preceding articles there has been scarcely any mention made of one of the most important countries of Europe—France, and for this reason: In the countries hitherto treated of, the action of the working class, though essentially a political action, is not intimately mixed up with general, or so to say official politics. The working class of Germany, Italy, Belgium etc., is not yet a political power in the State; it is a political power only prospectively, and if the official parties in some of these countries, Conservatives, Liberals, or Radicals, have to reckon with it, it is merely because its rapid onward progress makes it evident, that in a very short time the Proletarian party will be strong enough to make its influence felt. But in France it is different. The workmen of Paris, seconded by those of the large provincial towns, have ever since the great Revolution been a power in the State. They have been for nearly ninety years the fighting army of progress; at every great crisis of French history, they descended into the streets, armed themselves as best as they could, threw up barricades and provoked the battle, and it was their victory or defeat which decided the future of France for years to come. From 1789 to 1830, the revolutions of the middle class were fought out by the workmen of Paris; it was they who conquered the Republic in 1848, having mistaken that Republic to mean emancipation of labor, they were cruelly undeceived by the defeat inflicted on them, in June of the same year²⁵⁷; they resisted on the barricades Louis Napoleon's Coup d'État 1851²⁵⁸ and were again defeated; they swept away in

September 1870 the defunct Empire²⁵⁹ which the middle-class Radicals were too cowardly to touch. In March 1871 Thiers' attempt to take away from them the arms with which they had defended Paris against foreign invasion, forced them into the revolution of the Commune and the protracted struggle which ended with its bloody extinction.

A national working class which thus, for nearly a century, not only has taken a decisive part in every crisis of the history of its own country, but at the same time has always been the advanced guard of European Revolution, such a working class cannot live the comparatively secluded life which is still the proper sphere of action of the rest of the continental workmen. Such a working class as that of France is bound to its past history and by its past history. Its history, no less than its acknowledged decisive fighting power, has mixed it up indissolubly with the general political development of the country. And thus, we cannot give a retrospect of the action of the French working class without entering into French politics generally.

Whether the French working class had been fighting its own battle or the battle of the Liberal, Radical, or Republican middle class, every defeat it suffered has hitherto been followed by an oppressive political reaction, as violent as it was enduring. Thus, the defeats of June 1848 and December 1851 were succeeded by the eighteen years of the Bonapartist Empire, during which the press was fettered, the right of meeting and of association suppressed and the working class consequently deprived of every means of inter-communication and organization. The necessary result was that when the revolution of September 1870 came, the workmen had no other men to put into office, but those middle-class radicals who under the Empire had formed the official parliamentary opposition and who as a matter of course betrayed them and their country. After the stamping-out of the Commune, the working class, disabled for years in their fighting power, had but one immediate interest: to avoid the recurrence of such another protracted reign of repression, and with it the necessity of again fighting, not for their own direct emancipation, but for a state of things permitting them to prepare for the final emancipatory struggle. Now, in France there are four great political parties: three monarchist, the Legitimists, Orleanists and Bonapartists, each with a separate pretender to the crown; and the Republican party. Whichever of the three pretenders^a were to

^a Chambord, Napoleón Eugène Bonaparte and the Count of Paris.—*Ed.*

ascend the throne, he would in every case be supported by a small minority only of the people, he would consequently have to rely upon force only. Thus, the reign of violence, the suppression of all public liberties and personal rights, which the working class must wish to avoid, was the necessary concomitant of every Monarchist restoration. On the other hand the maintenance of the established Republican government left them at least the chance of obtaining such a degree of personal and public liberty as would allow them to establish a working-class press, an agitation by meetings and an organization as an independent political party, and moreover, the conservation of the Republic would save them the necessity of delivering a separate battle for its future re-conquest.

It was thus another proof of the high instinctive political intelligence of the French working class, that as soon as, on the 16th May last,²⁶⁰ the great conspiracy of the three Monarchist factions declared war against the Republic, the workmen, one and all, proclaimed the maintenance of the Republic to be their chief immediate object. No doubt in this they acted as the tail of the middle-class Republicans and Radicals, but a working class which has no press, no meetings, no clubs, no political societies, what else can it be but the tail of the Radical middle-class party? What can it do, in order to gain its political independence, but support the only party which is bound to secure to the people generally, and therefore, to the workmen too, such liberties as will admit of independent organization? Some people say, the workmen at the last election ought to have put up their own candidates, but even in those places where they could have done so successfully, where were the working-class candidates, well known enough amongst their own class to find the necessary support? Why, the government since the Commune have taken good care to arrest, as a participator in that insurrection, every workman who made himself known even by private agitation in his own district of Paris.

The victory of the Republicans at the elections last November²⁶¹ was signal. It was followed by still more signal triumphs at the departmental, municipal and supplementary elections which followed it. The Monarchist conspiracy would, perhaps, not have given way for all that; but its hand was lamed by the unmistakable attitude of the army. Not only were there numerous Republican officers especially in the lower grades; but, what was more decisive, the mass of the soldiers refused to march against the Republic. That was the first result of the reorganization of the

army, by which bought substitutes had been done away with and the army transformed into a fair representation of the young men of all classes.²⁶² Thus, the conspiracy broke down without having to be broken up by force. And this, too, was much in the interest of the working class which, too weak yet after the blood-letting of 1871, can have no wish to waste again its greatest, its fighting power, in struggles for the benefit of others or to engage in a series of violent collisions before it has recovered its full strength.

But this Republican victory has yet another significance. It proves that since 1870 the country people have made a great step in advance. Hitherto, every working-class victory gained in Paris, was nullified in a very short time by the reactionist spirit of the small peasantry who form the great mass of the French population. Since the beginning of this century, the French peasantry had been Bonapartist. The second Republic, established by the Paris workingmen in February 1848, had been cancelled by the six million peasant votes given to Louis Napoleon in December following. But the Prussian invasion of 1870 has shaken the Imperialist faith of the peasantry, and the elections of November last prove that the mass of the country population had become Republican, and this is a change of the highest importance. It does not only mean that henceforth all Monarchist restoration has become hopeless in France. It means also the approaching alliance between the workingmen of the towns and the peasantry of the country. The small peasant proprietors established by the great Revolution are proprietors of the soil, but in name. Their farms are mortgaged to usurers; their crops are spent in the payment of interest and law-expenses; the notary, the attorney, the bailiff, the auctioneer are constantly threatening at their doors. Their position is fully as bad as that of the workingmen, and almost as insecure. And if these peasants now turn from Bonapartism to the Republic, they show by this that they no longer expect an improvement of their condition from those Imperialist miracles which Louis Napoleon ever promised and never performed. Thiers' faith in the mysterious powers of salvation held by an "Emperor of peasants" has been rudely dispelled by the second Empire. The spell is broken. The French peasantry are at last in a state of mind rational enough to look out for the real causes of the chronic distress and for the practical means to do away with it; and once set a thinking they must soon find out that their only remedy lies in an alliance with the only class that has no interest in their present miserable condition, the working class of the town.

Thus, however contemptible the present Republican govern-

ment of France may be, the final establishment of the Republic has at last given the French workingmen the ground upon which they can organize themselves as an independent political party, and fight their future battles, not for the benefit of others, but for their own; the ground, too, upon which they can unite with the hitherto hostile mass of the peasantry and thus render future victories not, as heretofore, short-lived triumphs of Paris over France, but final triumphs of all the oppressed classes of France, led by the workmen of Paris and the large provincial towns.

V

(CONCLUSION)

There is still another important European country to be considered—Russia. Not that there exists in Russia a working-class movement worth speaking of. But the internal and external circumstances in which Russia is placed are most peculiar and big with events of the highest importance with regard to the future, not only of the Russian workingmen, but those of all Europe.

In 1861 the government of Alexander II carried out the emancipation of the serfs, the transformation of the immense majority of the Russian people from bondsmen, attached to the soil and subject to forced labour for their landlord, into free peasant proprietors. This change, the necessity of which had long been evident, was effected in such a way that neither the former landlords nor the former serfs were the gainers by it. The peasant villages received allotments of soil, which henceforth were to be their own, while the landlords were to be paid for the value of the land thus ceded to the villages, and also, to a certain extent, for the claim they hitherto had possessed to the peasant's labor. As the peasants evidently could not find the money to pay the landlords, the State stepped in. One portion of this payment was effected by transferring to the landlord a portion of the land hitherto cultivated by the peasants for their own account; the rest was paid in the shape of government bonds, advanced by the State, and to be repaid to it with interest, in yearly instalments, by the peasants. The majority of the landlords sold these bonds and spent the money; they are thus not only poorer than before, but cannot find laborers to till their estates, the peasants actually declining to work upon them and to leave their own fields uncultivated. As to the peasants, their shares of land had not only been reduced in size

from what they had been before, and very often to an extent which, under Russian circumstances, left them insufficient to maintain a family; these shares had, in most instances, been taken from the very worst land on the estate, from bogs or other unclaimed lands, while the good land, hitherto owned by the peasants and improved by their labor, had been transferred to the landlords. Under these circumstances, the peasants, too, were considerably worse off than before; but besides this, they were expected to pay every year to the government the interest and part of the capital advanced by the State for buying them off, and, moreover, the taxes levied upon them increased from year to year. Furthermore, before emancipation, the peasants had possessed certain common rights on the estate lands of pasture for their cattle, the hewing of timber for building and other purposes, etc. These rights were expressly taken from them by the new settlement; if they wanted to exercise them again, they had to bargain with their former landlord.

Thus, while the majority of the landed proprietors became even more indebted, in consequence of the change, than they had been before, the peasantry were reduced to a position in which they could neither live nor die. The great act of emancipation, so universally extolled and glorified by the Liberal press of Europe, had created nothing but the groundwork and the absolute necessity of a future revolution.

This revolution, the government did all in its power to hasten on—the corruption pervading all official spheres, and leaving whatever power for good they might be supposed to possess—this hereditary corruption remained as bad as ever, and came to light glaringly in every public department at the outbreak of the Turkish war.²⁶³ The finances of the empire, completely disordered at the end of the Crimean war,^a were allowed to go from bad to worse. Loan after loan was contracted, until there was no other means of paying the interest of the old debts except by contracting new ones. During the first years of Alexander's^b reign, the old imperial despotism had been somewhat relaxed; the press had been allowed more freedom, trial by jury established and representative bodies, elected by the nobility, the citizens of the towns, and the peasants respectively, had been permitted to take some share in local and provincial administration. Even with the Poles some political flirtation had been carried on. But the public

^a in 1856.— *Ed.*

^b Alexander II's.— *Ed.*

had misunderstood the benevolent intentions of the government. The press became too outspoken. The juries actually acquitted political prisoners which the government had expected them to convict against evidence. The local and provincial assemblies, one and all, declared that the government, by its act of emancipation, had ruined the country, and that things could not go on in that way any longer. A national assembly was even hinted at as the only means of getting out of troubles fast becoming insupportable. And finally, the Poles refused to be bamboozled with fine words, and broke out into a rebellion²⁶⁴ which it took all the forces of the empire, and all the brutality of the Russian generals, to quell in torrents of blood. Then the government turned round again. Stern repression once more became the order of the day. The press was muzzled, the political prisoners were handed over to special courts, consisting of judges packed for the purpose, the local and provincial assemblies were ignored. But it was too late. The government, having once shown signs of fear, had lost its prestige. The belief in its stability, and in its power of absolutely crushing all internal resistance, had gone. The germ of a future public opinion had sprung up. The forces could not be brought back to the former implicit obedience to government dictation. Discussion of public matters, if only in private circles, had become a habit among the educated classes. And finally, the government, with all its desire to return to the unbridled despotism of the reign of Nicholas, still pretended to keep up, before the eyes of Europe, the appearances of the liberalism initiated by Alexander. The consequence was a system of vacillation and hesitation, of concessions made to-day and retracted to-morrow, to be again half-conceded and half-retracted in turns, a policy changing from hour to hour, bringing home to everybody the intrinsic weakness, the want of insight and of will, on the part of a government which was nothing unless it was possessed of a will and of the means to enforce it. What was more natural than that every day should increase the contempt felt for a government which, long since known to be powerless for good and obeyed only through fear, now proved that it doubted of its power of maintaining its own existence, that it had at least as much fear of the people as the people had of it? There was only one way of salvation for the Russian government, the way open to all governments brought face to face with overwhelming popular resistance—foreign war. And foreign war was resolved upon; a war, proclaimed before Europe as undertaken for the deliverance of Christians from protracted Turkish misrule, but proclaimed before the Russian

people as carried on for the bringing home of their Slavonic brethren in race from Turkish bondage into the fold of the Holy Russian Empire.

This war, after months of inglorious defeat, has now come to an end through the equally inglorious crushing of Turkish resistance, partly by treachery, partly by immensely superior numbers. But the Russian conquest of the greater part of Turkey in Europe is itself only the prelude to a general European war. Either Russia, at the impending European Conference (if that Conference ever meets), will have to recede so much from the position now gained, that the disproportion between the immense sacrifices and the puny results must bring the popular discontent to a violent revolutionary outburst; or else, Russia will have to maintain her newly conquered position in a European war. More than half exhausted as she is already, her government cannot carry her through such a war—whatever may be its final result—without important popular concessions. Such concessions, in the face of a situation as that described above, mean the commencement of a revolution. From this revolution the Russian government cannot possibly escape, if even it may succeed in delaying its outbreak for a year or two. But a Russian revolution means more than a mere change of government in Russia herself. It means the disappearance of a vast, though unwieldy, military power which, ever since the French Revolution, has formed the backbone of the united despotisms of Europe. It means the emancipation of Germany from Prussia, for Prussia has already been the creature of Russia, and has only existed by leaning upon her. It means the emancipation of Poland. It means the awakening of the smaller Slavonic nationalities of Eastern Europe from the Pan Slavist dreams fostered among them by the present Russian government. And it means the beginning of an active national life among the Russian people themselves, and along with it the springing up of a real working-class movement in Russia. Altogether, it means such a change in the whole situation of Europe as must be hailed with joy by the workingmen of every country as a giant step towards their common goal—the universal emancipation of Labor.

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels

HERR BUCHER²⁶⁵TO THE EDITOR^a OF *THE DAILY NEWS*

Sir,

According to a telegram of Reuter's,^b

"Herr Bucher, Councillor of Legation, is designated for the post of secretary and keeper of the records of the Congress."²⁶⁶

Should this "Herr Bucher" be the same Lothar Bucher who, during his long London exile, shone as a staunch partisan of the late Mr. David Urquhart, whose anti-Russian doctrines he held forth week by week in the Berlin *National Gazette*^c; the same Lothar Bucher who, on his return to Berlin, turned so ardent a votary of Ferdinand Lassalle that the latter named him his testamentary executor, bequeathed him an annual revenue, and transferred the copyright of his works to Lothar Bucher²⁶⁷? Soon after Lassalle's death Lothar Bucher entered the Prussian Foreign Office, was made a "Councillor of Legation", and became Bismarck's confidential man-of-all-work.

He had the *naïveté* to address a letter to myself, inviting me, of course with the sanction of his master, to undertake the money article of the Prussian official *Staats-Anzeiger*.

The pecuniary terms were left to my discretion, while I was expressly told I should enjoy full liberty of treating the operations and the operators of the money market from my own "scientific"

^a W. K. Hales.—*Ed.*

^b "We have received the following telegrams through Reuter's Agency: Eastern Affairs, Berlin, June 11." In the section *Latest Intelligence*, *The Times*, No. 29279, June 12, 1878.—*Ed.*

^c *National-Zeitung*.—*Ed.*

standpoint. Since this odd incident I felt not a little amused at seeing Lothar Bucher's contributions as a member of the "International Working Men's Association" daily and yearly chronicled in the columns of the *Vorbote*,^a an organ of the International, edited by Johann Philipp Becker at Geneva. If this be not a case of mistaken identity, and if there be anything in the reports that the Russian and German Governments, *à propos* of the attempts of Hoedel and Nobiling,²⁶⁸ intend to propose to the Congress international measures against the spread of Socialism, then Herr Bucher is the very man to tell the Congress authoritatively that the organisation, the action, and the doctrines of the German Social-Democratic party have no more to do with these attempts than with the sinking of the *Grosser Kurfürst*,²⁶⁹ or with the meeting of the Congress at Berlin; that the panic-mongering arrests throughout Germany and the whirlwind of dust raised by the Press-reptiles²⁷⁰ serve the exclusive purpose of an electioneering cry for a Reichstag ready to sanction at last the solution, long since elaborated by Prince Bismarck, of the paradox problem how to endow the German Government with all the financial resources of a modern State, while, at the same time, reimposing upon the German people the ancient political regime scattered to pieces by the hurricane of 1848.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Karl Marx

London, June 12

First published in *The Daily News*,
No. 10030, June 13, 1878

Reproduced from the newspaper

^a "Empfangsbescheinigungen der für die Zentralkasse von Außen eingegangenen Beträge", *Der Vorbote*, No. 9, September 1867; No. 10, October 1871.— *Ed.*

Karl Marx

[REPLY TO BUCHER'S "DECLARATION"]²⁷¹

Mr. Lothar Bucher has published a "declaration" in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of June 21,^a which in the first instance establishes the unpleasant circumstance that my letter to *The Daily News* was reprinted by the National-Liberal and Party-of-Progress newspapers.^b Mr. Bucher declares that 3,000 lines would be required in order to straighten out the distortions I had compressed together. Thirty lines are more than sufficient to establish once and for all the truth of Bucher's "corrections" and "supplementary statements".

The letter in which Mr. Bucher tries to bring me to heel for the *Staats-Anzeiger* is dated October 8, 1865, and thus originates from the period of the conflict between the Prussian liberal and Party-of-Progress bourgeoisie and Mr. von Bismarck. The letter says, amongst other things:

"With regard to the content, it goes without saying that you *only follow your scientific conviction*; however, consideration for the readers—*haute finance*—not the editorial office, will make it advisable that you allow the *innermost core* to shine through only for those properly versed in these matters."

By contrast, Mr. Bucher's "correction" says that he

"asked Mr. Marx if he would supply the articles requested, in which it was important for the treatment to be objective. There is not a word in my letter pertaining to Mr. Marx's 'own scientific standpoint'".

^a A. L. Bucher [Declaration concerning Karl Marx's letter in *The Daily News*], Berlin, den 20. Juni, *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 145, June 21, 1878.—Ed.

^b *Berliner Freie Presse*, No. 138, June 16 and *Vossische Zeitung*, No. 139, June 16, 1878.—Ed.

^c Finance aristocracy.—Ed.

Further, the same letter says:

"The *Staats-Anzeiger* requires a monthly report on the movements in the money market (and, of course, also in the commodity market, inasmuch as the two are inseparable). I was asked if I could not perhaps recommend someone, and replied that no one would do it better than you. I have consequently been asked to contact you."

According to his own unambiguous words therefore, Mr. Bucher began his "correspondence" with me at the request of *someone* or other. By contrast, his "correction" asserts:

"No one, not even the editor of the *Staats-Anzeiger*,^a knew anything of this correspondence or learned anything about it."

So much on Mr. Bucher's method of making corrections. And now a sample of his method when it comes to making supplementary statements!

My letter to *The Daily News* mentions only Mr. Bucher's "naive" inquiry of me, but refrains from mentioning a word about my answer to him. He, however, in his anxiety to make the "curious occurrence" appear in a trivial light, has to "supplement" me and therefore invents the following:

"Mr. Marx replied that he would not write for a reactionary newspaper."

How am I to answer with such banalities a letter whose "innermost core" doesn't "only" shine through, but flashes through blindingly in the following closing passage:

"Progress" (he means the liberal or Party-of-Progress bourgeoisie) "will cast its skin many times before it dies; and therefore anyone who wishes to have an effect within the state in his lifetime, *must rally round the government.*"

Karl Marx

London, June 27

Published in the *Frankfurter Zeitung und Handelsblatt*, No. 180, June 29, 1878;
Vossische Zeitung, No. 152, July 2, 1878;
Vorwärts, No. 78, July 5, 1878

Printed according to the manuscript

Published in English for the first time

^a Adolf Rutenberg.—Ed.

Karl Marx

MR. GEORGE HOWELL'S HISTORY OF THE
INTERNATIONAL WORKING-MEN'S ASSOCIATION²⁷²

I believe it worth while to illustrate by a few notes the most recent contribution—see the *Nineteenth Century* of July last—to the extensive spurious literature on the International's History, because its last expounder, Mr. George Howell, an ex-workman and ex-member of the General Council of that Association, may erroneously be supposed to have drawn his wisdom from sources not generally accessible.

Mr. Howell sets about his "History" by passing by the facts that, on September 28th, 1864, I was present at the foundation-meeting of the International, was there chosen a member of the provisional General Council, and soon after drew up the "Inaugural Address", and the "General Statutes" of the Association,^a first issued at London in 1864, then confirmed by the Geneva Congress of 1866.

So much Mr. Howell knew, but, for purposes of his own, prefers to make "a German Doctor named Karl Marx" first appear at the London "Congress opened on September 25th, 1865".^{b 273} There and then, he avers, the said "doctor" had "sown the seeds of discord and decay by the introduction of the *Religious Idea*".

In the first instance, no "Congress" of the International took place in September, 1865. A few delegates from the main

^a The reference is to the "Inaugural Address of the Working Men's International Association" and the "Provisional Rules of the Association" (see present edition, Vol. 20).—*Ed.*

^b Here and below Marx quotes Howell's article "The History of the International Association", *The Nineteenth Century. A Monthly Review*, Vol. IV, London, 1878.—*Ed.*

continental branches of the Association met at London for the sole purpose of conferring with the General Council on the Programme of the "First Congress", which was to assemble at Geneva, in September, 1866. The real business of the Conference was transacted in private sittings, not at the semi-public meetings in Adelphi Terrace, exclusively made mention of by the exact historian, Mr. George Howell.

Like the other representatives of the General Council, I had to secure the acceptance by the Conference of our own programme, on its publication thus characterised, in a letter to the *Siècle*, by the French historian, Henri Martin:

"The breadth of view and the high moral, political, and economical conceptions which have decided the choice of questions composing the programme of the International Congress of Workingmen, which is to assemble next year, will strike with a common sympathy all friends of progress, justice, and liberty in Europe."^a

By the way, a paragraph of the programme which I had the honour to indite for the General Council, runs thus:

"The necessity of annihilating the Muscovite influence in Europe, by the application of the principle of the right of nations to dispose of themselves, and the reconstruction of Poland upon a democratic and socialist basis."²⁷⁴

Upon this text Henri Martin put the gloss:

"We will take the liberty of remarking that the expression, 'democratic and socialist basis', is a very simple one as regards Poland, where the social framework needs reconstruction quite as much as the political framework, and where this basis has been laid down by the decrees of the anonymous government of 1863,^b and accepted by all classes of the nation. This, then, is the reply of true socialism, of social progress in harmony with justice and liberty, to the advances of the Communist despotism of Muscovy. This secret of the people of Paris is now becoming the common secret of the peoples of Europe."

Unfortunately, the "people of Paris" had kept their "secret" so well that, quite unaware of it, two of the Paris delegates to the Conference, Tolain, now a senator of the French Republic, and Fribourg, now a simple renegade, inveighed against the very proposition which was to call forth the enthusiastic comment of the French historian.

The programme of the General Council contained not one syllable on "Religion", but at the instance of the Paris delegates the forbidden dish got into the bill of fare in store for the prospective Congress, in this dressing:

^a H. Martin, "L'Association Internationale des Travailleurs", *Le Siècle*, No. 11171, October 14, 1865.—Ed.

^b *Centralny Narodowy Komitet jako tymczasowy Rząd Narodowy*.—Ed.

"Religious Ideas (not "The Religious Idea", as Howell's spurious version has it), their influence on the social, political and intellectual movement."

The topic of discussion thus introduced by the Paris delegates was left in their keeping.²⁷⁵ In point of fact, they dropped it at the Geneva Congress of 1866, and no one else picked it up.

The London "Congress" of 1865, the "Introduction" there by "a German Doctor named Karl Marx" of the "Religious Idea", and the fierce feud thence arising within the International—this, his triple myth, Mr. George Howell caps by a legend. He says:

"In the Draft Address to the American people with regard to the abolition of slavery, the sentence, 'God made of one blood all nations of men', was struck out, etc."

Now the General Council issued an address, not to the American people, but to its President, Abraham Lincoln, which he gracefully acknowledged. The address, written by me,^a underwent no alteration whatever. As the words "God made of one blood all nations of men" had never figured in it, they could not be "struck out".

The attitude of the General Council in regard to the "Religious Idea" is clearly shown by the following incident:—One of the Swiss branches of the *Alliance*, founded by Michael Bakunin,²⁷⁶ and calling itself *Section des athées Socialistes*, requested its admission to the International from the General Council, but got the reply: "Already in the case of the Young Men's Christian Association the Council has declared that it recognizes *no theological sections*. (See page 13 of *Les prétendues scissions dans l'Internationale Circulaire du Conseil Général*, printed at Geneva.^b)"

Even Mr. George Howell, at that time not yet become a convert by close study of the *Christian Reader*, consummated his divorce from the International, not at the call of the "Religious Idea", but on grounds altogether secular. At the foundation of the *Commonwealth* as the "special organ" of the General Council, he canvassed keenly the "proud position" of Editor. Having failed in his "ambitious" attempt, he waxed sulky, his zeal grew less and less, and soon after he was no more heard of. During the most eventful period of the International he was therefore an outsider.

Conscious of his utter incompetence to trace the history of the Association, but at the same time eager to spice his article with

^a K. Marx, "To Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States of America".—*Ed*

^b K. Marx and F. Engels, *Fictitious Splits in the International* (see present edition, Vol. 23, p. 93).—*Ed*

strange revelations, he catches at the appearance, during the Fenian troubles,²⁷⁷ of General Cluseret in London where, we are told, at the Black Horse, Rathbone Place, Oxford-street, the General met "a few men—fortunately Englishmen", in order to initiate them into his "plan" of "a general insurrection". I have some reason to doubt the genuineness of the anecdote, but suppose it to be true,²⁷⁸ what else would it prove but that Cluseret was not such a fool as to intrude his person and his "plan" upon the General Council, but kept both of them wisely in reserve for "a few Englishmen" of Mr. Howell's acquaintance, unless the latter himself be one of these stout fellows in buckram^a who, by their "fortunate" interference, contrived to save the British Empire and Europe from universal convulsion.

Mr. George Howell has another dark secret to disclose.

At the beginning of June, 1871, the General Council put forth an *Address on the Civil War in France*,^b welcomed on the part of the London press by a chorus of execration. One weekly fell foul of "the infamous author", cowardly concealing his name behind the screen of the General Council. Thereupon I declared in *The Daily News* that I was the author.^c This stale secret Mr. George Howell reveals, in July, 1878, with all the consequentiality of the man behind the curtain.

"The writer of that Address was Dr. Karl Marx. ...Mr. George Odger and Mr. Lucraft, both of whom were members of the Council when it (sic) was adopted, repudiated it on its publication."^d

He forgets to add that the other nineteen British members present acclaimed the "Address".

Since then, the statements of this Address have been fully borne out by the *Enquêtes* of the French Rural Assembly,²⁷⁹ the evidence taken before the Versailles Courts-Martial, the trial of Jules Favre, and the memoirs of persons far from hostile to the victors.

It is in the natural order of things that an English historian of Mr. George Howell's sound erudition should haughtily ignore French prints, whether official or not. But I confess to a feeling of disgust when, on such occasions for instance as the Hödel and

^a Shakespeare, *King Henry IV*, Part I, Act II, Scene IV. (When telling an invented story about his skirmish with a band of fellows, each time Falstaff increased their number and described them as dressed either in buckrams or in jackets made of Kendal cloth.)—*Ed.*

^b See present edition, Vol. 22.—*Ed.*

^c K. Marx, "To the Editor of *The Daily News*" (see present edition, Vol. 22, p. 370).—*Ed.*

^d G. Howell, op. cit., *The Nineteenth Century*, Vol. IV, p. 35.—*Ed.*

Nobiling attempts,²⁸⁰ I behold great London papers ruminating the base calumnies, which their own correspondents, eye-witnesses, had been the first to refute.

Mr. Howell reaches the climax of snobbism in his account of the exchequer of the General Council.^a

The Council, in its published *Report to the Congress of Basle* (1869), ridicules the huge treasure with which the busy tongue of the European police and the wild imagination of the capitalist had endowed it. It says,

"If these people, though good Christians, had happened to live at the time of nascent Christianity, they would have hurried to a Roman bank there to pry into St. Paul's balance."^b

Mr. Ernest Renan who, it is true, falls somewhat short of Mr. George Howell's standard of orthodoxy, even fancies the state of the primitive Christian communes sapping the Roman Empire might be best illustrated by that of the International Sections.

Mr. George Howell, as a writer, is what the crystallographer would call a "Pseudomorph",²⁸¹ his outer form of penmanship being but imitative of the manner of thought and style "natural" to the English moneyed man of sated virtue and solvent morals. Although he borrows his array of "figures" as to the resources of the General Council from the accounts yearly laid by that same Council before a public "International Congress", Mr. George Howell must not derogate from his "imitative" dignity by stooping to touch the obvious question: how came it to pass that, instead of taking comfort from the lean budgets of the General Council, all the governments of Continental Europe took fright at "the powerful and formidable organisation of the International Working-men's Association, and the rapid development it had attained in a few years". (See *Circular^c of the Spanish Foreign Minister^d to the representatives of Spain in Foreign Countries.*²⁸²) Instead of laying the Red Ghost by the simple process of shaking at its face the sorry returns of the General Council, why, in the name of common sense, did the Pope^e and his bishops exorcise the International,²⁸³ the French Rural Assembly outlaw it, Bismarck—at the Salzburg

^a G. Howell, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-35.—*Ed.*

^b K. Marx, "Report of the General Council to the Fourth Annual Congress of the International Working Men's Association" (see present edition, Vol. 21, p. 70).—*Ed.*

^c See *Gaceta de Madrid*, No. 17, January 17, 1872 (in the section *Ministerio de la Gobernacion*).—*Ed.*

^d Bonifacio.—*Ed.*

^e Pius IX.—*Ed.*

meeting of the emperors of Austria and Germany^a—threaten it with a Holy Alliance Crusade,²⁸⁴ and the White Czar^b commend it to his terrible "Third Division", then presided over by the emotional Schouvaloff?

Mr. George Howell condescends to admit: "Poverty is no crime, but it is fearfully inconvenient."^c I admit, he speaks by book. The prouder he ought to have felt of his former fellowship with a Working-men's Association, which won world-wide fame and a place in the history of mankind, not by length of purse, but by strength of mind and unselfish energy.

However, from the lofty standpoint of an insular "philistine", Mr. George Howell reveals to the "cultured people" of the "Nineteenth Century", that the International was a "failure", and has faded away. In reality, the social democratic working-men's parties organised on more or less national dimensions, in Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, Portugal, Italy, Belgium, Holland, and the United States of America, form as many international groups, no longer single sections thinly scattered through different countries and held together by an eccentric General Council, but the working masses themselves in continuous, active, direct intercourse, cemented by exchange of thought, mutual services, and common aspiration.²⁸⁵

After the fall of the Paris Commune, all working class organisation in France was of course temporarily broken, but is now in an incipient state of reforming. On the other hand, despite all political and social obstacles, the Slavs, chiefly in Poland, Bohemia, and Russia, participate at present in this international movement to an extent not to be foreseen by the most sanguine in 1872. Thus, instead of dying out, the International did only pass from its first period of incubation to a higher one where its already original tendencies have in part become realities. In the course of its progressive development, it will yet have to undergo many a change, before the last chapter of its history can be written.

Written at the beginning of July 1878

Reproduced from the journal

First published in *The Secular Chronicle,
And Record of Freethought Progress*, Vol. X,
No. 5, August 4, 1878

^a Francis Joseph I and William I.—*Ed.*

^b Alexander II.—*Ed.*

^c G. Howell, *op. cit.*, p. 32.—*Ed.*

Karl Marx

[THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE
ON THE ANTI-SOCIALIST LAW(OUTLINE OF AN ARTICLE)]²⁸⁶

REICHSTAG SITTING OF SEPTEMBER 16 AND 17, 1878

Vice-Bismarck—von Stolberg spoke for 4 minutes, 7 seconds.

FROM THE STENOGRAPHIC REPORT

Reichstag. 4th sitting. Monday, September 16, 1878. Speaker: Forckenbeck.//House met 11.30. Adjourned 3.40.//^a*Deputising for the Imperial Chancellor, Minister of State, Count Stolberg-Wernigerode:*

"What will matter is ... ensuring that in future no one can engage in such agitation with the slightest semblance of legality."

FROM THE SPEECHES AT THE SITTING OF SEPTEMBER 16

ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT

Bebel: "Gentlemen, at the beginning of today's debate attention was specifically drawn by the *Imperial Chancellor's deputy* to the attempted assassinations,²⁸⁷ as was similarly done a few days since in the *King's Speech*²⁸⁸ and likewise in the *preamble* to the Bill submitted to us; everyone who has spoken today has likewise more or less touched on the assassination attempts, and everyone has designated those assassination attempts as the immediate occasion for this exceptional law,²⁸⁹ nor could anything be more evident than that they were the cause thereof.—In that case, Gentlemen, the government might justly have been expected to express itself clearly and accurately in this respect, to give evidence as to what discoveries it had made, what facts incriminating us had been brought to light that might prove the existence of *just one*, if only an *ideological connection* between the would-be assassins^b and Social-Democracy. To this day, however, nothing of the kind has been done, all we have been given *has been empty words and accusations*. Similarly, we hear the parrot-cry: 'The assassination attempts were instigated by the Social-Democrats.' This is to accuse the Social-Democrats of 'being the party of regicides', etc.... We are quite unwilling to put up with the silence that has been maintained until this very day.... First and foremost, we are vitally concerned to know *what is contained in the numerous records made in writing in connection with the assassination attempts*. In particular, we insist on knowing what came to light during the *extraordinarily numerous interrogations that took place in various parts of Germany of*

^a Square brackets encountered in Marx's actual manuscript have been replaced with two oblique lines.—*Ed.*

^b Emil Heinrich Max Hödel and Dr. Karl Eduard Nobiling.—*Ed.*

members of our party and non-party members, of men of the most diverse political leanings who had any connection, however remote, with the would-be assassins. We, upon whom the guilt and the responsibility is being foisted, insist that the matter be finally clarified. And this in particular as regards the last assassination attempt which was the immediate occasion of the fresh elections to the Reichstag and the submission of this Bill...

"I went away //from the *Vorwärts* where he had been making inquiries about Dr. Nobiling—this, late at night on the 2nd of June (1878)// very satisfied with what I had heard and, a few minutes later, came to a shop where, to my intense surprise, I found a despatch posted up which read:

"Berlin, 2 o'clock in the morning: In the course of a later judicial examination, the would-be assassin, Nobiling, confessed that he subscribed to socialist tendencies, also that he had repeatedly attended socialist meetings here and that he had, for a week or more, already been intending to shoot His Imperial Majesty^a because he regarded the removal of the Head of State to be in the interests of the public weal."

"...The despatch that precipitated this piece of news into the world is explicitly designated an official one. Here, in my hand, I have the despatch which was officially delivered to the editorial board of the *Kreuz-Zeitung*^b 290 with comments written by the *Kreuz-Zeitung*'s editor.^c There is not a shadow of doubt as to the official nature of this despatch. Now, sundry trustworthy reports have shown that Nobiling was not subjected to any kind of judicial examination on the day of the attempted assassination or in the course of the ensuing night, that nothing was ascertained that could in any way be seriously regarded as a clue to the murderer's motives and his political convictions. Every one of you, Gentlemen, knows the nature of *Wolff's Telegraphic Agency* (Hear, hear!), everyone of you knows that despatches of this kind simply cannot go through without being officially approved. And that very word 'official' has, for good measure, been authoritatively appended to this despatch. Hence there can, in my view, be no doubt whatsoever that the said despatch was a deliberate and witting forgery on the part of the authorities, and was sent out into the world as such. (Hear, hear!) The despatch contains one of the most infamous calumnies ever to have been unloosed on the world from official sources and this, moreover, with the intention of casting the most odious suspicions on the whole of a large party, and of branding it as an accessory to a crime.

"Again, I would ask how it was possible that the government organs, the entire semi-official and official press and, in their wake, almost the whole of the rest of the press should, on the strength of the above-mentioned despatches, have been allowed, for weeks and months on end, to go on hitting out at us day after day in the most outrageous and rebellious fashion; that it could, day after day, unloose upon the world the most hair-raising and disquieting accounts of plots discovered, fellow culprits, etc., without the government's ever, etc.... Rather, the government did all in its power to disseminate and implant in the minds of an ever wider public a belief in the accuracy of the untrue allegations; and, up till this very hour, the government's official representatives have not so much as deigned to cast any light whatsoever on the present obscurities...."

Bebel now turns to the question of harassment (p. 39, Column II).

"It is clear that every effort was made to provoke disturbances; the intention was to annoy us to the extreme, thus inciting us to acts of violence of one kind or another.

^a William I.—Ed.

^b *Neue Preußische Zeitung*.—Ed.

^c Edwin von Niebelschütz.—Ed.

The attempted assassinations were patently not enough. Had we been incited to acts of violence by that harassment, certain circles would have undoubtedly rejoiced at having been thus provided with an even greater wealth of material incriminating ourselves and hence with an excuse for the most drastic intervention, etc." Thereupon Bebel demands "that the records should at long last be brought to light and that these be submitted, in printed form, to the Reichstag and in particular to the commission entrusted with the task of examining the Bill under discussion. The demand I am making here is similar to that which, a few days ago, during the debate on the *Grosser Kurfürst* disaster,²⁹¹ was voiced, with complete justification and the assent of almost all sections of the House, with reference to the said disaster and which was expressly admitted to be allowable by the Minister for Naval Affairs (von Stosch),^a insofar as it lay within his competence (1)."

//Bebel's request was greeted by the Reichstag with cries of "Quite right! Capital!"/>

//And what was the Prussian government's reply to this crushing accusation? With Eulenburg for its mouthpiece, it replied that it would not submit the records and that there was no incriminating material whatever to hand, //

Minister of the Interior, Count zu Eulenburg: "As regards the first point,"

//information obtained by the representatives of the federal governments, "concerning the examination to which the criminal, Nobiling, since deceased, was subjected"//.^b

1. "As regards the first point, I have to tell you that, if submission be demanded, it would be for the Prussian judiciary to give a ruling as to the feasibility or admissibility of disclosing the transactions of the proceedings that were instituted against Nobiling. This much, however, I am able to tell you, Gentlemen, and that is that Nobiling was subjected to *one* examination and that, in the course of that examination, insofar as I have any knowledge of it, he stated that he had participated in Social-Democratic meetings and found the doctrines put forward there to his liking. Having regard to the fact that it is for the Prussian judiciary to give a ruling as to the submission of the files, I must refrain from giving any further information."

//All that Eulenburg is actually saying is: 1. that "one" examination took place; he is careful not to say a "judicial" examination. Equally, he omits to say when that one examination took place (no doubt after the bullet that went through his head had blown out part of his brains).// But the words attributed by Eulenburg to Nobiling in the course of this "one" examination (assuming that Nobiling was in a condition to give an account of himself) prove, firstly, that he did not describe himself as a *Social-Democrat*, or as a *member of the Social-Democratic Party*; all he said was that he had attended some of the latter's MEETINGS like many other philistines

^a The name has been inserted by Marx.—Ed.

^b See *Stenographische Berichte über die Verhandlungen des Deutschen Reichstags*, Vol. 1, Berlin, 1878, pp. 50-51.—Ed.

and had found "the doctrines put forward there to his liking". Hence those doctrines were not his doctrines. His attitude towards them was that of a newcomer. *Secondly*, that he never suggested there was *any* connection between his "assassination attempt" and the MEETINGS or the doctrines put forward there.

But that is not the end of the curious tale: Mr. Eulenburg is fabricating the "this much" he is able to tell, or saying problematically "that, in the course of that examination, *insofar as I have any knowledge of it*, he stated". According to this, therefore, Mr. Eulenburg has *never seen the record*; he knows it only from hearsay and can only tell as much "as has come to his knowledge in this way". But he at once proceeds to give himself the lie. Having just told everything "*insofar as he had any knowledge of it*", he goes on in his very next sentence to say:

"Having regard to the fact that it is for the Prussian judiciary to give a ruling as to the submission of the files, *I must refrain from giving any further information.*"

In other words, he would compromise the government were he to "give" what he knows.

Incidentally: If only *one* interrogation took place, we also know "when", namely on the day when Nobiling was arrested with bullets in his brain and a sabre cut in the head, namely on the day, the same day that the notorious telegram was released,^a *at 2 o'clock in the morning, on June 2*. Later, however, the government sought to make the *ultramontane* party²⁹² responsible for Nobiling. The interrogation, therefore, had revealed no *connection of any description* between Nobiling's assassination attempt and the Social-Democrats.

But Eulenburg has not yet concluded his confessions. He has to

"expressly point out that, as early as *May*, I stated from this place²⁹³ that *the statement did not go so far as to say that these acts had been directly instigated by the Social-Democrats; neither am I now in a position to make such statement nor, indeed, to add anything new along the same lines.*"

Bravo! Eulenburg roundly admits that, for all the disgraceful harassment by police and interrogators which took place between Hödel's assassination attempt and the Reichstag MEETING, not *one shred of factual evidence* was produced in support of the government's pet "theory" regarding the attempted assassinations!

Eulenburg and Co., whose tender "regard" for the powers of the "Prussian judiciary" is such that the latter is assumed, after Hödel's decapitation and Nobiling's death,²⁹⁴ to present an obstacle

^a "Die Frevelthat vom 2. Juni", *Neue Preussische Zeitung*, No. 126, June 4, 1878.—*Ed.*

to submitting the "records" to the Reichstag, the investigation thus being closed for good, did not scruple on the very day of Nobiling's assassination attempt, when the investigation of his case had barely begun, to issue a tendentiously worded "telegram", purportedly about the initial interrogation of Nobiling, thereby evoking delirium tremens in the German philistines and causing their press to build an edifice of lies thereon! What respect for the *judiciary* and more particularly for the similarly accused government!

Having thus declared that there is no *factual evidence* arising out of these attempted assassinations upon which to base an accusation against the Social-Democrats—and therefore refused to produce the records which would cast a grotesque light on this abhorrent circumstance, Mr. Eulenburg proceeds to say that the Bill in fact rests simply upon a "theory", the government's theory that

"the line of vehement agitation adopted by *Social-Democracy* in the dissemination of its doctrines would be well-calculated to induce in *unruly spirits* the maturation of such tragic fruits as we, to our most profound regret, have had to witness."

//Tragic fruits such as Sefeloge, Tschsch, Schneider, Becker, Kullmann, Cohen (alias Blind)?//

"And I believe that in so saying, Gentlemen, I am still today of *one mind* with the *entire German press*,"

//i.e. insofar as it has been reptilized,²⁹⁵ i.e. with the single exception of *independent papers of all complexions*//

"with the *sole exception* of the Social-Democratic section thereof".

(Outright lies, as before!)

//The meetings attended by Nobiling, like any other, took place *under the supervision* of a policeman; hence there was nothing insidious about them; the *doctrines* he listened to can only have related to the subjects on the *agenda*//

After these *factually* false pronouncements about the "entire German press", Mr. Eulenburg may be

"certain of *encountering no contradiction* from that quarter".

In reply to Bebel, he has to "*recall* the attitude adopted towards these events by the Social-Democratic press" in order to prove "that Social-Democracy" does not, as it claims, "*abhor murder* in whatever guise".

Proof:

1. "The organs of Social-Democracy began by trying to demonstrate that the attempted assassinations were a put-up job" (CROWN PRINCE^a).

^a Frederick William.—Ed.

//The *Norddeutsche Allgemeine [Zeitung]*'s complaints concerning the legal nature of German Social-Democratic agitation.//²⁹⁶

2. "When they saw that this offered no means of escape...., they changed their tune and asserted that neither of the criminals could be held accountable, depicting them as isolated lunatics and their deeds as manifestations such as had always occurred from time to time in every era"

//haven't they?//

"and for which no one could be held responsible."

//(Proves love of "murder".) (Many non-Social-Democratic journals did the same.)//

Instead of producing the "records" of which, according to his previous statement, he has no knowledge—or must, out of regard for the "Prussian judiciary", refrain from blabbing about—Mr. Eulenburg now demands that credence be attached, on the grounds of these "records" withheld by him, to the following:

"Gentlemen, the investigation which has been carried out has not yielded the slightest indication that the two men were in any way incapable of reflecting upon the consequences and implications of their acts. On the contrary, *all that it has been possible to establish* is that they were fully accountable for their actions and, in the latter case, //not, then, in that of the executed man, Hödel?// acted with *deliberate malice aforethought* such as has seldom been seen before."

3. "There has been a tendency in many of the organs of Social-Democracy to excuse these actions, to exculpate their perpetrators. Not they, but society"

//they were exculpated by the government in that the latter does not hold *them* responsible but "the doctrines of Social-Democracy" and the agitators of the working class—i.e. *one section of society* and its "doctrines"—//

"was held responsible for the crimes"

//i.e. the exculpation was not extended to the *acts*, otherwise they would not have been regarded as "crimes", and the question of "guilt" would not have been discussed at all//

"which had been committed."

(Quotes from *Vorwärts*,^a with complete justification, with reference to Hödel.)

After all this clap-trap:

4. "Side by side with this, Gentlemen, there appeared comments on the heinous acts perpetrated or attempted against high-ranking officials in Russia. With reference to *Vera Zasulich's* assassination attempt"

//the St. Petersburg jury and the press throughout the world!!!

"and the murder of General *Mezentsov*"²⁹⁷

^a Eulenburg quotes "Das Attentat" in *Vorwärts*, No. 57, May 17, 1878.—Ed.

//more about this below, *re* Bismarck^a//

"you will have seen in a paper published here the question: 'Well, what else could they have done? What other recourse did they have?'"^b

5. "Finally, *Social-Democracy abroad* has explicitly and in so many words expressed its sympathy with these acts. The *Congress of the Jura Federation*, which met at Fribourg in July of this year, explicitly declared the acts of Hödel and Nobiling to be revolutionary acts which had its full sympathy, etc."²⁹⁸

But is German Social-Democracy "responsible" for the statements and MOVEMENTS of a clique hostile to it whose "assassinations" and [the like]^c in Italy, Switzerland, Spain //likewise Russia: Nechayev// have hitherto been confined exclusively to members of "the Marxian tendency"?²⁹⁹

//In referring to these same anarchists, Mr. Eulenburg had already remarked that one had had to relinquish the view that

"the attempted assassinations were a put-up job", "when even Social-Democratic organs abroad—I shall presently provide an example of this—expressed the conviction that nothing of the kind was the case";

he forgets to provide "the example".//

There now follows a *fine passage* on

the "*Marxian tendency*" and the "*tendency of the so-called Anarchists*"

(p. 51, Column I). They are different, but

"it cannot be denied that there is a certain" (what? hostile) "connection between all these associations"

as, indeed, there is a *certain* connection between all the manifestations of one and the same epoch. If they want to make a *cas pendable*^d of this "connection", they must first of all show it to have a *distinctive character*, and not rest content with a phrase that is applicable to anything and everything in the universe where a "certain" connection exists between absolutely everything. The "Marxian tendency" has demonstrated that there is a definite connection between the "Anarchists'" doctrines and actions and those of the European "police". When the details of this connection were exposed in the report *The Alliance*, etc.,^e the entire reptilian and respectable press held its peace. These "revelations" did not fit in with their idea of a "connection".

^a For Bismarck's speech at the Reichstag sitting of September 17, 1878 see *Stenographische Berichte...*, Vol. 1, Berlin, 1878, p. 70.—Ed.

^b See "Das Henkerbeil", *Berliner Freie Presse*, No. 195, August 23, 1878.—Ed.

^c Not easily decipherable in the MS.—Ed.

^d Capital offence.—Ed.

^e K. Marx and F. Engels, *The Alliance of Socialist Democracy and the International Working Men's Association* (present edition, Vol. 23).—Ed.

(Hitherto this clique has confined its attempted murders solely to members of the "Marxian" tendency.)

After this *faux fuyant*^a Mr. Eulenburg proceeds, *via* an unobtrusive "and", to tack on a sentence which seeks to demonstrate the said "connection" by means of a false *locus communis*^b and one, moreover, that was expressed in an exceptionally "critical" form:

"...and", he goes on, "and in such movements, *experience based upon the law of gravity*"

//a movement may be based on the law of gravity, e.g. the movement of a fall, but an experience is based *prima facie*^c only on the phenomenon of the fall//

"has shown that *more extreme tendencies*"

//e.g. self-mutilation in Christianity//

"*gradually* gain the upper hand, and that the more moderate ones are unable to hold their own against them."

Firstly, to say that in historical movements it is the so-called extreme tendencies in any timely movement that gain the upper hand,—Luther versus Thomas Münzer, the Puritans versus the LEVELLERS, the Jacobins versus the Hébertistes³⁰⁰—is a *false locus communis*. History proves precisely the opposite. *Secondly*, however, the "anarchist" tendency is not an "extreme tendency" of German Social-Democracy,—something which Eulenburg should prove rather than insinuate. What is involved in the one case is the genuine historical movement of the working class; the other is a phantom of a *jeunesse sans issue*^d intent on making history, and merely shows how the ideas of French socialism are caricatured in the *hommes déclassés*^e of the upper classes. As a result, anarchism has suffered an almost universal eclipse, and continues to exist only where there is as yet no proper workers' movement. This is a fact.

All that Mr. Eulenburg proves is how dangerous it can be when the "police" take to "philosophising".

See the immediately ensuing sentence (Column I, p. 51) in which Eulenburg speaks *quasi re bene gesta*.^f

^a Red herring.—*Ed.*

^b Commonplace.—*Ed.*

^c On the face of it.—*Ed.*

^d Young people in a predicament.—*Ed.*

^e Déclassé men.—*Ed.*

^f As though all was as it should be.—*Ed.*

He now seeks to prove that "*the doctrines and objectives of Social-Democracy are harmful in all respects*"! And how? With three quotations.

But first let us look at the splendid way in which he makes the transition:

"And if you take a somewhat closer look at these doctrines and objectives of Social-Democracy, you will find that *the objective* is not, as said just now, *peaceful development*, but that *peaceful development is only a stage* intended to lead on to the *final objectives* which are unattainable by any means other than those of force."

//In the same way, perhaps, as the "National Association"³⁰¹ was a "stage" intended to lead on to the *forcible Prussification of Germany*,—that's how Mr. Eulenburg looks at the matter [with] "Blood and Iron".³⁰²//

If one takes the first part of the sentence, what he is saying is merely a tautology or an absurdity: If development has an "objective"—"final objectives"—then those "objectives" are its "objectives", the nature of the development being neither "peaceful" nor otherwise. What Eulenburg is in fact trying to say is: Peaceful development towards an objective is only a stage which is intended to lead on to the forcible development of the objective, and indeed, according to Mr. Eulenburg, this subsequent change from "peaceful" to "forcible" development is inherent in the objective it is seeking to attain. The objective in the case under consideration is the emancipation of the working class and the revolution (transformation) of society implicit therein. An historical development can remain "peaceful" only for so long as its progress is not forcibly obstructed by those wielding social power at the time. If in England, for instance, or the United States, the working class were to gain a majority in PARLIAMENT OF CONGRESS, they could, by lawful means, rid themselves of such laws and institutions as impeded their development, though they could only do so insofar as society had reached a sufficiently mature development. However, the "peaceful" movement might be transformed into a "forcible" one by resistance on the part of those interested in restoring the former state of affairs; if (as in the American Civil War and French Revolution³⁰²) they are put down by *force*, it is as rebels against "lawful" force.

But what Eulenburg advocates is *forcible reaction* on the part of those in power against *development while still* at the "peaceful

^a An allusion to Bismarck's statement regarding the way of unifying Germany. See his speech at the 94th session of the Budget Commission of the Prussian Chamber of Deputies on September 30, 1862, *Berliner Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 458, October 2, 1862 (morning issue).—Ed.

stage", and this for the purpose of preventing subsequent "forcible" conflicts; the war cry of forcible counter-revolution against actually "peaceful" development; indeed, the government is seeking to suppress *by force* a development it dislikes but cannot *lawfully* attack. This is the necessary prelude to forcible revolutions.

It is an old story
which yet remains eternally new.^a

Mr. Eulenburg now adduces three quotations in proof of Social-Democracy's doctrines of force:

1. *In his work on capital, Marx says: "Our aims etc."*

//But "our" aims is said, not in the name of German Social-Democracy, but in that of the *Communist Party*// The passage is not from *Capital* which appeared in 1867, but from the *Communist Manifesto* which had appeared in "1847",³⁰⁵ i.e. twenty years before the "German Social-Democracy" was actually formed.

2. And in another passage, which is quoted in Mr. Bebel's work, *Unsere Ziele*, we read, as an assertion made by Marx:

//He [Eulenburg] himself, who quotes from *Capital* a passage that is not in it, naturally quotes passage that does appear in it as an assertion quoted elsewhere. (Cf. *passage in Capital, 2nd edition*.^b)// But the passage in Bebel runs:

"Thus we see that *force* plays its role at various periods of history, and it is probably not without good reason that *K. Marx* (in his book, '*Das Kapital*' in which he depicts the course of development of capitalist production) exclaims: 'Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one. It is itself an economic power'."^c

3. Quotation from Bebel: What *Unsere Ziele* (Column I, p. 51) quotes is, in fact, the following:

"The course of this development depends on the intensity (power) with which the circles involved take hold of the movement; it *depends on the resistance encountered by the movement from its opponents*. Of one thing we may be sure: *The more vigorous the resistance, the more forcibly will the new conditions be brought about*. The problem will not at all be solved by a sprinkling of rose water."

//Eulenburg quotes this from Bebel's "*Unsere Ziele*". It is to be found on p. 16, see *passage side-lined* on p. 16, ditto 15; see ditto, *passage side-lined*, p. 43.// Again "falsified" because quoted out of context.

^a H. Heine, "Ein Jungling liebt ein Mädchen...", *Buch der Lieder*, Hamburg, 1839.—Ed.

^b K. Marx, *Das Kapital*, Hamburg, 1872, p. 782 (see *Capital*, Vol. I, Part VIII, Chapter XXXI, present edition, Vol. 35).—Ed.

^c A. Bebel, *Unsere Ziele*, 4th ed., Leipzig, 1874, p. 16.—Ed.

After this forceful performance, see the puerile and self-demolishing twaddle about *Bismarck's* "contacts" with the "leaders of Social-Democracy" (p. 51, Column II).³⁰⁴

At the same sitting:

Stolberg's speech was followed by *Reichensperger's*. His chief fear—that the law whereby everything was made subject to the police be also applied to other parties displeasing to the government; in addition, unending *Catholic* balderdash. (See side-lined passages, pp. 30-35).

Reichensperger was followed by *von Helldorff-Bedra*. Utterly naive:

"Gentlemen, the present law has the character of a preventive law in the most eminent sense of the word; it contains no penal clauses, but simply empowers the police to issue prohibitions and attaches penalties to infringements of these patently unmistakable prohibitions" (p. 36, Column I).

//It allows only the police to prohibit everything and does not punish the infringement of any law, but rather the "infringement" of the police ukase. A highly successful way of rendering penal laws superfluous.//

The "danger", admits *Mr. von Helldorff*, lies in the electoral victories of the Social-Democrats³⁰⁵ which were not even prejudiced by the harassment consequent upon the assassination attempts! That calls for disciplinary action. Use of general suffrage in a manner displeasing to the government! (36, Column II).

However, the laddie concedes that *Reichensperger* is right and the "Complaints office", the "Federal Council Commission", nonsense.

"The only question to be settled here is one that concerns the police, and to circumscribe such an authority by guaranteeing rights—quite definitely wrong"; abuse can be combatted by showing "confidence in politically highly placed officials" (37, I and II). Demands "amendment of our suffrage" (38, I).

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Frederick Engels

[THE ANTI-SOCIALIST LAW IN GERMANY.—
THE SITUATION IN RUSSIA]³⁰⁶

London, March 21

...The last socialist elections in Germany prove that one cannot kill socialism just by stopping its mouth.³⁰⁷ Indeed the law against the socialists will be a great success for us. It will complete the revolutionary education of the German workers...

With great effort and great sacrifices they had won the degree of freedom of the press, of association and assembly which they enjoyed. It was a continuous struggle, but in the end victory always remained on the side of the workers. They could organise, and whenever there was a general election it was a new triumph for them.

This legal agitation, however, made some people believe that it was no longer necessary to do anything else in order to obtain the final victory of the proletariat. This, in a country as poor in revolutionary traditions as Germany, could have been dangerous. Luckily, Bismarck's brutal action and the cowardice of the German bourgeoisie who support him have changed things. The German workers have proved just how much constitutional liberties are worth when the proletariat takes them seriously and uses them to combat capitalist domination. If any illusions still existed in this respect, our friend Bismarck has abruptly dispelled them. I say our *friend* Bismarck because no one has ever rendered so many services to socialism in Germany as he has. After preparing the revolution with the most advanced and intolerable militarism, with constantly increasing taxes, with an alliance between the State and the most shameless stock-jobbing, with a return to the most feudal and repressive traditions of the old Prussia, with persecutions as numerous as they were petty, and with public degradation and revilement inflicted on a bourgeoisie which, it must be said,

deserved no better,—after preparing the revolution in this way he crowns his labours by forcing the German proletariat to set out on the revolutionary road.

Our friend Bismarck can rest assured. The revolution he has so well prepared will be carried out by the German workers. When the signal is given by Russia, they will be ready.

For some years now I have been bringing the state of Russia, where a decisive movement is being prepared, to the attention of European socialists. The struggle between the government and the secret societies has taken on so violent a character there that it cannot last. The movement seems to be on the brink of exploding. The government agents are committing incredible atrocities. Against such wild animals one must defend oneself as one can, with powder and lead. Political assassination in Russia is the only means which men of intelligence, dignity and character possess to defend themselves against the agents of an unprecedented despotism.³⁰⁸

Powerful conspiracies in the army and even in the imperial Court, national opinion humiliated by the diplomatic defeats following the war,³⁰⁹ the treasury empty, credit in ruins, the bankers refusing to grant loans unless they are guaranteed by a national assembly, and finally destitution. This is the balance of Russia.

Written on March 21, 1879

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Signed: *F. Engels*

Printed according to the news-
paper

Translated from the Italian

Published in English for the first
time

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels

CIRCULAR LETTER

TO AUGUST BEBEL, WILHELM LIEBKNECHT,
WILHELM BRACKE AND OTHERS³¹⁰

Dear Bebel,

The delay in replying to your letter of August 20^a has been due, on the one hand, to Marx's prolonged absence³¹¹ and, on the other, to a number of incidents: first, the arrival of the "Richter" *Jahrbuch*, secondly that of Höchberg himself.³¹²

I can only conclude that Liebknecht did not show you the last letter I wrote him, although I specifically instructed him to do so. Otherwise you would certainly not have adduced the same reasons as had been put forward by Liebknecht, and to which I had already *replied* in the aforesaid letter.³¹³

Let us now run through the individual points with which we are concerned here.

I. THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH CARL HIRSCH

Liebknecht asked Hirsch whether he would undertake to edit the party organ that was about to be founded in Zurich. Hirsch sought information as to the financing of the paper: what funds were available and who was providing them? Firstly, so as to know whether the paper might not peter out within a few months. Secondly, to ascertain who held the purse-strings, thus having the final say as to the paper's stance. Liebknecht's reply, telling Hirsch that "everything is in order; you will be getting further information from Zurich" (Liebknecht to Hirsch, July 28), didn't arrive.³¹⁴ But what did reach Hirsch from Zurich was a letter from

^a The original erroneously has: "August 29".—*Ed.*

Bernstein (July 24) in which Bernstein informed him that "We^a are being entrusted with the production and *supervision* (of the paper)". A discussion had taken place "between Viereck, Singer and ourselves" during which it was suggested

"that your position might be rendered somewhat difficult by the differences of opinion which you, as a *Latene* man, have had with individual comrades, though I myself do not consider this objection carries much weight".

Not a word about the financing.

Hirsch answered by return on July 26, enquiring about the paper's material circumstances. Which comrades had undertaken to cover the deficit? Up to what amount and for how long?—The question of the editor's salary didn't enter into this at all; Hirsch merely wanted to know whether "means have been secured to ensure the paper's continued existence for at least a year".

On July 31, Bernstein replied, saying that any deficit there might be would be covered by voluntary contributions of which *some* (!) had already been subscribed. Hirsch's remarks about the stance he thought the paper should adopt, of which more below, elicited deprecating remarks and *injunctions*:

"It is all the more necessary for the *supervisory committee*³¹⁵ to insist on it in that it, in turn, is subject to control, i.e. is responsible. On these points, therefore, you must come to an understanding with the supervisory committee."

They asked him to reply by return, preferably by telegraph.

Hence, instead of getting a reply to his justified questions, Hirsch was informed that he was to be editor under a *supervisory committee* based in Zurich, with views differing very materially from his own and members of whose names he wasn't even informed!

Hirsch, quite justifiably outraged by this treatment, chose rather to come to an understanding with the Leipzigers. His letter of August 2 to Liebknecht must be known to you, since Hirsch *expressly demanded* that it be shown to you and Viereck. Hirsch is even willing to submit to a supervisory committee in Zurich, inasmuch as the latter is to put its comments to the editor in writing and these may be referred for decision to the controlling committee in Leipzig.³¹⁶

In the meantime Liebknecht had written to Hirsch on July 28:

"Of course finance is available for the undertaking, seeing that it is backed by the entire party+(INCLUSIVE) Höchberg. But I'm not concerned with the details."

Nor does Liebknecht's next letter contain anything about the financing—only an assurance that the Zurich committee is not an

^a Eduard Bernstein, Karl Höchberg and Karl August Schramm.—*Ed.*

[Handwritten text in German, likely a circular letter or manifesto, written in cursive script. The text is dense and covers most of the page, with some lines appearing to be crossed out or heavily faded. There are some faint markings and a signature-like scribble on the right side of the page.]

A page of the "Circular Letter to August Bebel, Wilhelm Liebknecht, Wilhelm Bracke and Others" by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels

editorial committee, but is only to be entrusted with *administration* and the financial side. As late as August 14, Liebknecht wrote to me along the same lines, and asked that we persuade Hirsch to accept. You yourself, as late as August 20 were still so little acquainted with the actual circumstances that you wrote to me saying:

"He" (Höchberg) "has no more say in the editing of the paper than *any other well-known member of the party.*"

Finally, Hirsch received a letter from Viereck, dated August 11, containing the admission that

"the 3 men domiciled in Zurich are to, qua *editorial committee*, apply themselves to founding the paper and, subject to the agreement of the three Leipzigers, select an editor ... *so far as I recall*, the resolutions that were sent them also asserted that the (Zurich) founding committee mentioned under 2., was to assume *both political and financial responsibility* towards the party.... From this state of affairs it follows, or so it seems to me, that ... there can be no question of anyone assuming the editorship without the concurrence of the 3 men domiciled in Zurich and entrusted with the founding by the party".

Here at last was *something* definite, at least, for Hirsch to go on, if only in regard to the position of the editor vis-à-vis the Zurichers. They were an *editorial* committee; they were also *politically* responsible; without their concurrence no one could assume the editorship. In short, Hirsch was simply instructed to come to an understanding with three men in Zurich whose names had still not been disclosed to him.

But to make the confusion worse, Liebknecht added a postscript to Viereck's letter:

"Singer from Berlin was here just now and *informed* us that the supervisory committee in Zurich is *not*, as Viereck imagines, an *editorial* committee, but essentially an administrative committee which is financially responsible to the party, i.e. to ourselves, for the paper; of course, its members also have the right and the duty to discuss the editing with you (a right and a duty of which, by the way, *every* member is possessed); they are *not* empowered to place you under their *guardianship.*"

The Zurich trio and one member of the Leipzig committee—the *only one*^a present at the discussions—insist that Hirsch is to be subject to official direction by Zurich, while another Leipzig member^b contests this outright. And yet Hirsch is to make up his mind before these gentlemen are agreed amongst themselves! The fact that Hirsch was entitled to acquaint himself with the resolutions they had adopted and which embodied the conditions with which he was expected to comply, was entirely overlooked.

^a Louis Viereck.—*Ed.*

^b Wilhelm Liebknecht.—*Ed.*

the more so since it never seems to have occurred to the Leipzigers that they *themselves* should become properly acquainted with those resolutions. How, otherwise, can the above-mentioned inconsistency be accounted for?

If the Leipzigers were unable to agree upon the powers vested in the Zurich people, the latter harboured no doubts on this score.

Schramm to Hirsch, August 14:

"Had you not written at one time that in a similar case" (as that of Kayser),^a "you would do just as you had done before, thus holding out the prospect of a similar *modus operandi*,"³¹⁷ we would not be wasting words on the subject. As it is, however, and in view of that statement of yours, we must reserve the right to have the casting vote as to what articles the new paper should take."

The letter to Bernstein in which Hirsch was alleged to have said this was dated July 26, *long* after the conference in Zurich at which the Zurich trio's powers were laid down. But so much were those in Zurich already revelling in the sense of their own bureaucratic authority that, in reply to this subsequent letter of Hirsch's, they were already laying claim to new powers, namely the *decision* as to what articles should be included. The editorial committee was already a *censorship* committee.

Not until Höchberg arrived in Paris did Hirsch learn from him the *names* of the members of the two committees.³¹⁸

If, then, discussions with Hirsch broke down, what was the cause?

1. The obstinate refusal, on the part of both Leipzig and Zurich, to give him any hard and fast information about the paper's financial basis and hence the likelihood of keeping it afloat, if only for a year. Not until he was over here did he learn from me (following your communication to me^b) how much had been subscribed. Hence, the only conclusion it was really possible to draw from previous communications (the party + Höchberg) was either that the paper was already being largely financed by Höchberg or that it would soon be entirely dependent on his subsidies. And this latter eventuality is still far from being excluded. The sum of—if I read it right—800 marks is *precisely* the same (40 pounds sterling) as had to be contributed by the local association, *Freiheit*,³¹⁹ during the *first half year*.

2. Liebknecht's repeated assurances, which have since proved totally erroneous, that Zurich was to have no official control whatever over the editorship, and the resulting comedy of errors;

3. The certainty finally established that not only were the Zurich

^a See this volume, pp. 260-61.—*Ed.*

^b This refers to August Bebel's letter to Engels of August 20, 1879.—*Ed.*

people to control the editing, they were actually to censor it, and that the only role that would redound upon him, Hirsch, would be that of the man of straw.

His refusal at that juncture is something we cannot but approve. The Leipzig committee, or so we hear from Höchberg,³²⁰ has received reinforcements in the shape of two more who do not live in the place^a and hence that committee can intervene quickly only if the three Leipzigers are agreed. As a result, the real centre of gravity has altogether shifted to Zurich, and Hirsch or, for that matter, any true revolutionary and proletarian-minded editor, would not have been able to work with the people there for any length of time. More about this later.

II. THE PROPOSED STANCE OF THE PAPER

As early as July 24 Bernstein had informed Hirsch that the differences he, as a *Laterne* man, had had with individual comrades would render his position more difficult.

Hirsch replied^b that in his view the paper's stance would in general have to be the same as that of the *Laterne*, i.e. such as to avoid prosecution in Switzerland and not cause undue alarm in Germany. He inquired who those comrades might be and continued:

"I know of only one and can promise you that in a similar case of *undisciplined conduct* I should deal with him in exactly the same way."

Whereupon Bernstein, conscious of his newly acquired dignity as official censor, replied:

"Now as regards the paper's stance, it is the view of the supervisory committee that the *Laterne* should not serve as a model; in our view the paper should be less taken up with political radicalism, but rather adopt a line that is socialist on principle. Instances such as the attack upon Kayser, which was frowned on by all comrades without exception" (!), "must under all circumstances be avoided."^c

And so on and so forth. Liebknecht called the attack on Kayser "a bloomer", and so dangerous did it seem to Schramm that he immediately imposed censorship on Hirsch.^d

Hirsch again wrote to Höchberg, saying that a case such as that of Kayser

"could not occur should an official party organ exist, whose lucid expositions and friendly hints *could* not be so presumptuously brushed aside by a deputy".

^a Ignaz Auer and Karl Grillenberger.—*Ed.*

^b On July 26, 1879.—*Ed.*

^c Eduard Bernstein's letter to Carl Hirsch of July 31, 1879.—*Ed.*

^d See this volume, p. 258.—*Ed.*

Viereck also wrote, saying that what was required of the new paper was that it adopt a

"dispassionate attitude and, in so far as possible, bury the hatchet"; it ought not to be an "enlarged version of the *Lateme*" and "the most Bernstein can be reproached with is that he holds views that are too moderate, if reproach it be at a time when we cannot, after all, crowd on sail".

Well, now, what is this Kayser case, this unpardonable crime Hirsch is supposed to have committed? In the Reichstag, Kayser spoke in favour of and voted for protective tariffs, the only one of the Social-Democratic deputies to do so. Hirsch accused him of having infringed party discipline, in that Kayser

1. voted for indirect taxation, the abolition of which is expressly demanded by the party programme";

2. voted Bismarck funds, thus infringing the first and fundamental rule of our party tactics: not a farthing for this government.

Hirsch is undeniably right on both counts. And, after Kayser had spurned, on the one hand, the party programme to which the deputies, by their resolution in congress, had in effect been solemnly pledged and, on the other hand, the most imperative and all-important rule of party tactics, after he had voted Bismarck funds, *out of gratitude for the Anti-Socialist Law*,³²¹ Hirsch was again perfectly justified in our opinion in handling him as roughly as he did.

We have never understood how it was that this attack upon Kayser could have aroused such a furore in Germany. I am now told by Höchberg that it was the "faction" which gave Kayser *permission* to act as he did, and Kayser is held to be covered by that permission.

If such is the case, then it is really too bad. In the first place, Hirsch could have known no more than the rest of the world about this secret resolution.^b Then, again, the discredit incurred by the party, for which previously Kayser alone could have been blamed, is all the greater for this affair, as is Hirsch's merit in having brought to light in public and for all the world to see Kayser's preposterous phraseology and his even more preposterous vote, thus saving the honour of the party. Or has German

^a See "Programm der sozialistischen Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands", *Der Volksstaat*, No. 59, May 28, 1875.—*Ed.*

^b Deleted in the manuscript: "Even admitting that two or three other Social-Democratic deputies (for it is unlikely that any more were there) had allowed themselves to be misled into permitting Kayser to recite his inanities in front of all and sundry, and vote Bismarck funds, it was their duty publicly to assume responsibility for this and then wait and see what Hirsch would say."—*Ed.*

Social-Democracy indeed been infected with the parliamentary disease, believing that, with the popular vote, the Holy Ghost is poured upon those elected, that meetings of the faction are transformed into infallible councils and factional resolutions into sacrosanct dogma?

Admittedly, a bloomer has been made—not by Hirsch, however, but by the deputies who gave Kayser the protection of their resolution. And if those upon whom, above all others, it is incumbent to see that party discipline is maintained, themselves so glaringly infringe that party discipline by a resolution of this kind, then so much the worse. But it is even worse still if they have the audacity to believe that it was not Kayser, by his speech and vote, or the other deputies by their resolution, who infringed party discipline, but Hirsch, inasmuch as he attacked Kayser despite that resolution about which, moreover, he knew nothing.

For the rest, there can be no doubt that the policy the party had adopted towards the question of protective tariffs was as muddled and vacillating as it has always been in regard to virtually all economic questions—e.g. state railways⁵²²—when they have become a practical issue. The reason for this is that the party organs, notably *Vorwärts*, rather than subject such questions to a thorough discussion, have preferred to apply themselves to the construction of the future social order. When, *subsequent to* the Anti-Socialist Law, the question of protective tariffs suddenly became a live issue, views on the subject diverged, assuming a wide variety of nuances, and there was absolutely no one to hand possessing the qualification that would have enabled him to form a lucid and accurate opinion, namely a knowledge of conditions in German industry and the latter's position in the world market. Again, as was bound to happen, protectionist tendencies cropped up here and there amongst the electorate, tendencies which, it was felt, ought also to be taken into consideration. The only possible way out of the confusion would have been to take a purely political view of the question (as was done in the *Laterne*), but this was not pursued with any determination. Thus it was inevitable that in this debate, the party acted for the first time in a hesitant, uncertain and muddled way and ended up by thoroughly discrediting itself through the person of and in company with Kayser.

The attack on Kayser is now being used as a pretext to admonish Hirsch, in tones ranging through the whole gamut, to the effect that the new paper must on no account repeat the excesses of the *Laterne*, must be less taken up with political radicalism and rather adopt a line that is dispassionate and

socialist on principle. And this from Viereck no less than from Bernstein who, precisely because he is too moderate, appears to the former to be the right man, seeing that just now we cannot, after all, crowd on sail.

But why go abroad at all, unless one intends to crowd on sail? Abroad, there's nothing to prevent this being done. In Switzerland there are no German press, combination and penal laws. Hence, not only can one say things there, which could not, even before the Anti-Socialist Law, be said at home because of the ordinary German laws, but one is actually *duty-bound* to do so. For here one is under the eyes, not of Germany alone, but of Europe and it is one's duty, insofar as the *Swiss* laws allow, openly to proclaim for Europe's benefit the methods and aims of the German party. Anyone in Switzerland seeking to abide by the *German* laws would only prove that he is deserving of those German laws and that he has, in effect, nothing to say save what he was allowed to say in Germany before the Exceptional Law. Nor should any account be taken of the possibility that the editors might be temporarily deprived of the chance to return to Germany. Anyone who is not prepared to run that risk is not fit to occupy so exposed and honourable a post.

More. If the German party was ostracised by the Exceptional Law, this was precisely *because* it was the only serious opposition party in Germany. If, in an organ published abroad, it renders thanks to Bismarck by abandoning its role as the only serious opposition party, by behaving in a nice, docile manner and adopting a dispassionate stance when kicked, it only proves that it deserved to be kicked. Of all the German émigré papers that have appeared abroad since 1830, the *Laterne* is undoubtedly one of the most moderate. If, however, even the *Laterne* was too insolent—then the new organ could not but compromise the party in the eyes of sympathisers in non-German countries.

III. THE MANIFESTO OF THE ZURICH TRIO

In the meantime we have received Höchberg's *Jahrbuch*, containing an article, "Rückblicke auf die sozialistische Bewegung in Deutschland,"^a which, as Höchberg himself informed me, was actually written by the three members of the Zurich committee.^b

^a See this volume, p. 253. *Jahrbuch für Socialwissenschaft und Socialpolitik*, Jg. 1, 1. Hälfte, Zurich-Oberstrass, 1879, pp. 75-96. The parentheses, abridgements and italics in the following quotations are by Engels.—*Ed.*

^b Höchberg, Bernstein and Schramm.—*Ed.*

Here we have their authentic critique of the movement up till now, and hence their authentic programme for the new paper's stance insofar as this is dependent on them.

At the very start we read:

"The movement, regarded by Lassalle as an eminently political one, to which he sought to rally not only the workers but all honest democrats, and in the van of which were to march the independent representatives of science and all men imbued with a true love of mankind, was trivialised under the chairmanship of J. B. von Schweitzer into a one-sided struggle of the industrial workers to promote their own interests."^a

I shall not inquire whether and to what extent this is historically true. The specific charge against Schweitzer is that Schweitzer *trivialised* Lassalleanism, here regarded as a bourgeois democratic-philanthropic movement, into a one-sided struggle of the industrial workers to promote their own interests—*trivialised* it by *emphasising* its character as a class struggle of industrial workers against the bourgeoisie.^b He is further charged with having "repudiated bourgeois democracy".^c But has bourgeois democracy any business to be in the Social-Democratic Party at all? If it consists of "honest men", it surely cannot wish to join, and if it nevertheless wishes to join, this can only be for the purpose of stirring up trouble.

The Lassallean party "chose to present itself in a most *one-sided* manner as a *workers' party*".^d The gentlemen who wrote those

^a *Jahrbuch für Socialwissenschaft und Socialpolitik*, p. 84.—Ed.

^b These two sentences were substituted by the authors for the following passage deleted in the manuscript: "Schweitzer was a great blackguard, but very talented intellectually. His particular merit consisted in his having broken free of the original, narrow Lassalleanism with its limited panacea of state aid... Whatever wrong he may have done out of corrupt motives and however much, too, he may have clung to the Lassallean panacea of state aid in order to preserve his domination, he nevertheless had the merit of having broken free of the original, narrow Lassalleanism, of having broadened the party's economic horizons and thus paved the way for its subsequent merger with the German party as a whole. The class struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie, that pivot of all revolutionary socialism, had already been advocated by Lassalle. If Schweitzer stressed this point even more strongly it was, at any rate, a step forward so far as the cause was concerned, however much of a pretext he may thus have afforded dangerous individuals for calling his dictatorship in question. It may rightly be said that he turned Lassalleanism into a *one-sided* struggle of the *industrial* workers to promote their own interests. But one-sided only in the sense that, for reasons that were politically corrupt, he wished to have nothing to do with the farm workers' struggle to promote their own interests vis-à-vis the big landowners. It is not that with which he is reproached here; rather the 'trivialisation' consists in his emphasising its character as a class struggle of industrial workers against the bourgeoisie."—Ed.

^c *Jahrbuch für Socialwissenschaft und Socialpolitik*, p. 84.—Ed.

^d *Ibid.*, p. 85.—Ed.

words are themselves members of a party which presents itself in the most one-sided manner as a workers' party, and now hold office in the same. Here we have a complete incompatibility. If they think as they write, they ought to leave the party or at least resign from office. If they don't, it is tantamount to admitting that they intend to use their official position to combat the party's proletarian character. Hence the party is betraying itself if it allows them to remain in office.

Thus, in the view of these gentlemen, the Social-Democratic Party ought *not* to be a one-sided workers' party but a many-sided party of "all men imbued with a true love of mankind". This it is to prove, above all, by divesting itself of crude proletarian passions and applying itself, under the direction of educated philanthropic bourgeois, "to the formation of good taste" and "the acquisition of good manners" (p. 85). After which the "seedy appearance" of some of the leaders would give way to a respectable "bourgeois appearance".^a (As though the outwardly seedy appearance of those referred to here were not the least that could be held against them!) After which, too,

"there will be an *influx of supporters* from the ranks of the *educated and propertied* classes. *These*, however, must first be won over if the ... agitation engaged in is to have *perceptible results*...". German socialism has laid "too much stress on winning over the *masses*, thus omitting to prosecute vigorous" (!)"propaganda amongst the so-called upper strata of society". For "the party still lacks men who are fit to represent it in the Reichstag". It is, however, "desirable and necessary to entrust the mandates to men who have had the time and the opportunity to become thoroughly conversant with the relevant material. Only rarely and in exceptional cases does ... the simple working man and small master craftsman have sufficient leisure for the purpose".^b

Therefore elect bourgeois!

In short, the working class is incapable of emancipating itself by its own efforts. In order to do so it must place itself under the direction of "educated and propertied" bourgeois who alone have "the time and the opportunity" to become conversant with what is good for the workers. And, secondly, the bourgeois are not to be combatted—not on your life—but *won over* by vigorous propaganda.

If, however, you wish to win over the upper strata of society, or at least their well-intentioned elements, you mustn't frighten them—not on your life. And here the Zurich trio believe they have made a reassuring discovery:

^a *Jahrbuch für Socialwissenschaft und Socialpolitik*, p. 86.—*Ed.*

^b *Ibid.*, pp. 87-89.—*Ed.*

"Now, at the very time it is oppressed by the Anti-Socialist Law, the party is showing that it *does not wish* to pursue the path of forcible, bloody revolution, but rather is determined ... to tread the path of legality, i.e. of *reform*." ^a

If, therefore, the 5-600,000 Social-Democratic voters, $\frac{1}{10}$ to $\frac{1}{8}$ of the total electorate—and dispersed, what is more, over the length and breadth of the country—have sense enough not to beat their heads against a wall and attempt a "bloody revolution" with the odds at one to ten, this is supposed to prove that they will, for all time, continue to *deny* themselves all chance of exploiting some violent upheaval abroad, a sudden wave of revolutionary fervour engendered thereby, or even a people's *victory* won in a clash arising therefrom! Should Berlin ever be so uneducated as to stage another March 18,³²⁵ it would behove the Social-Democrats not to take part in the fighting as "louts besotted with barricades" (p. 88) but rather to "tread the path of legality", to placate, to clear away the barricades and, if necessary, march with the glorious army against the one-sided, crude, uneducated masses. Or if the gentlemen insist that that's not what they meant, then what did they mean?

But there's better in store.

"Hence, the more calm, sober and considered it (the Party) shows itself to be in its criticism of existing circumstances and its proposals to change the same, the less likelihood is there of a repetition of the present successful move" (introduction of the Anti-Socialist Law) "by means of which conscious reaction has scared the bourgeoisie out of their wits by holding up the red spectre" (p. 88).

In order to relieve the bourgeoisie of the last trace of anxiety, it is to be shown clearly and convincingly that the red spectre really is just a spectre and doesn't exist. But what is the secret of the red spectre, if not the bourgeoisie's fear of the inevitable life-and-death struggle between itself and the proletariat, fear of the unavoidable outcome of the modern class struggle? Just abolish the class struggle, and the bourgeoisie and "all independent persons" will "not hesitate to go hand in hand with the proletarians"! ^b In which case the ones to be hoodwinked would be those self-same proletarians.

Let the party, therefore, prove, by its humble and subdued demeanour, that it has renounced once and for all the "improprieties and excesses" ^c which gave rise to the Anti-Socialist Law. If it voluntarily undertakes to remain wholly within the bounds of the Anti-Socialist Law, Bismarck and the bourgeoisie will, no

^a *Jahrbuch für Socialwissenschaft und Socialpolitik*, pp. 87-88.—*Ed.*

^b *Ibid.*, p. 88.—*Ed.*

^c *Ibid.*, p. 87.—*Ed.*

doubt, oblige by rescinding what would then be a redundant law!

"Let no one misunderstand us"; we don't want "to relinquish our party and our programme,^a but in our opinion we shall have enough to do for years to come if we concentrate our whole strength, our entire energies, on the attainment of certain immediate objectives which must in any case be won before there can be any thought of realising more ambitious aspirations."^b

Then, too, the bourgeois, petty-bourgeois and workers, who "are now scared off ... by ambitious demands";^c will join us *en masse*.

The programme is not to be *relinquished*, but merely *postponed*—for some unspecified period. They accept it—not for themselves in their own lifetime but posthumously, as an heirloom for their children and their children's children. Meanwhile they devote their "whole strength and energies" to all sorts of trifles, tinkering away at the capitalist social order so that at least something should appear to be done without at the same time alarming the bourgeoisie. Here I can only commend that communist, Miquel, who gives proof of his unshakable belief in the inevitable downfall of capitalist society within the next few hundred years by swindling it for all he's worth, contributing manfully to the crash of 1873, and thus *really* doing something towards the collapse of the existing order.³²⁴

Another offence against good manners was the "exaggerated attacks on the *Gründer*",⁸⁴ who, after all, were "only children of their time"; hence "the vilification of Strousberg and suchlike men ... would have been better omitted".^d Sadly we are all "children of our time", and if this be sufficient grounds for excuse, it is no longer permissible to attack anyone, and we for our part would have to desist from all polemic, all struggle; we would calmly submit whenever kicked by our opponents, because we would know in our wisdom that they are "only children of their time" and cannot act otherwise than they do. Instead of repaying them their kicks with interest, we should rather, it seems, feel sorry for the poor fellows.

Similarly, our support for the Commune had one drawback, at any rate, namely

"that it put off people otherwise well-disposed towards us, and generally increased the *hatred* felt for us by the *bourgeoisie*". Moreover, the party "cannot be wholly exonerated from having brought about the October Law,³²⁵ for it had needlessly exacerbated the *hatred of the bourgeoisie*".^e

^a "Programm der sozialistischen Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands".—*Ed.*

^b *Jahrbuch für Socialwissenschaft und Socialpolitik*, p. 88.—*Ed.*

^c *Ibid.*—*Ed.*

^d *Ibid.*, p. 95.—*Ed.*

^e *Ibid.*, pp. 95, 96.—*Ed.*

There you have the programme of the three censors of Zurich. As regards clarity, it leaves nothing to be desired. Least of all so far as we're concerned, since we are still only too familiar with all these catch-phrases of 1848. There are the voices of the representatives of the petty bourgeoisie, terrified lest the proletariat, impelled by its revolutionary situation, should "go too far". Instead of resolute political opposition—general conciliation; instead of a struggle against government and bourgeoisie—an attempt to win them over and talk them round; instead of defiant resistance to maltreatment from above—humble subjection and the admission that the punishment was deserved. Every historically necessary conflict is reinterpreted as a misunderstanding and every discussion wound up with the assurance: we are, of course, all agreed on the main issue. The men who in 1848 entered the arena as bourgeois democrats might now just as well call themselves Social-Democrats. To the former, the democratic republic was as unattainably remote as the overthrow of the capitalist order is to the latter, and therefore utterly irrelevant to present political practice; one can conciliate, compromise, philanthropise to one's heart's content. The same thing applies to the class struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie. On paper it is recognised because there is no denying it any longer, but in practice it is glossed over, suppressed, emasculated. The Social-Democratic Party *should not* be a workers' party, it should not bring upon itself the hatred of the bourgeoisie or, for that matter, of anyone else; above all, it should prosecute vigorous propaganda amongst the bourgeoisie; instead of laying stress on ambitious goals which are calculated to frighten off the bourgeoisie, and unattainable anyway in our own generation, it should rather devote all its strength and energies to those petty-bourgeois stop-gap reforms which provide new props for the old social order and which might, perhaps, transform the ultimate catastrophe into a gradual, piecemeal and, as far as possible, peaceable process of dissolution. These are the same people who keep up an appearance of ceaseless activity, yet not only do nothing themselves but also try to ensure that nothing at all is done save—chin-wagging; the same people whose fear of any kind of action in 1848 and '49 held back the movement at every step and finally brought about its downfall; the same people who never see reaction and then are utterly dumbfounded to find themselves at last in a blind alley in which neither resistance nor flight is possible; the same people who want to confine history within their narrow philistine horizons, and over whose heads history invari-

ably proceeds to the order of the day.

As for their socialist import, this has already been adequately criticised in the *Manifesto*, Chapter: "German, or 'True' Socialism". Wherever the class struggle is thrust aside as a distasteful, "crude" manifestation, the only basis still left to socialism will be a "true love of mankind" and empty phrases about "justice".

It is an inevitable manifestation, and one rooted in the process of development, that people from what have hitherto been the ruling class also join the militant proletariat and supply it with educative elements. We have already said so clearly in the *Manifesto*. But in this context there are two observations to be made:

Firstly, if these people are to be of use to the proletarian movement, they must introduce genuinely educative elements. However, in the case of the vast majority of German bourgeois converts, this is not the case. Neither the *Zukunft* nor the *Neue Gesellschaft* has contributed anything that might have advanced the movement by a single step. Here we find a complete lack of genuinely educative matter, either factual or theoretical. In place of it, attempts to reconcile superficially assimilated socialist ideas with the most diverse theoretical viewpoints which these gentlemen have introduced from the university or elsewhere, and of which each is more muddled than the last thanks to the process of decay taking place in what remains of German philosophy today. Instead of first making a thorough study of the new science, each man chose to adapt it to the viewpoint he had brought with him, not hesitating to produce his own brand of science and straightaway assert his right to teach it. Hence there are, amongst these gentlemen, almost as many viewpoints as there are heads; instead of elucidating anything, they have only made confusion worse—by good fortune, almost exclusively amongst themselves. The party can well dispense with educative elements such as these for whom it is axiomatic to teach what they have not learnt.

Secondly, when people of this kind, from different classes, join the proletarian movement, the first requirement is that they should not bring with them the least remnant of bourgeois, petty-bourgeois, etc., prejudices, but should unreservedly adopt the proletarian outlook. These gentlemen, however, as already shown, are chock-full of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideas. In a country as petty-bourgeois as Germany, there is certainly some justification for such ideas. But only *outside* the Social-Democratic Workers' Party. If the gentlemen constitute themselves a Social-Democratic petty-bourgeois party, they are fully within their

rights: in that case we could negotiate with them and, according to circumstances, form an alliance with them, etc. But within a workers' party they are an adulterating element. Should there be any reason to tolerate their presence there for a while, it should be our duty *only* to tolerate them, to allow them no say in the Party leadership and to remain aware that a break with them is only a matter of time. That time, moreover, would appear to have come. How the Party can suffer the authors of this article to remain any longer in their midst seems to us incomprehensible. But should the Party leadership actually pass, to a greater or lesser extent, into the hands of such men, then the Party will be emasculated no less, and that will put paid to its proletarian grit.

As for ourselves, there is, considering all our antecedents, only one course open to us. For almost 40 years we have emphasised that the class struggle is the immediate motive force of history and, in particular, that the class struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat is the great lever of modern social revolution; hence we cannot possibly co-operate with men who seek to eliminate that class struggle from the movement. At the founding of the International we expressly formulated the battle cry: The emancipation of the working class must be achieved by the working class itself.^a Hence we cannot co-operate with men who say openly that the workers are too uneducated to emancipate themselves, and must first be emancipated from above by philanthropic members of the upper and lower middle classes. If the new party organ is to adopt a policy that corresponds to the opinions of these gentlemen, if it is bourgeois and not proletarian, then all we could do—much though we might regret it—would be publicly to declare ourselves opposed to it and abandon the solidarity with which we have hitherto represented the German Party abroad. But we hope it won't come to *that*.

It is intended that this letter should be communicated to all five members of the committee in Germany,³²⁶ and also to Bracke....

Nor have we any objection to its being communicated to the people in Zurich.

Written on September 17-18, 1879

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^a See present edition, Vol. 20, p. 14.—Ed.

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels

[ABOUT KARL BLIND]³²⁷

The article ought to be headed, not "Prince Napoleon etc.",^a but "I". For every once the name of Prince Napoleon occurs in it, the pronoun "I" occurs at least 20 times, not to count its inflected cases and derived forms. What it says of Prince Napoleon, has all been printed more than once, and what it says about "I", has, alas, also been related, printed, and published more than once in England, as the proprietors and editors of sundry reviews, defunct and alive, know to their sorrow.³²⁸

Deprived of its false pretence, the paper gives a new version of Mr. Blind's old tale: How Karl Blind, by various untoward circumstances, was unfortunately prevented from changing the course of history. First comes the oft repeated story which forms his chief stock-in-trade, how he was sent on a diplomatic mission by the moribund provisional governments of the South German insurrection of 1849³²⁹ ostensibly to the then government of the French Republic, but in reality to the revolutionary government of Ledru-Rollin which, it was expected, would be shortly installed by a popular commotion. Alas! the government which had sent him, was unceremoniously chased into Swiss exile by the Prussians, and the demonstration of the 13th June, which was to establish the government to which he was really accredited, was equally unceremoniously put down.³³⁰ Of his rather grotesque mission from a dead to an unborn government, he had the good fortune to be relieved by the existing French government who arrested him as a participator in the "pacific" demonstration of

^a K. Blind, "Prince Napoleon and European Democracy", *Fraser's Magazine*, Vol. 20, London, 1879, pp. 504-21.—*Ed.*

the unarmed Paris national guard on the 13th June, [and] finally expelled [from] the country. Had the government which sent him but remained alive, and had the government to which he was really sent, but come into existence, what would not Karl Blind have been enabled to do? By procuring himself from somebody in Baden a sham mission to somebody in Paris, he had contrived to eschew "diplomatically" even the least possibility of a dangerous encounter with the approaching Prussian army. At all events he had done something.^a

Again, in 1870, on the outbreak of the Franco-German war, there was a chance of Italy joining France. But Karl Blind watched. "Had King Victor Emmanuel etc." (page 519). But again, it was an embassy from one non-existing government to another. Louis Napoleon refused Rome to Victor Emmanuel, thus forcing the latter to take the town in the teeth of France, and rendering the Italian alliance impossible.³³¹ Again, the services and offers of Karl Blind, whatever these offers may have been worth, were declined, and that eternal diplomatist *in partibus*,^b instead of changing the route of history, had to be satisfied with the "warmest thanks" of Mazzini.

Who can help being reminded of the braggart who, when involved in a *fracas*, shouted: "Hold me back, friends, or else I shall commit some fearful deed!" Unfortunately for the world, but perhaps fortunately for Mr. Karl Blind, whenever he is about to step into the foreground of historical action, some untoward event prevents him from accomplishing that "fearful deed" which was to render him immortal.

Let us hope that this is the last lucubration, at least in English, written by Karl B. on K. B. in the interest of K. B.

Written between October 5 and 9, 1879

Reproduced from the manuscript

First published in: Marx and Engels,
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Moscow, 1960

^a The last two sentences were written by Marx. In the margin of the previous page of Engels' manuscript, Marx wrote another version: "By getting his opportune acceptance of a sham mission abroad, he had contrived to render impossible any encounter of Karl Blind with the Prussian troops then invading Baden."—*Ed.*

^b *In partibus infidelium*—literally: in parts inhabited by unbelievers. The words are added to the title of Roman Catholic bishops appointed to purely nominal dioceses in non-Christian countries.—*Ed.*

L'ÉGALITÉ

ORGANE COLLECTIVISTE RÉVOLUTIONNAIRE

PARAISANT LE MERCREDI

Frederick Engels

THE SOCIALISM OF MR. BISMARCK ³³²

I. THE CUSTOMS TARIFF

In the debate on the notorious law which places the German socialists outside the law,³³³ Mr. Bismarck declared that repression alone was not enough to crush socialism; what was needed, in addition, were measures to remedy the undeniable social ills, to ensure the regularity of work, to forestall industrial crises and what have you. He promised to introduce these "positive" measures of social welfare.^a For, he said, when one has directed the affairs of one's country for 17 years, as I have done, one is entitled to consider oneself a competent judge in matters of political economy; which is like someone saying that eating potatoes for 17 years is enough to give one a thorough knowledge of agronomy.

In any case, this time Mr. Bismarck was true to his word. He has bestowed on Germany two grand "social measures", and he has not finished yet.

The first was a customs tariff^b which was to ensure that German industry was allowed exclusive rights to the domestic market.

Until 1848 Germany had had no large-scale industry properly speaking. Labour dominated. Steam, mechanisation were simply

^a See O. Bismarck's speeches in the Reichstag on the Anti-Socialist Law on September 17 and October 9, 1878, *Stenographische Berichte über die Verhandlungen des Deutschen Reichstags* 4. Legislatur-Periode. I. Session 1878. Erster Band, Berlin, 1878, pp. 70, 125.—*Ed.*

^b "Gesetz, betreffend den Zolltarif des Deutschen Zollgebiets und den Ertrag der Zölle und der Tabacksteuer. Vom 15. Juli 1879", *Reichs-Gesetzblatt*, No. 27, 1879.—*Ed.*

the exception. In 1848 and 1849, having incurred a shameful defeat in the political sphere because of its cowardice, the German bourgeoisie consoled itself by launching eagerly into large-scale industry. The face of the country was rapidly transformed. Anyone who had not seen Rhenish Prussia, Westphalia, Royal Saxony, High Silesia, Berlin and the seaports since 1849 could no longer recognise them in 1864. Steam and machines had invaded the entire country. Large factories had mostly supplanted the small workshops. Steamships gradually replaced sailing vessels, first in coastal traffic, then in transatlantic trade. Railways multiplied; in the construction yards, in the coal and iron-ore mines there was activity the like of which the sluggish Germans would hitherto not have believed themselves capable of. Compared with the development of large-scale industry in England and even in France, all this was small beer; but anyway it was a beginning. Moreover, all this had been done without any help from the governments, without any grants or export subsidies, and under a customs tariff which, compared with the tariffs of other continental countries, might be considered very free-trade indeed.

This industrial movement, let it be said in passing, did not fail to have the social consequences which it has had everywhere. The German industrial workers had, until then, vegetated in conditions reminiscent of the Middle Ages. Generally speaking, they still had some chance of gradually becoming petty bourgeois, masters of their trade, owners of several hand looms, etc. Now all this disappeared. The workers, becoming the employees of the big capitalists, started to form a permanent class, a real proletariat. But he who says "proletariat" says "socialism". Furthermore, there still remained a trace of the liberties which the workers had won at the barricades in 1848. Thanks to these two circumstances German socialism, which before 1848 had had to restrict itself to underground propaganda and a secret organisation whose members were few, was now able to unfold in the full light of day and to penetrate into the masses. Hence 1863 is the year which saw the recommencement of socialist agitation by Lassalle.³³⁴

Then came the war of 1870, the peace of 1871 and the milliards.³³⁵ If France was far from ruining herself by paying them, Germany came within a hair's breadth of its demise by receiving them. Recklessly squandered by a government of upstarts in an upstart empire, the milliards fell into the hands of high finance, which hastened to make them bear fruit on the Stock Exchange. Berlin saw the return of the heyday of *Crédit mobilier*.³³⁶ It was a race to see who could start more public and

mixed liability companies, banks, building societies and financial institutions, railway construction companies, factories of all kinds, shipyards, companies speculating in land and buildings, and other things whose industrial trappings were no more than an excuse for the most bare-faced jobbing. The alleged public needs of commerce, communications, consumption, etc., simply served as a cloak for the frantic need of the Stock Exchange wolves to make these milliards work as long as they had them in their hands. Besides, all this was seen in Paris in the glorious days of Péréire and Fould; the same jobbers were at work in Berlin, reappearing under the names of Bleichroeder and Hansemann.

What had happened in Paris in 1867, what had happened many times in London and New York, happened all over again in 1873 in Berlin: unbridled speculation terminated in a general collapse. Companies went bankrupt in their hundreds; the shares of those which survived became unsaleable; the rout was complete all along the line. But in order to speculate it had been necessary to create the means of production and communication, the factories, railways, etc., whose shares had been the object of this speculation. At the time of the crash it was found that the public need which had served as a pretext had been outstripped by far; that in four years more railways, factories, mines, etc., had been created than the normal development of industry would have produced in a quarter of a century.

After the railways, to which we shall return below, speculation had been chiefly directed at the iron and steel industry. The mills had multiplied rapidly; more than one plant had been set up that put Creuzot in the shade. Unfortunately, on the day of the crisis it turned out that there were no consumers for this gigantic production. The large manufacturing companies found themselves on the verge of bankruptcy. As the good German patriots they were, their directors sought help from the government: protective tariffs that would secure for them the exploitation of the domestic market against competition from English iron. But if one demanded protective tariffs for iron, one could not deny other industries, even agriculture, the same protection. So noisy agitation for tariff protection was organised throughout Germany, agitation which allowed Mr. Bismarck to introduce a customs tariff which was supposed to fulfil this purpose. This tariff, which became law in the summer of 1879, is now in force.³⁸⁷

But German industry, such as it was, had always lived in the fresh air of free competition. Arriving last on the scene, after England and France, it had been obliged to confine itself to filling

the small gaps left for it by its predecessors; to providing, on a large scale, articles that were too paltry for the English, too tawdry for the French; to manufacturing on a small scale products that were always changing, *cheap goods* at a *low price*. Let it not be thought that this is merely an assertion of our own: these are the very words of the official assessment of German products as set out in Philadelphia (1876) by the official commissioner of the German Government, Mr. Reuleaux, a man with a European scientific reputation.^a

An industry of this kind can only assert itself in neutral markets if there is free trade at home. If one expects German textiles, processed metals and machinery to withstand foreign competition abroad, then all the raw materials necessary for their production, cotton, linen or silk thread, pig iron or metal wire, must be available at the same low price at which their foreign competitors buy them. So you have the choice of two things. If you wish to continue exporting textiles and the products of the metal industry, then free trade is necessary, at the risk of seeing these industries use materials taken from abroad. If, on the other hand, you wish to protect spinning and the production of crude metals in Germany with customs tariffs—then you will soon have ruled out the possibility of exporting the products of which thread and crude metal are the raw materials.

By protecting spinning and metallurgy with his notorious tariff, Mr. Bismarck destroyed the last chance which German textiles, processed metals, needles and machinery had until then of finding an outlet abroad. But the Germany whose agriculture produced a surplus for export in the first half of the century cannot now do without a supplement of foreign agricultural products. If Mr. Bismarck forbids his industry to produce for export, with what will he pay for these imports and many others which all the tariffs in the world will not prevent him from needing.

To solve this question called for nothing less than the genius of Mr. Bismarck combined with that of his Stock Exchange friends and advisers. This is how it is done:

Let us take iron. The period of speculation and feverish production has bestowed on Germany two firms (the Dortmund Union and Laurahütte), each of which has the capacity to produce, on its own, enough on average to satisfy the country's entire consumption. Then there is the gigantic Krupp concern in Essen, another similar one in Bochum, and then an infinite

^a See F. Reuleaux, *Briefe aus Philadelphia*, Brunswick, 1877, p. 5.—Ed.

number of smaller ones. As a result, domestic iron consumption is covered three or four times over, at least. One might say that this is a situation necessitating most urgently unlimited free trade, which is alone capable of securing an outlet for this enormous excess production. One might say so—but this is not the opinion of those involved. Since there are at most a dozen companies that matter and which dominate the others, one forms what the Americans call a *RING*: an association to maintain prices at home and regulate exports.

As soon as there is a bid for rails or other products of their factories, the Committee designates by turns the member who is to undertake the work, and fixes the price at which he is to do so. The other associates submit tenders at a higher price, similarly agreed in advance. As a result, all competition ceases; there is an absolute monopoly. The same thing goes for exports. To ensure the implementation of this plan, each member of the *RING* deposits with the Committee a blank bill for 125,000 francs, to be put into circulation and presented for payment as soon as the signatory has broken the agreement. In this way the price of the monopoly extorted from the German consumers will permit the factories to sell abroad their excess production at prices that even the English refuse—and the German philistine (who anyway deserves it) pays the piper. This is how German exports are becoming possible again, thanks to the same protective tariffs which in the eyes of the common people appear to be destroying it.

Do you want examples? Last year an Italian railway company, which we could name, needed 30,000 or 40,000 tons (of 1,000 kg) of rails. After long negotiations an English factory took 10,000; the rest of the order went to the Dortmund Union, which offered delivery at a price that was turned down in England. An English competitor, asked why he could not offer better terms than the German concern, replied: "Who on earth can compete with a bankrupt?"

In Scotland a railway bridge was to be constructed across an arm of the sea near Edinburgh. 10,000 tons of Bessemer steel were needed for this bridge. Who accepted the lowest price, who defeated all competitors, and on the native soil of the great iron industry, England? A German, protected by Bismarck in more ways than one, Mr. Krupp of Essen, the "Cannon King".

So much for iron. It goes without saying that this fine system can only delay the inevitable bankruptcy of these big conspiring companies for a few years. Meanwhile, as the other industries imitate them, they will ruin not the foreign competition but their

own country. It is almost like living in a country of madmen; yet all the facts recounted above have been taken from bourgeois free-trade newspapers in Germany herself. Organising the demolition of German industry on the pretext of protecting it—are they wrong, then, those German socialists who have been repeating for years that Mr. Bismarck is working for socialism, as if he were in their pay?

II. THE STATE RAILWAYS

From 1869 to 1873, during the rising tide of speculation in Berlin, two institutions, at times hostile, at times in alliance, shared the domination of the Stock Exchange: the Discount Society³⁹⁸ and the Bleichroeder bank. These were, so to speak, the Péreires and the Mirès of Berlin. Speculation being chiefly directed at the railways, these two banks had the idea of making themselves indirect masters of most of the major lines already in existence or under construction. By buying and holding a certain number of shares in each one they would dominate their boards of directors; the shares themselves would be the deposit for loans with which to buy new shares, and so on. A pure repetition, of course, of the ingenious little operation which first brought the two Péreires to the height of success and ended with the *Crédit mobilier* crisis, as we know. At the beginning the Berlin Péreires met with the same success.

In 1873 the crisis came. Our two banks found themselves burdened with their heaps of railway shares which could no longer be made to cough up the millions which they had swallowed. The plan to subjugate the railway companies had failed. So they changed their tack, and tried to sell them to the state. The plan to concentrate all the railways in the hand of the Imperial Government has its origin not in the social welfare of the country but in the individual welfare of two insolvent banks.

The implementation of the plan was not too difficult. They had "interested" a good many members of parliament in the new companies, thus dominating the national liberal and moderate conservative parties, in other words the majority. Some high officials of the Empire, some Prussian ministers, had had a hand in the shady deals whereby these companies were founded. In the last resort, Bleichroeder was Mr. Bismarck's banker and financial factotum. So they were not short of means.

Meanwhile, to make it worthwhile selling the railway shares to

the Empire, it was necessary to raise the price of the shares. So, in 1873, they created an "imperial railways office"³³⁹; its head,^a a well-known shady speculator, at once raised the fares on all German railways by 20%, which was supposed to increase net revenue and hence also the value of the shares by about 35%. This was the only step which this gentleman took; it was the only reason why he had accepted his duties; therefore he resigned shortly afterwards.

Meanwhile, they had succeeded in giving Bismarck a taste for the plan. But the petty kingdoms^b resisted; the Federal Council³⁴⁰ refused point-blank. A new change of tack: it was resolved that Prussia should first buy all the Prussian railways, selling them, should the occasion arise, to the Empire.

Moreover, there was another ulterior motive for the Imperial Government to wish to acquire the railways. And this is related to the French milliards.

Out of these milliards they had kept back some considerable sums in order to form three "imperial funds", one for the construction of a parliament building, the second for fortresses, and finally, the third for the invalids of the last three wars. The total sum amounted to 926 million francs.

The most important and at the same time the strangest of these three funds was the one for the invalids. It was designed to eat itself up; that is to say, the day the last of these invalids was dead, the fund itself, capital and interest, would also have disappeared. A fund which consumes itself sounds like the invention of madmen once more. But these were no madmen; it was the shady speculators of the Discount Society who had invented it, and for a good reason. This is why it took nearly a year to get the government to accept the idea.

However, it seemed to our jobbers that the fund would not devour itself fast enough. Moreover, they believed it was their duty to endow the other two funds with the same fine property of devouring themselves. The means was simple. Even before a law had laid down the nature of the securities in which these funds would be invested, a commercial company owned by the Prussian Government³⁴¹ was authorised to buy up suitable stocks and shares. This company turned to the Discount Society, which sold, for the three imperial funds, 300 million francs worth of railway shares, at that time unsaleable, which we could specify.

^a Alfred Scheele.— *Ed.*

^b Bavaria, Saxony and Württemberg.— *Ed.*

Among these shares were 120 millions in Magdeburg-Halberstadt and amalgamated lines, an almost bankrupt railway which had served to ensure enormous profits to the speculators, but had scarcely any chance of bringing in any return at all to the shareholders. This may be imagined when one bears in mind that the board of directors had issued shares to a value of 16 millions to meet the cost of constructing three branch lines and that this money disappeared entirely without the lines even having been started. And the invalid fund is the proud owner of a good many of these shares in non-existent railways.

The acquisition of these lines by the Prussian State would legalise at a stroke the purchase of shares in them by the Empire; it would give them a certain real value. This is the interest of the Imperial Government in the affair. Hence the line which we are concerned with here was among the first whose purchase was proposed by the Prussian Government and ratified by the chambers.

The price paid to the shareholders by the State was well above the real value, even of the good lines. Which is demonstrated by the constant rise in their shares as soon as the resolution to buy them was known and especially once the conditions of sale were announced. Two major lines, whose shares were worth 103 and 108 respectively in December 1878, were subsequently bought by the State; today they are quoted at 148 and 158. Hence nothing was more difficult for the shareholders than to conceal their joy while the deal was being negotiated.

It goes without saying that this rise brought happiness mainly to the big jobbers of Berlin who were in on the secret intentions of the government. The Stock Exchange, still rather depressed in the spring of 1879, gained new life. Before finally parting with their dear shares, the speculators made use of them to organise a new orgy of jobbing.

It is plain to see: the German Empire is just as completely under the yoke of the Stock Exchange as was the French Empire in its day. It is the stockbrokers who prepare the projects which the Government has to carry out—for the profit of their pockets. Yet in Germany they have an advantage which the Bonapartist Empire lacked: if the Imperial Government encounters resistance among its princelings it turns into the Prussian Government, which will certainly not find any in its own chambers, true branches of the Stock Exchange that they are.

What's that? Hasn't the General Council of the International said it already, immediately after the war of 1870: "You,

Mr. Bismarck, have only overthrown the Bonapartist régime in France *in order to re-establish it in your own country!*"³⁴²

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Frederick Engels

SOCIALISM:
UTOPIAN AND SCIENTIFIC³⁴³

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SOCIALISM
UTOPIAN AND SCIENTIFIC

BY
FREDERICK ENGELS

TRANSLATED BY EDWARD AVELING

D.Sc., Fellow of University College, London

WITH A SPECIAL INTRODUCTION BY THE AUTHOR



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The title-page of the authorised English edition of Engels' *Socialism:
Utopian and Scientific*

I

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

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

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

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

We know to-day that this kingdom of reason was nothing more than the idealised kingdom of the bourgeoisie; that this eternal Right found its realisation in bourgeois justice; that this equality reduced itself to bourgeois equality before the law; that bourgeois property was proclaimed as one of the essential rights of man; and that the government of reason, the Contrat Social of Rousseau,³⁴⁵ came into being, and only could come into being, as a democratic bourgeois republic. The great thinkers of the eighteenth century could, no more than their predecessors, go beyond the limits imposed upon them by their epoch.

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

participated in celebrating this holy day. A sublime emotion swayed men at that time, an enthusiasm of reason pervaded the world, as if now had come the reconciliation of the Divine Principle with the world." [Hegel: "Philosophy of History", 1840, p. 535.^a] Is it not high time to set the Anti-Socialist Law³⁴⁴ in action against such teachings, subversive and to the common danger, by the late Professor Hegel?

^a G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte* (Werke, 2. Aufl., Bd. IX, Berlin, 1840, S. 535-36).—Ed.

claim to represent at the same time the interests of the different working-classes of that period, yet in every great bourgeois movement there were independent outbursts of that class which was the forerunner, more or less developed, of the modern proletariat. For example, at the time of the German Reformation and the Peasants' War, the Anabaptists³⁴⁶ and Thomas Münzer; in the great English Revolution, the Levellers³⁴⁷; in the great French Revolution, Babeuf.

There were theoretical enunciations corresponding with these revolutionary uprisings of a class not yet developed; in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Utopian pictures of ideal social conditions³⁴⁸; in the eighteenth, actual communistic theories (Morelly and Mably).³ The demand for equality was no longer limited to political rights; it was extended also to the social conditions of individuals. It was not simply class privileges that were to be abolished, but class distinctions themselves. A Communism, ascetic, denouncing all the pleasures of life, Spartan, was the first form of the new teaching. Then came the three great Utopians: Saint-Simon, to whom the middle-class movement, side by side with the proletariat, still had a certain significance; Fourier; and Owen, who in the country where capitalist production was most developed, and under the influence of the antagonisms begotten of this, worked out his proposals for the removal of class distinction systematically and in direct relation to French materialism.

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

For, to our three social reformers, the bourgeois world, based upon the principles of these philosophers, is quite as irrational and unjust, and, therefore, finds its way to the dust-hole quite as readily as feudalism and all the earlier stages of society. If pure reason and justice have not, hitherto, ruled the world, this has been the case only because men have not rightly understood them. What was wanted was the individual man of genius, who has now arisen and who understands the truth. That he has now arisen,

³ See Morelly, *Code de la nature*, Paris, 1841 and Mably, *De la législation, ou principes des loix*, Amsterdam, 1776.—Ed.

that the truth has now been clearly understood, is not an inevitable event, following of necessity in the chain of historical development, but a mere happy accident. He might just as well have been born 500 years earlier, and might then have spared humanity 500 years of error, strife, and suffering.

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

But the new order of things, rational enough as compared with earlier conditions, turned out to be by no means absolutely rational. The State based upon reason completely collapsed. Rousseau's *Contrat Social* had found its realisation in the Reign of Terror, from which the bourgeoisie, who had lost confidence in their own political capacity, had taken refuge first in the corruption of the Directorate,³⁴⁹ and, finally, under the wing of the Napoleonic despotism. The promised eternal peace was turned into an endless war of conquest. The society based upon reason had fared no better. The antagonism between rich and poor, instead of dissolving into general prosperity, had become intensified by the removal of the guild and other privileges, which had to some extent bridged it over, and by the removal of the charitable institutions of the Church. The "freedom of property" from feudal fetters, now veritably accomplished, turned out to be, for the small capitalists and small proprietors, the freedom to sell their small property, crushed under the overmastering competition of the large capitalists and landlords, to these great lords, and thus, as far as the small capitalists and peasant proprietors were concerned, became "freedom *from* property". The development of industry upon a capitalistic basis made poverty and misery of the working masses conditions of existence of society. Cash payment became more and more, in Carlyle's phrase,^b the sole nexus between man and man. The number of crimes increased from year to year. Formerly, the feudal vices had openly stalked about in broad daylight; though not eradicated, they were now at

^a The German edition of 1891 has: "the idealised understanding of the middle burgher".—*Ed.*

^b See Th. Carlyle, *Past and Present*, London, 1843, p. 198.—*Ed.*

any rate thrust into the background. In their stead, the bourgeois vices, hitherto practised in secret, began to blossom all the more luxuriantly. Trade became to a greater and greater extent cheating. The "fraternity" of the revolutionary motto³⁵⁰ was realised in the chicanery and rivalries of the battle of competition. Oppression by force was replaced by corruption; the sword, as the first social lever, by gold. The right of the first night was transferred from the feudal lords to the bourgeois manufacturers. Prostitution increased to an extent never heard of. Marriage itself remained, as before, the legally recognised form, the official cloak of prostitution, and, moreover, was supplemented by rich crops of adultery.

In a word, compared with the splendid promises of the philosophers, the social and political institutions born of the "triumph of reason" were bitterly disappointing caricatures. All that was wanting was the men to formulate this disappointment, and they came with the turn of the century. In 1802 Saint-Simon's Geneva letters appeared; in 1808 appeared Fourier's first work, although the groundwork of his theory dated from 1799; on January 1, 1800, Robert Owen undertook the direction of New Lanark.³⁵¹

At this time, however, the capitalist mode of production, and with it the antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, was still very incompletely developed. Modern Industry, which had just arisen in England, was still unknown in France. But Modern Industry develops, on the one hand, the conflicts which make absolutely necessary a revolution in the mode of production, and the doing away with its capitalistic character—conflicts not only between the classes begotten of it, but also between the very productive forces and the forms of exchange created by it. And, on the other hand, it develops, in these very gigantic productive forces, the means of ending these conflicts. If, therefore, about the year 1800, the conflicts arising from the new social order were only just beginning to take shape, this holds still more fully as to the means of ending them. The "have-nothing" masses of Paris, during the Reign of Terror, were able for a moment to gain the mastery, and thus to lead the bourgeois revolution to victory in spite of the bourgeoisie themselves. But, in doing so, they only proved how impossible it was for their domination to last under the conditions then obtaining. The proletariat, which then for the first time evolved itself from these "have-nothing" masses as the nucleus of a new class, as yet quite incapable of independent political action, appeared as an oppressed,

suffering order, to whom, in its incapacity to help itself, help could, at best, be brought in from without, or down from above.

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

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

Saint-Simon was a son of the great French Revolution, at the outbreak of which he was not yet thirty. The Revolution was the victory of the third estate, *i.e.*, of the great masses of the nation, *working* in production and in trade, over the privileged *idle* classes, the nobles and the priests. But the victory of the third estate soon revealed itself as exclusively the victory of a small part of this "estate", as the conquest of political power by the socially privileged section of it, *i.e.*, the propertied bourgeoisie. And the bourgeoisie had certainly developed rapidly during the Revolution, partly by speculation in the lands of the nobility and of the Church, confiscated and afterwards put up for sale, and partly by frauds upon the nation by means of army contracts. It was the domination of these swindlers that, under the Directorate, brought France^a to the verge of ruin, and thus gave Napoleon the pretext for his *coup d'état*.

Hence, to Saint-Simon the antagonism between the third estate and the privileged classes took the form of an antagonism between

^a The German edition of 1891 further has: "and the Revolution".—*Ed.*

"workers" and "idlers". The idlers were not merely the old privileged classes, but also all who, without taking any part in production or distribution,^a lived on their incomes. And the workers were not only the wage-workers, but also the manufacturers, the merchants, the bankers. That the idlers had lost the capacity for intellectual leadership and political supremacy had been proved, and was by the Revolution finally settled. That the non-possessing classes had not this capacity seemed to Saint-Simon proved by the experiences of the Reign of Terror. Then, who was to lead and command? According to Saint-Simon, science and industry, both united by a new religious bond, destined to restore that unity of religious ideas which had been lost since the time of the Reformation—a necessarily mystic and rigidly hierarchic "new Christianity". But science, that was the scholars; and industry, that was, in the first place, the working bourgeois, manufacturers, merchants, bankers. These bourgeoisie were, certainly, intended by Saint-Simon to transform themselves into a kind of public officials, of social trustees; but they were still to hold, *vis-à-vis* of the workers, a commanding and economically privileged position. The bankers especially were to be called upon to direct the whole of social production by the regulation of credit. This conception was in exact keeping with a time in which Modern Industry in France and, with it, the chasm between bourgeoisie and proletariat was only just coming into existence. But what Saint-Simon especially lays stress upon is this: what interests him first, and above all other things, is the lot of the class that is the most numerous and the most poor ("*la classe la plus nombreuse et la plus pauvre*").³⁵²

Already, in his Geneva letters, Saint-Simon lays down the proposition that

"all men ought to work".

In the same work he recognises also that the Reign of Terror was the reign of the non-possessing masses.

"See," says he to them, "what happened in France at the time when your comrades held sway there: they brought about a famine."^b

But to recognise the French Revolution as a class war, and not simply one between nobility and bourgeoisie, but between nobility,

^a The German edition of 1891 has "commerce" instead of "distribution".—Ed.

^b Engels quotes the second letter from Saint-Simon's *Lettres d'un habitant de Genève à ses contemporains*, Paris [1803]. In the edition: G. Hubbard, *Saint-Simon, sa vie et ses travaux* (Paris, 1857), these quotations are on pages 143 and 135.—Ed.

bourgeoisie, and the non-possessors, was, in the year 1802, a most pregnant discovery. In 1816, he declares that politics is the science of production, and foretells the complete absorption of politics by economics.³⁵³ The knowledge that economic conditions are the basis of political institutions appears here only in embryo. Yet what is here already very plainly expressed is the idea of the future conversion of political rule over men into an administration of things and a direction of processes of production—that is to say, the “abolition of the State”, about which recently there has been so much noise.

Saint-Simon shows the same superiority over his contemporaries, when in 1814, immediately after the entry of the allies into Paris, and again in 1815, during the Hundred Days’ War,³⁵⁴ he proclaims the alliance of France with England, and then of both these countries with Germany, as the only guarantee for the prosperous development and peace of Europe.³⁵⁵ To preach to the French in 1815 an alliance with the victors of Waterloo required as much courage as historical foresight.³⁵⁶

If in Saint-Simon we find a comprehensive breadth of view, by virtue of which almost all the ideas of later Socialists, that are not strictly economic, are found in him in embryo, we find in Fourier a criticism of the existing conditions of society, genuinely French and witty, but not upon that account any the less thorough. Fourier takes the bourgeoisie, their inspired prophets before the Revolution, and their interested eulogists after it, at their own word. He lays bare remorselessly the material and moral misery of the bourgeois world. He confronts it with the earlier philosophers’ dazzling promises of a society in which reason alone should reign, of a civilisation in which happiness should be universal, of an illimitable human perfectibility, and with the rose-coloured phraseology of the bourgeois ideologists of his time. He points out how everywhere the most pitiful reality corresponds with the most high-sounding phrases, and he overwhelms this hopeless fiasco of phrases with his mordant sarcasm.

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

emancipation is the natural measure of the general emancipation.³⁵⁷

But Fourier is at his greatest in his conception of the history of society. He divides its whole course, thus far, into four stages of evolution—savagery, barbarism, the patriarchy, civilisation. This last is identical with the so-called civil, or bourgeois, society of to-day—i.e., with the social order that came in with the sixteenth century. He proves

“that the civilised stage raises every vice practised by barbarism in a simple fashion into a form of existence, complex, ambiguous, equivocal, hypocritical”^a—that civilisation moves in “a vicious circle”, in contradictions which it constantly reproduces without being able to solve them; hence it constantly arrives at the very opposite to that which it wants to attain, or pretends to want to attain,^b so that, e.g.,

“under civilisation poverty is born of superabundance itself”.^c

Fourier, as we see, uses the dialectic method in the same masterly way as his contemporary, Hegel. Using these same dialectics, he argues, against the talk about illimitable human perfectibility, that every historical phase has its period of ascent and also its period of descent,^d and he applies this observation to the future of the whole human race. As Kant introduced into natural science the idea of the ultimate destruction of the earth, Fourier introduced into historical science that of the ultimate destruction of the human race.

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

^a See Ch. Fourier, *Théorie de l'unité universelle*, Vols. 1 and 4. In: *Oeuvres complètes*, Vol. 2, Paris, 1843, pp. 78-79 and Vol. 5, Paris, 1841, pp. 213-14.—Ed.

^b See Ch. Fourier, *Le nouveau monde industriel et sociétaire, ou invention du procédé d'industrie attrayante et naturelle distribuée en séries passionnées*. In: *Oeuvres complètes*, Vol. 6, Paris, 1845, pp. 27-46, 390.—Ed.

^c *Ibid.*, p. 35.—Ed.

^d *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, Paris, 1841, p. 50 et seq.—Ed.

the most fluctuating portion of the population, now led a precarious existence.

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

At this juncture there came forward as a reformer a manufacturer 29 years old—a man of almost sublime, childlike simplicity of character, and at the same time one of the few born leaders of men. Robert Owen had adopted the teaching of the materialistic philosophers: that man's character is the product, on the one hand, of heredity, on the other, of the environment of the individual during his lifetime, and especially during his period of development. In the industrial revolution most of his class saw only chaos and confusion, and the opportunity of fishing in these troubled waters and making large fortunes quickly. He saw in it the opportunity of putting into practice his favourite theory, and so of bringing order out of chaos. He had already tried it with success, as superintendent of more than five hundred men in a Manchester factory. From 1800 to 1829, he directed the great cotton mill at New Lanark, in Scotland, as managing partner, along the same lines, but with greater freedom of action and with a success that made him a European reputation. A population, originally consisting of the most diverse and, for the most part, very demoralised elements, a population that gradually grew to 2,500, he turned into a model colony, in which drunkenness, police, magistrates, lawsuits, poor laws, charity, were unknown. And all this simply by placing the people in conditions worthy of human beings, and especially by carefully bringing up the rising generation. He was the founder of infant schools, and introduced them first at New Lanark. At the age of two the children came to school, where they enjoyed themselves so much that they could scarcely be got home again. Whilst his competitors worked their people thirteen or fourteen hours a day, in New Lanark the working-day was only ten and a half hours. When a crisis in cotton

stopped work for four months, his workers received their full wages all the time. And with all this the business more than doubled in value, and to the last yielded large profits to its proprietors.

In spite of all this, Owen was not content. The existence which he secured for his workers was, in his eyes, still far from being worthy of human beings.

"The people were slaves at my mercy."

The relatively favourable conditions in which he had placed them were still far from allowing a rational development of the character and of the intellect in all directions, much less of the free exercise of all their faculties.

"And yet, the working part of this population of 2,500 persons was daily producing as much real wealth for society as, less than half a century before, it would have required the working part of a population of 600,000 to create. I asked myself, what became of the difference between the wealth consumed by 2,500 persons and that which would have been consumed by 600,000?" *

The answer was clear. It had been used to pay the proprietors of the establishment 5 per cent on the capital they had laid out, in addition to over £300,000 clear profit. And that which held for New Lanark held to a still greater extent for all the factories in England.

"If this new wealth had not been created by machinery, imperfectly as it has been applied, the wars of Europe, in opposition to Napoleon, and to support the aristocratic principles of society, could not have been maintained. And yet this new power was the creation of the working-classes." **

To them, therefore, the fruits of this new power belonged. The newly-created gigantic productive forces, hitherto used only to enrich individuals and to enslave the masses, offered to Owen the foundations for a reconstruction of society; they were destined, as the common property of all, to be worked for the common good of all.

Owen's Communism was based upon this purely business foundation, the outcome, so to say, of commercial calculation. Throughout, it maintained this practical character. Thus, in 1823, Owen proposed the relief of the distress in Ireland by Communist colonies, and drew up complete estimates of costs of founding

* From "The Revolution in Mind and Practice", p. 21, a memorial addressed to all the "red Republicans, Communists and Socialists of Europe", and sent to the provisional government of France, 1848, and also "to Queen Victoria and her responsible advisers".³⁵⁸

** Note, I. c., p. 22.

them, yearly expenditure, and probable revenue.^a And in his definite plan for the future, the technical working out of details is managed with such practical knowledge—ground plan, front and side and bird's-eye views all included^b—that the Owen method of social reform once accepted, there is from the practical point of view little to be said against the actual arrangement of details.

His advance in the direction of Communism was the turning-point in Owen's life. As long as he was simply a philanthropist, he was rewarded with nothing but wealth, applause, honour, and glory. He was the most popular man in Europe. Not only men of his own class, but statesmen and princes listened to him approvingly. But when he came out with his Communist theories, that was quite another thing. Three great obstacles seemed to him especially to block the path to social reform: private property, religion, the present form of marriage. He knew what confronted him if he attacked these—outlawry, excommunication from official society, the loss of his whole social position. But nothing of this prevented him from attacking them without fear of consequences, and what he had foreseen happened. Banished from official society, with a conspiracy of silence against him in the press, ruined by his unsuccessful Communist experiments in America, in which he sacrificed all his fortune, he turned directly to the working-class and continued working in their midst for thirty years. Every social movement, every real advance in England on behalf of the workers links itself on to the name of Robert Owen. He forced through in 1819, after five years' fighting, the first law limiting the hours of labour of women and children in factories.³⁵⁹ He was president of the first Congress at which all the Trade Unions of England united in a single great trade association.³⁶⁰ He introduced as transition measures to the complete communistic organisation of society, on the one hand, co-operative societies for retail trade and production. These have since that time, at least, given practical proof that the merchant and the manufacturer are socially quite unnecessary. On the other hand, he introduced labour bazaars for the exchange of the products of labour through the medium of labour-notes, whose unit was a single hour of work³⁶¹; institutions necessarily doomed to failure, but completely anticipating Proudhon's bank of exchange of a much later

^a See R. Owen, *Report of the Proceedings at the Several Public Meetings, held in Dublin ... on the 18th March, 12th April, 19th April and 3rd May, Dublin, 1823.*—Ed.

^b See R. Owen, *The Book of the New Moral World, Containing the Rational System of Society, Founded on Demonstrable Facts, Developing the Constitution and Laws of Human Nature and of Society, London, 1842-1844, parts 1-7.*—Ed.

period,³⁶² and differing entirely from this in that it did not claim to be the panacea for all social ills, but only a first step towards a much more radical revolution of society.

The Utopians' mode of thought has for a long time governed the socialist ideas of the nineteenth century, and still governs some of them. Until very recently all French and English Socialists did homage to it. The earlier German Communism, including that of Weitling, was of the same school. To all these Socialism is the expression of absolute truth, reason, and justice, and has only to be discovered to conquer all the world by virtue of its own power. And as absolute truth is independent of time, space, and of the historical development of man, it is a mere accident when and where it is discovered. With all this, absolute truth, reason, and justice are different with the founder of each different school. And as each one's special kind of absolute truth, reason, and justice is again conditioned by his subjective understanding, his conditions of existence, the measure of his knowledge and his intellectual training, there is no other ending possible in this conflict of absolute truths than that they shall be mutually exclusive one of the other. Hence, from this nothing could come but a kind of eclectic, average Socialism, which, as a matter of fact, has up to the present time dominated the minds of most of the socialist workers in France and England. Hence, a mish-mash allowing of the most manifold shades of opinion; a mish-mash of such critical statements, economic theories, pictures of future society by the founders of different sects as excite a minimum of opposition; a mish-mash which is the more easily brewed the more the definite sharp edges of the individual constituents are rubbed down in the stream of debate, like rounded pebbles in a brook.

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

II

In the meantime, along with and after the French philosophy of the eighteenth century had arisen the new German philosophy, culminating in Hegel. Its greatest merit was the taking up again of dialectics as the highest form of reasoning. The old Greek philosophers were all born natural dialecticians, and Aristotle, the most encyclopaedic intellect of them, had already analysed the most essential forms of dialectic thought. The newer philosophy, on the other hand, although in it also dialectics had brilliant exponents (*e.g.* Descartes and Spinoza), had, especially through English influence, become more and more rigidly fixed in the so-called metaphysical mode of reasoning, by which also the French of the eighteenth century were almost wholly dominated, at all events in their special philosophical work. Outside philosophy in the restricted sense, the French nevertheless produced masterpieces of dialectic. We need only call to mind Diderot's "Le Neveu de Rameau",³⁶³ and Rousseau's "Discours sur l'origine et les fondemens de l'inégalité parmi les hommes". We give here, in brief, the essential character of these two modes of thought.

When we consider and reflect upon nature at large, or the history of mankind, or our own intellectual activity, at first we see the picture of an endless entanglement of relations and reactions, permutations and combinations, in which nothing remains what, where, and as it was, but everything moves, changes, comes into being and passes away. We see, therefore, at first the picture as a whole, with its individual parts still more or less kept in the background; we observe the movements, transitions, connections, rather than the things that move, combine, and are connected.

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

But this conception, correctly as it expresses the general character of the picture of appearances as a whole, does not suffice to explain the details of which this picture is made up, and so long as we do not understand these, we have not a clear idea of the whole picture. In order to understand these details we must detach them from their natural or historical connection and examine each one separately, its nature, special causes, effects, etc. This is, primarily, the task of natural science and historical research; branches of science which the Greeks of classical times, on very good grounds, relegated to a subordinate position, because they had first of all to collect materials for these sciences to work upon. A certain amount of natural and historical material must be collected before there can be any critical analysis, comparison, and arrangement in classes, orders, and species. The foundations of the exact natural sciences were, therefore, first worked out by the Greeks of the Alexandrian period,³⁶⁴ and later on, in the Middle Ages, by the Arabs. Real natural science dates from the second half of the fifteenth century, and thence onward it has advanced with constantly increasing rapidity. The analysis of Nature into its individual parts, the grouping of the different natural processes and objects in definite classes, the study of the internal anatomy of organised bodies in their manifold forms—these were the fundamental conditions of the gigantic strides in our knowledge of Nature that have been made during the last four hundred years. But this method of work has also left us as legacy the habit of observing natural objects and processes in isolation, apart from their connection with the vast whole; of observing them in repose, not in motion; as constants, not as essentially variables; in their death, not in their life. And when this way of looking at things was transferred by Bacon and Locke from natural science to philosophy, it begot^b the narrow, metaphysical mode of thought peculiar to the last century.

To the metaphysician, things and their mental reflexes, ideas, are isolated, are to be considered one after the other and apart

^a Heraclitus, *Fragmente*.—*Ed.*

^b The French edition of 1880 and the German edition of 1891 further have: "the specific narrow-mindedness of the last centuries, the metaphysical mode of thought".—*Ed.*

from each other, are objects of investigation fixed, rigid, given once for all. He thinks in absolutely irreconcilable antitheses. "His communication is 'yea, yea; nay, nay'; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."^a For him a thing either exists or does not exist; a thing cannot at the same time be itself and something else. Positive and negative absolutely exclude one another; cause and effect stand in a rigid antithesis one to the other.

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

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

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

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

^a Matthew 5:37.—*Ed.*

^b In the French (1880) and German (1891) editions: "atoms".—*Ed.*

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

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

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

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

^a In the French (1880) and German (1891) editions: "modern natural science".—*Ed.*

^b The 1891 German edition has: "a real history".—*Ed.*

^c See Ch. Darwin, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, London, 1859.—*Ed.*

the formation of the sun and all the planets out of a rotating nebulous mass. From this he at the same time drew the conclusion that, given this origin of the solar system, its future death followed of necessity. His theory half a century later was established mathematically by Laplace, and half a century after that the spectroscope proved the existence in space of such incandescent masses of gas in various stages of condensation.³⁶⁵

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

That the Hegelian system did not solve the problem it propounded is here immaterial. Its epoch-making merit was that it propounded the problem. This problem is one that no single individual will ever be able to solve. Although Hegel was—with Saint-Simon—the most encyclopaedic^a mind of his time, yet he was limited, first, by the necessarily limited extent of his own knowledge, and, second, by the limited extent and depth of the knowledge and conceptions of his age. To these limits a third must be added. Hegel was an idealist. To him the thoughts within his brain were not the more or less abstract pictures of actual things and processes, but, conversely, things and their evolution were only the realised pictures of the "Idea", existing somewhere from eternity before the world was. This way of thinking turned everything upside down, and completely reversed the actual connection of things in the world. Correctly and ingeniously as many individual groups of facts were grasped by Hegel, yet, for the reasons just given, there is much that is botched, artificial, laboured, in a word, wrong in point of detail. The Hegelian system, in itself, was a colossal miscarriage—but it was also the last of its kind. It was suffering, in fact, from an internal and

^a The German edition of 1891 has: "universal".—*Ed.*

incurable contradiction. Upon the one hand, its essential proposition was the conception that human history is a process of evolution, which, by its very nature, cannot find its intellectual final term in the discovery of any so-called absolute truth. But, on the other hand, it laid claim to being the very essence of this absolute truth. A system of natural and historical knowledge, embracing everything, and final for all time, is a contradiction to the fundamental law of dialectic reasoning. This law, indeed, by no means excludes, but, on the contrary, includes the idea that the systematic knowledge of the external universe can make giant strides from age to age.

The perception of the fundamental contradiction in German idealism led necessarily back to materialism, but *nota bene*, not to the simply metaphysical, exclusively mechanical materialism of the eighteenth century. Old materialism looked upon all previous history as a crude heap of irrationality and violence³; modern materialism sees in it the process of evolution of humanity, and aims at discovering the laws thereof. With the French of the eighteenth century, and even with Hegel, the conception obtained of Nature as a whole, moving in narrow circles, and forever immutable, with its eternal celestial bodies, as Newton, and unalterable organic species, as Linnaeus, taught.³⁶⁶ Modern materialism embraces the more recent discoveries of natural science, according to which Nature also has its history in time, the celestial bodies, like the organic species that, under favourable conditions, people them, being born and perishing. And even if Nature, as a whole, must still be said to move in recurrent cycles, these cycles assume infinitely larger dimensions. In both aspects, modern materialism is essentially dialectic, and no longer requires the assistance of that sort of philosophy which, queen-like, pretended to rule the remaining mob of sciences. As soon as each special science is bound to make clear its position in the great totality of things and of our knowledge of things, a special science dealing with this totality is superfluous or unnecessary. That which still survives of all earlier philosophy is the science of thought and its laws—formal logic and dialectics. Everything else is subsumed in the positive science of Nature and history.

Whilst, however, the revolution in the conception of Nature could only be made in proportion to the corresponding positive materials furnished by research, already much earlier certain

³ In the French (1880) and German (1891) editions this part of the sentence reads as follows: "In contrast to naively revolutionary, simple rejection of all previous history".—*Ed.*

historical facts had occurred which led to a decisive change in the conception of history. In 1831, the first working-class rising took place in Lyons³⁶⁷; between 1838 and 1842, the first national working-class movement, that of the English Chartists,³⁶⁸ reached its height. The class struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie came to the front in the history of the most advanced countries in Europe, in proportion to the development, upon the one hand, of modern industry, upon the other, of the newly-acquired political supremacy of the bourgeoisie. Facts more and more strenuously gave the lie to the teachings of bourgeois economy as to the identity of the interests of capital and labour, as to the universal harmony and universal prosperity that would be the consequence of unbridled competition. All these things could no longer be ignored, any more than the French and English Socialism, which was their theoretical, though very imperfect, expression. But the old idealist conception of history, which was not yet dislodged, knew nothing of class struggles based upon economic interests, knew nothing of economic interests; production and all economic relations appeared in it only as incidental, subordinate elements in the "history of civilisation".

The new facts made imperative a new examination of all past history. Then it was seen that *all* past history, with the exception of its primitive stages, was the history of class struggles; that these warring classes of society are always the products of the modes of production and of exchange^a—in a word, of the *economic* conditions of their time; that the economic structure of society always furnishes the real basis, starting from which we can alone work out the ultimate explanation of the whole superstructure of juridical and political institutions as well as of the religious, philosophical, and other ideas of a given historical period. Hegel had freed history from metaphysics—he had made it dialectic; but his conception of history was essentially idealistic. But now idealism was driven from its last refuge, the philosophy of history^b; now a materialistic treatment of history was propounded, and a method found of explaining man's "knowing" by his "being", instead of, as heretofore, his "being" by his "knowing".

From that time forward Socialism was no longer an accidental discovery of this or that ingenious brain, but the necessary outcome of the struggle between two historically developed classes—the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Its task was no longer

^a The German edition of 1891 has: "and of intercourse".—*Ed.*

^b The German edition of 1891 has: "the conception of history".—*Ed.*

to manufacture a system of society as perfect as possible, but to examine the historico-economic succession of events from which these classes and their antagonism had of necessity sprung, and to discover in the economic conditions thus created the means of ending the conflict. But the Socialism of earlier days was as incompatible with this materialistic conception as the conception of Nature of the French materialists was with dialectics and modern natural science. The Socialism of earlier days certainly criticised the existing capitalistic mode of production and its consequences. But it could not explain them, and, therefore, could not get the mastery of them. It could only simply reject them as bad. The more strongly this earlier Socialism denounced the exploitation of the working-class, inevitable under Capitalism, the less able was it clearly to show in what this exploitation consisted and how it arose. But for this it was necessary—(1) to present the capitalistic method of production in its historical connection and its inevitableness during a particular historical period, and therefore, also, to present its inevitable downfall; and (2) to lay bare its essential character, which was still a secret. This was done by the discovery of *surplus-value*. It was shown that the appropriation of unpaid labour is the basis of the capitalist mode of production and of the exploitation of the worker that occurs under it; that even if the capitalist buys the labour-power of his labourer at its full value as a commodity on the market, he yet extracts more value from it than he paid for; and that in the ultimate analysis this surplus-value forms those sums of value from which are heaped up the constantly increasing masses of capital in the hands of the possessing classes. The genesis of capitalist production and the production of capital were both explained.

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

III

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

^a The words "of the means to support human life" are missing in the German edition of 1891.—*Ed.*

^b Goethe, *Faust*, Erster Teil, "Studierzimmer".—*Ed.*

^c In the German edition of 1891 this sentence reads: "These means are not to be *invented* in the head, but are to be *discovered* with the help of the head in the existing material facts of production."—*Ed.*

What is, then, the position of modern Socialism in this connexion?

The present structure of society—this is now pretty generally conceded—is the creation of the ruling class of to-day, of the bourgeoisie. The mode of production peculiar to the bourgeoisie, known, since Marx, as the capitalist mode of production, was incompatible with^a the feudal system, with the privileges it conferred upon individuals, entire social ranks and local corporations, as well as with the hereditary ties of subordination which constituted the framework of its social organisation. The bourgeoisie broke up the feudal system and built upon its ruins the capitalist order of society, the kingdom of free competition, of personal liberty,^b of the equality, before the law, of all commodity owners,^c of all the rest of the capitalist blessings. Thenceforward the capitalist mode of production could develop in freedom. Since steam, machinery, and the making of machines by machinery^d transformed the older manufacture into modern industry, the productive forces evolved under the guidance of the bourgeoisie developed with a rapidity and in a degree unheard of before. But just as the older manufacture, in its time, and handicraft, becoming more developed under its influence, had come into collision with the feudal trammels of the guilds, so now modern industry, in its more complete development, comes into collision with the bounds within which the capitalistic mode of production holds it confined. The new productive forces have already outgrown the capitalistic mode of using them. And this conflict between productive forces and modes of production is not a conflict engendered in the mind of man, like that between original sin and divine justice. It exists, in fact, objectively, outside us, independently of the will and actions even of the men that have brought it on. Modern Socialism is nothing but the reflex, in thought, of this conflict in fact; its ideal reflection in the minds, first, of the class directly suffering under it, the working-class.

Now, in what does this conflict consist?

Before capitalistic production, *i.e.*, in the Middle Ages, the

^a In the German edition of 1891 the end of this sentence reads as follows: "the local and social-estate privileges as well as with the mutual personal ties of the feudal system".—*Ed.*

^b The French (1880) and German (1891) editions have: "the freedom of movement".—*Ed.*

^c The German edition of 1891 has: "the equality of commodity owners".—*Ed.*

^d In the French (1880) and German (1891) editions the beginning of the sentence reads as follows: "Since steam and the new machine tools".—*Ed.*

system of petty industry obtained generally, based upon the private property of the labourers in their means of production; in the country, the agriculture of the small peasant, freeman or serf; in the towns, the handicrafts organised in guilds.^a The instruments of labour—land, agricultural implements, the workshop, the tool—were the instruments of labour of single individuals, adapted for the use of one worker, and, therefore, of necessity, small, dwarfish, circumscribed. But, for this very reason they belonged, as a rule, to the producer himself. To concentrate these scattered, limited means of production, to enlarge them, to turn them into the powerful levers of production of the present day—this was precisely the historic role of capitalist production and of its upholder, the bourgeoisie. In the fourth section of *Capital*^b Marx has explained in detail, how since the fifteenth century this has been historically worked out through the three phases of simple co-operation, manufacture, and modern industry. But the bourgeoisie, as is also shown there, could not transform these puny means of production into mighty productive forces, without transforming them, at the same time, from means of production of the individual into *social* means of production only workable by a collectivity of men. The spinning-wheel, the handloom, the blacksmith's hammer, were replaced by the spinning-machine, the power-loom, the steam-hammer; the individual workshop, by the factory implying the co-operation of hundreds and thousands of workmen. In like manner, production itself changed from a series of individual into a series of social acts, and the products from individual to social products. The yarn, the cloth, the metal articles that now came out of the factory were the joint product of many workers, through whose hands they had successively to pass before they were ready. No one person could say of them: "I made that; this is *my* product."

But where, in a given society, the fundamental form of production is that spontaneous division of labour which creeps in gradually and not upon any preconceived plan, there the products take on the form of *commodities*, whose mutual exchange, buying and selling, enable the individual producers to satisfy their manifold wants. And this was the case in the Middle Ages. The peasant, *e.g.*, sold to the artisan agricultural products and bought from him the products of handicraft. Into this society of individual producers, of commodity-producers, the new mode of production thrust

^a The words "organised in guilds" were added in the English edition.—*Ed.*

^b K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Part IV (present edition, Vol. 35).—*Ed.*

itself. In the midst of the old division of labour, grown up spontaneously and upon *no definite plan*, which had governed the whole of society, now arose division of labour upon *a definite plan*, as organised in the factory; side by side with *individual* production appeared *social* production. The products of both were sold in the same market, and, therefore, at prices at least approximately equal. But organisation upon a definite plan was stronger than spontaneous division of labour. The factories working with the combined social forces of a collectivity of individuals produced their commodities far more cheaply than the individual small producers. Individual production succumbed in one department after another. Socialised production revolutionised all the old methods of production. But its revolutionary character was, at the same time, so little recognised, that it was, on the contrary, introduced as a means of increasing and developing the production of commodities. When it arose, it found ready-made, and made liberal use of, certain machinery for the production and exchange of commodities: merchants' capital, handicraft, wage-labour. Socialised production thus introducing itself as a new form of the production of commodities, it was a matter of course that under it the old forms of appropriation remained in full swing, and were applied to its products as well.

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

Then came the concentration of the means of production and of the producers in large workshops and manufactories, their transformation into actual socialised means of production and socialised producers.^a But the socialised producers and means of

^a The words "and of the producers" and "and socialised producers" are missing in the German edition of 1891.—*Ed.*

production and their products^a were still treated, after this change, just as they had been before, i.e., as the means of production and the products of individuals. Hitherto, the owner of the instruments of labour had himself appropriated the product, because, as a rule, it was his own product and the assistance of others was the exception. Now the owner of the instruments of labour always appropriated to himself the product, although it was no longer *his* product but exclusively the product of the *labour of others*. Thus, the products now produced socially were not appropriated by those who had actually set in motion the means of production and actually produced the commodities, but by the *capitalists*. The means of production, and production itself, had become in essence socialised. But they were subjected to a form of appropriation which presupposes the private production of individuals, under which, therefore, every one owns his own product and brings it to market. The mode of production is subjected to this form of appropriation, although it abolishes the conditions upon which the latter rests.*

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

The first capitalists found, as we have said, alongside of other forms of labour,^b wage-labour ready-made for them on the market. But it was exceptional, complementary, accessory, transitory wage-labour. The agricultural labourer, though, upon occasion, he hired himself out by the day, had a few acres of his own

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

^a In the German edition of 1891 the beginning of the sentence reads as follows: "But the socialised means of production and products".—*Ed.*

^b The words "alongside of other forms of labour" were added in the English edition.—*Ed.*

land on which he could at all events live at a pinch. The guilds were so organised that the journeyman of to-day became the master of to-morrow. But all this changed, as soon as the means of production became socialised and concentrated in the hands of capitalists. The means of production, as well as the product, of the individual producer became more and more worthless; there was nothing left for him but to turn wage-worker under the capitalist. Wage-labour, aforesaid the exception and accessory, now became the rule and basis of all production; aforesaid complementary, it now became the sole remaining function of the worker. The wage-worker for a time became a wage-worker for life. The number of these permanent wage-workers was further enormously increased by the breaking-up of the feudal system that occurred at the same time, by the disbanding of the retainers of the feudal lords, the eviction of the peasants from their homesteads, etc. The separation was made complete between the means of production concentrated in the hands of the capitalists on the one side, and the producers, possessing nothing but their labour-power, on the other. *The contradiction between socialised production and capitalistic appropriation manifested itself as the antagonism of proletariat and bourgeoisie.*

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

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

and in antagonism to them, as inexorable^a natural laws of their particular form of production. The product governs the producers.

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

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

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

* See Appendix.^b

^a The German edition of 1891 has: "blindly working".—Ed.

^b Here Engels refers to his work *The Mark* (see this volume, pp. 439-56).—Ed.

^c In the German edition of 1891 the beginning of the sentence reads as follows: "The anarchy of socialised production became apparent and".—Ed.

opposite of anarchy. It was the increasing organisation of production, upon a social basis, in every individual productive establishment. By this, the old, peaceful, stable condition of things was ended. Wherever this organisation of production was introduced into a branch of industry, it brooked no other method of production by its side.^a The field of labour became a battleground. The great geographical discoveries, and the colonisation following upon them, multiplied markets and quickened the transformation of handicraft into manufacture. The war did not simply break out between the individual producers of particular localities. The local struggles begot in their turn national conflicts, the commercial wars of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries.³⁶⁹

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

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

^a The German edition of 1891 has one more sentence here: "Wherever it took possession of handicraft, it destroyed its old form."—Ed.

^b See Ch. Fourier, *Le nouveau monde industriel et sociétaire, ou invention du procédé d'industrie attrayante et naturelle distribuée en séries passionnées*. In: *Oeuvres complètes*, Vol. 6.—Ed.

^c The German edition of 1891 has here: "It is the compelling force of the social anarchy of production"—Ed.

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

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

* "The Condition of the Working-Class in England" (Sonnenschein & Co.), p. 84.^a

^a F. Engels, *The Condition of the Working-Class in England in 1844*. With Preface written in 1892. Translated by Florence Kelley-Wischnewetzky, London, Swan Sonnenschein and Co., 1892 (see present edition, Vol. 4, p. 384).— *Ed.*

^b K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Part IV, Chapter XV, Sections 5 and 9 (present edition, Vol. 35).— *Ed.*

^c *Ibid.*, Part IV, Chapter XV, Section 8, Sub-section "b": "Reaction of the Factory System on Manufacture and Domestic Industries".— *Ed.*

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

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

As a matter of fact, since 1825, when the first general crisis broke out, the whole industrial and commercial world, production and exchange among all civilised peoples and their more or less barbaric hangers-on, are thrown out of joint about once every ten years. Commerce is at a standstill, the markets are glutted, products accumulate, as multitudinous as they are unsaleable, hard cash disappears, credit vanishes, factories are closed, the mass of

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

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

The fact that the socialised organisation of production within the factory has developed so far that it has become incompatible with the anarchy of production in society, which exists side by side with and dominates it, is brought home to the capitalists themselves by the violent concentration of capital that occurs during crises, through the ruin of many large, and a still greater number of small, capitalists. The whole mechanism of the capitalist mode of production breaks down under the pressure of the productive forces, its own creations. It is no longer able to turn all this mass of means of production into capital. They lie fallow, and for that very reason the industrial reserve army must also lie fallow. Means of production, means of subsistence, available labourers, all the elements of production and of general wealth, are present in abundance. But “abundance becomes the source of distress and want” (Fourier), because it is the very thing that prevents the transformation of the means of production and

^a See Ch. Fourier, *Le nouveau monde industriel et sociétaire, ou invention du procédé d'industrie attrayante et naturelle distribuée en séries passionnées*. In: *Oeuvres complètes*, Vol. 6, pp. 393-94.—Ed.

subsistence into capital. For in capitalistic society the means of production can only function when they have undergone a preliminary transformation into capital, into the means of exploiting human labour-power. The necessity of this transformation into capital of the means of production and subsistence stands like a ghost between these and the workers. It alone prevents the coming together of the material and personal levers of production; it alone forbids the means of production to function, the workers to work and live. On the one hand, therefore, the capitalistic mode of production stands convicted of its own incapacity to further direct these productive forces. On the other, these productive forces themselves, with increasing energy, press forward to the removal of the existing contradiction, to the abolition of their quality as capital, to the *practical recognition of their character as social productive forces*.

This rebellion of the productive forces, as they grow more and more powerful, against their quality as capital, this stronger and stronger command that their social character shall be recognised, forces the capitalist class itself to treat them more and more as social productive forces, so far as this is possible under capitalist conditions. The period of industrial high pressure, with its unbounded inflation of credit, not less than the crash itself, by the collapse of great capitalist establishments, tends to bring about that form of the socialisation of great masses of means of production which we meet with in the different kinds of joint-stock companies. Many of these means of production and of distribution are, from the outset, so colossal, that, like the railroads, they exclude all other forms of capitalistic exploitation. At a further stage of evolution this form also becomes insufficient. The producers on a large scale in a particular branch of industry in a particular country unite in a "Trust", a union for the purpose of regulating production. They determine the total amount to be produced, parcel it out among themselves, and thus enforce the selling price fixed beforehand. But trusts of this kind, as soon as business becomes bad, are generally liable to break up, and, on this very account, compel a yet greater concentration of association. The whole of the particular industry is turned into one gigantic joint-stock company; internal competition gives place to the internal monopoly of this one company. This has happened in 1890 with the English *alkali* production, which is now, after the fusion of 48 large works, in the hands of one company, conducted upon a single plan, and with a capital of £6,000,000.

In the trusts, freedom of competition changes into its very

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

In any case, with trusts or without, the official representative of capitalist society—the State—will ultimately have to undertake the direction of production.* This necessity for conversion into State-property is felt first in the great institutions for intercourse and communication—the post-office, the telegraphs, the railways.

If the crises demonstrate the incapacity of the bourgeoisie for managing any longer modern productive forces, the transformation of the great establishments for production and distribution³ into joint-stock companies, trusts, and State property, shows how unnecessary the bourgeoisie are for that purpose. All the social functions of the capitalist are now performed by salaried employees. The capitalist has no further social function than that of pocketing dividends, tearing off coupons, and gambling on the Stock Exchange, where the different capitalists despoil one

* I say "have to". For only when the means of production and distribution have *actually* outgrown the form of management by joint-stock companies, and when, therefore, the taking them over by the State has become *economically* inevitable, only then—even if it is the State of to-day that effects this—is there an economic advance, the attainment of another step preliminary to the taking over of all productive forces by society itself. But of late, since Bismarck went in for State-ownership of industrial establishments, a kind of spurious Socialism has arisen, degenerating, now and again, into something of flunkeyism, that without more ado declares *all* State-ownership, even of the Bismarckian sort, to be socialistic. Certainly, if the taking over by the State of the tobacco industry is socialistic, then Napoleon and Metternich must be numbered among the founders of Socialism. If the Belgian State, for quite ordinary political and financial reasons, itself constructed its chief railway lines; if Bismarck, not under any economic compulsion, took over for the State the chief Prussian lines,³⁷⁰ simply to be the better able to have them in hand in case of war, to bring up the railway employees as voting cattle for the Government, and especially to create for himself a new source of income independent of parliamentary votes—this was, in no sense, a socialistic measure, directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously. Otherwise, the Royal Maritime Company,³⁷¹ the Royal porcelain manufacture, and even the regimental tailor of the army would also be socialistic institutions, or even, as was seriously proposed by a sly dog in Frederick William III's reign, the taking over by the State of the brothels.

³ The German edition of 1891 has here: "communication".—Ed.

another of their capital. At first the capitalistic mode of production forces out the workers. Now it forces out the capitalists, and reduces them, just as it reduced the workers, to the ranks of the surplus population, although not immediately into those of the industrial reserve army.

But the transformation, either into joint-stock companies and trusts, or into State-ownership, does not do away with the capitalistic nature of the productive forces. In the joint-stock companies and trusts this is obvious. And the modern State, again, is only the organisation that bourgeois society takes on in order to support the external conditions of the capitalist mode of production against the encroachments, as well of the workers as of individual capitalists. The modern State, no matter what its form, is essentially a capitalist machine, the state of the capitalists, the ideal personification of the total national capital.² The more it proceeds to the taking over of productive forces, the more does it actually become the national capitalist, the more citizens does it exploit. The workers remain wage-workers—proletarians. The capitalist relation is not done away with. It is rather brought to a head. But, brought to a head, it topples over. State-ownership of the productive forces is not the solution of the conflict, but concealed within it are the technical conditions that form the elements of that solution.

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

Active social forces work exactly like natural forces: blindly,

² The French (1880) and German (1891) editions have: "the ideal total capitalist".—*Ed.*

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

But when once their nature is understood, they can, in the hands of the producers working together, be transformed from master demons into willing servants. The difference is as that between the destructive force of electricity in the lightning of the storm, and electricity under command in the telegraph and the voltaic arc; the difference between a conflagration, and fire working in the service of man. With this recognition at last of the real nature of the productive forces of to-day, the social anarchy of production gives place to a social regulation of production upon a definite plan, according to the needs of the community and of each individual. Then the capitalist mode of appropriation, in which the product enslaves first the producer and then the appropriator, is replaced by the mode of appropriation of the products that is based upon the nature of the modern means of production; upon the one hand, direct social appropriation, as means to the maintenance and extension of production—on the other, direct individual appropriation, as means of subsistence and of enjoyment.

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

But, in doing this, it abolishes itself as proletariat, abolishes all class distinctions and class antagonisms, abolishes also the State as State. Society thus far, based upon class antagonisms, had need of the State. That is, of an organisation of the particular class which was *pro tempore* the exploiting class, an organisation for the

purpose of preventing any interference from without with the existing conditions of production, and therefore, especially, for the purpose of forcibly keeping the exploited classes in the condition of oppression corresponding with the given mode of production (slavery, serfdom, wage-labour). The State was the official representative of society as a whole; the gathering of it together into a visible embodiment. But it was this only in so far as it was the State of that class which itself represented, for the time being, society as a whole; in ancient times, the State of slave-owning citizens; in the middle ages, the feudal lords; in our own time, the bourgeoisie. When at last it becomes the real representative of the whole of society, it renders itself unnecessary. As soon as there is no longer any social class to be held in subjection; as soon as class rule, and the individual struggle for existence based upon our present anarchy in production, with the collisions and excesses arising from these, are removed, nothing more remains to be repressed, and a special repressive force, a State, is no longer necessary. The first act by virtue of which the State really constitutes itself the representative of the whole of society—the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society—this is, at the same time, its last independent act as a State. State interference in social relations becomes, in one domain after another, superfluous, and then dies out of itself; the government of persons is replaced by the administration of things, and by the conduct of processes of production. The State is not “abolished”. *It dies out.* This gives the measure of the value of the phrase “a free State”,^a both as to its justifiable use at times by agitators, and as to its ultimate scientific insufficiency; and also of the demands of the so-called anarchists for the abolition of the State out of hand.

Since the historical appearance of the capitalist mode of production, the appropriation by society of all the means of production has often been dreamed of, more or less vaguely, by individuals, as well as by sects, as the ideal of the future. But it could become possible, could become a historical necessity, only when the actual conditions for its realisation were there. Like every other social advance, it becomes practicable, not by men understanding that the existence of classes is in contradiction to justice, equality, etc., not by the mere willingness to abolish these classes, but by virtue of certain new economic conditions. The separation of society into an exploiting and an exploited class, a

^a See this volume, pp. 71 and 94-96.—Ed

ruling and an oppressed class, was the necessary consequence of the deficient and restricted development of production in former times. So long as the total social labour only yields a produce which but slightly exceeds that barely necessary for the existence of all; so long, therefore, as labour engages all or almost all the time of the great majority of the members of society—so long, of necessity, this society is divided into classes. Side by side with the great majority, exclusively bound slaves to labour, arises a class freed from directly productive labour, which looks after the general affairs of society: the direction of labour, State business, law, science, art, etc. It is, therefore, the law of division of labour that lies at the basis of the division into classes. But this does not prevent this division into classes from being carried out by means of violence and robbery, trickery and fraud. It does not prevent the ruling class, once having the upper hand, from consolidating its power at the expense of the working-class, from turning their social leadership into an intensified exploitation of the masses.

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

This point is now reached. Their political and intellectual bankruptcy is scarcely any longer a secret to the bourgeoisie themselves. Their economic bankruptcy recurs regularly every ten years. In every crisis, society is suffocated beneath the weight of its own productive forces and products, which it cannot use, and stands helpless, face to face with the absurd contradiction that the producers have nothing to consume, because consumers are wanting. The expansive force of the means of production bursts the bonds that the capitalist mode of production had imposed upon them. Their deliverance from these bonds is the one precondition for an unbroken, constantly-accelerated development

of the productive forces, and therewith for a practically unlimited increase of production itself. Nor is this all. The socialised appropriation of the means of production does away, not only with the present artificial restrictions upon production, but also with the positive waste and devastation of productive forces and products that are at the present time the inevitable concomitants of production, and that reach their height in the crises. Further, it sets free for the community at large a mass of means of production and of products, by doing away with the senseless extravagance of the ruling classes of to-day, and their political representatives. The possibility of securing for every member of society, by means of socialised production, an existence not only fully sufficient materially, and becoming day by day more full, but an existence guaranteeing to all the free development and exercise of their physical and mental faculties—this possibility is now for the first time here, but *it is here*.*

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

* A few figures may serve to give an approximate idea of the enormous expansive force of the modern means of production, even under capitalist pressure. According to Mr. Giffen,³⁷² the total wealth of Great Britain and Ireland amounted, in round numbers, in

1814 to £2,200,000,000.
 1865 to £6,100,000,000.
 1875 to £8,500,000,000.

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

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

Let us briefly sum up our sketch of historical evolution.^a

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

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

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

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

C. On the one hand, perfecting of machinery, made by competition compulsory for each individual manufacturer, and

^a The German edition of 1891 has: "of the course of development".—*Ed.*

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

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

III. *Proletarian Revolution*.—Solution of the contradictions. The proletariat seizes the public power, and by means of this transforms the socialised means of production, slipping from the hands of the bourgeoisie, into public property. By this act, the proletariat frees the means of production from the character of capital they have thus far borne, and gives their socialised character complete freedom to work itself out. Socialised production upon a predetermined plan becomes henceforth possible. The development of production makes the existence of different classes of society thenceforth an anachronism. In proportion as anarchy in social production vanishes, the political authority of the State dies out. Man, at last the master of his own form of social organisation, becomes at the same time the lord over Nature, his own master—free.

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

Karl Marx

[NOTE ON THE POVERTY OF PHILOSOPHY]⁹⁷³

The Poverty of Philosophy by Karl Marx appeared in 1847^a shortly after the *Economic Contradictions* by Proudhon,^b which bore the sub-title *Philosophy of Poverty*. What prompted us to reprint this book, the first edition of which is out of print, was the fact that it contains the seeds of the theory developed after twenty years' work in *Capital*. Reading the *Poverty of Philosophy* and the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, published by Marx and Engels in 1848, might thus serve as an introduction to the study of *Capital* and the works of other modern socialists who, like Lassalle, have derived their ideas from them. By authorising this republication in our journal, Marx wished to give us a token of his sympathy.

We must say a few more words about the drastic tone of this polemic against Proudhon. On the one hand, Proudhon, while attacking the official economists such as Dunoyer, Blanqui the Academician and the whole clique around the *Journal des Économistes*,^c knew how to appeal to their vanity at the same time as he heaped coarse insults on the utopian socialists and communists whom Marx honoured as the forebears^d of modern socialism. On the other hand, to prepare the way for the critical and materialist socialism which alone can render the real, historical

^a K. Marx, *Misère de la philosophie. Réponse à la philosophie de la misère de M. Proudhon*, Paris, Brussels, 1847.—*Ed.*

^b P. J. Proudhon, *Système des contradictions économiques, ou philosophie de la misère*, Vols. 1-2, Paris, 1846.—*Ed.*

^c Léon Faucher, Charles Duchâtel, Louis François Benoiston de Châteauneuf, Maurice Rubichon, and Edelestand Duméril.—*Ed.*

^d *L'Égalité* has here: "initiators".—*Ed.*

development of social production intelligible, it was necessary to break abruptly with the ideological economics of which Proudhon was unwittingly the last incarnation.

Besides, in an article published in the Berlin *Social-Demokrat*^a on the death of Proudhon, Marx did justice to this fighter's great qualities, to his manly attitude after the days of June 1848,³⁷⁴ and to his talent as a political writer.

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^a K. Marx, "On Proudhon", *Der Social-Demokrat*, Nos. 16-18, February 1, 3 and 5, 1865 (see present edition, Vol. 20, pp. 26-33).— *Ed.*

Karl Marx

WORKERS' QUESTIONNAIRE³⁷⁵

I

- 1) Which is your branch of industry?
- 2) Is the concern in which you work carried on by private capitalists or by a joint-stock company? Give the names of the private employer or the manager of the company.
- 3) State the number of persons employed.
- 4) State their sex and age.
- 5) Which is the lowest age at which children—male or female—are admitted?
- 6) State the number of overlookers and *other employés* who are no common wage-labourers.
- 7) Are apprentices employed and how many?
- 8) Are there besides the usual and regularly employed workmen others called in from abroad at certain seasons?
- 9) Is your master's business exclusively or mainly carried on for local customers, for the general home-market, or for export to Foreign countries?
- 10) Is the place of work rural or townish?
- 11) If your industry is carried on in a country-place, does it form your main subsistence or is it accessory to, or combined with, agriculture?
- 12) Is the work entirely or mainly hand-work or machine work?
- 13) State the division of labour in the business where you are employed.
- 14) Is steam-power employed as the motive power?
- 15) State the number of sets of working rooms in which the different parts of the business are carried on and describe that part of the industrial process in which you are employed, not only

technically, but with respect to the muscular and nervous strain it imposes and its general effects upon the health of the operative.

16) Describe the sanitary state of the place of work in regard to size (the space left for each operative), ventilation, temperature, whitewashing, *lieux d'aisance*, general cleanliness, noise of machinery, dust, dampness etc.

17) Is there any supervision, governmental or municipal, over the sanitary state of the working place?

18) Are there any peculiar deleterious influences in your business which breed specific diseases amongst the workmen?

19) Is the working place overcrowded with machinery?

20) Are the motive power, the machinery of transmission and the working machinery so secured as to prevent bodily harm to the workmen?

21) State the main accidents to limb and life of the operatives during your personal experience.

22) If working in a mine, state the precautionary measures taken by your employer to secure ventilation and to prevent explosions and other dangerous accidents.

23) If working in a metal manufacture, chemical manufacture, for railways or other specially perilous industry, state whether precautionary measures are taken by your employer.

24) What means of illumination, gas-light, petroleum etc. are applied in your working place?

25) Are there sufficient means of escape within and outside of the working buildings in case of fire?

26) In case of an accident, is the employer *legally* bound to indemnify the sufferer or his family?

27) If not, does he indemnify anyhow the parties that have come to grief in the work of enriching him?

28) Does there exist any medical attendance at your working place?

29) If you work at home, state the condition of your working room; whether you use any tools or also little machines; whether you employ your wife and children or other helpmates, adults or children, male or female; whether you work for private customers or for an "entrepreneur"; whether you engage directly with him or through middlemen.

II

1) State the usual daily hours of work and the usual number of working days in the week.

- 2) State the number of holidays during the year.
- 3) Which are the interruptions of the working day?
- 4) Are meal-times fixed at certain regular intervals or are they irregularly taken?^a
- 5) Is work performed during meal-times?
- 6) If steam-power is employed, state the actual time of starting and stopping it.
- 7) Is there night-work?
- 8) State the working time of children and young persons under 16 years of age.
- 9) Do different sets of children and young persons relieve each other during the working day?
- 10) Are such *legislative enactments* as exist for children's labour enforced by the government and strictly carried out by the employers?
- 11) Do there exist any schools for children and young persons engaged in your industry? If so, at what hours of the day are the children in school? What are they taught?
- 12) Where the work is continued night and day, what shifting system—relays of one set of workmen by another—is employed?
- 13) To what extent are the usual hours of work lengthened during times of business pressure?
- 14) Is the cleansing of machinery performed by an extra number of workmen, hired to the purpose, or is it gratuitously done by the operatives employed at the machines, during their usual working day?
- 15) Which are the regulations and penalties with regard to the exact attendance of workmen at the time when the day's work begins or when it recommences after meals?
- 16) How much time is daily lost to you by going from home to the working place and by returning home from the working place?

III

- 1) Which is the mode of engagement with your master? Are you engaged daily, weekly, monthly etc.?
- 2) Which is the term stipulated for your receiving or giving notice of leave?
- 3) In case of breach of contract, if the master be the defaulter, which penalties does he incur?

^a Here the following question was added by Charles Longuet: "Are they taken in or outside of the building?" — *Ed.*

4) If the workman be the defaulter, which penalties does he incur?

5) If apprentices are employed, state the terms of their contract.

6) Is your occupation regular or irregular?

7) Is your branch of industry mainly carried on in certain seasons or is work, in ordinary times, more or less evenly distributed over the whole year? If your work is bound to certain seasons, how do you live in the interval?

8) Are your wages calculated by time or by piece-work?

9) If by time, are they reckoned by the single hour or by the whole working day?

10) Are extra wages—and which—paid in case of *overtime*?

11) If your wages are paid *à la pièce*, state the method of fixing them; if you be employed in industries where the mass of the work done is estimated by measurement or by weight (as f.i. in coal-mines), are there trickeries resorted to by your master and his underlings in order to defraud you of part of your earnings?

12) If you are paid by piece-work, is the quality of the article made a pretext for fraudulent deduction from wages?

13) Whether calculated by time or by piece-work, *at what terms* are your wages paid? In other words how long a credit must you give to your master before receiving pay for work done? Is it paid after the lapse of a week, a month etc.?

14) Have you found that such delay in the payment of wages obliges you to frequently recur to the *monts de piété*,^a paying there high interest, and denuding you of things you ought to have at your command, or to take credit from shopkeepers, and, by becoming their debtors, to become their prey?

15) Are the wages paid directly by the "patron" or through a middleman, "*marchandeur*"^b etc.?

16) If the wages are paid through "*marchandeurs*" or other middlemen, state the terms of your engagement.

17) State the daily or weekly amount of your wages in money.

18) State the wages for the same time of the women and children co-operating with you in the same workshop.

19) State the highest and lowest day wages during last month.

20) State the highest and lowest piece wages during last month.

21) State your actual earnings during the same time, and if you have a family, also those of your wife and children.

22) Are the wages paid in money or partly otherwise?

^a Pawnshops.—*Ed.*

^b Contractor.—*Ed.*

23) If you rent your house accommodation from your employer, state on what terms? Does he deduct the house-rent from your wages?

24) State the price of your necessities, such as^a:

a) the pay for your dwelling and the terms on which it is rented; the number of rooms of which it consists; how many people live in it; repair and insurance; purchase and repair of furniture; lodging; heating, lighting, water etc.;

b) nourishment: bread, meat, vegetables (potatoes etc.); milk products, eggs, fish; butter, oil, lard, sugar, salt, spice; coffee, tea, chicory; beer, cider, wine etc.; tobacco;

c) clothes (for the parents and the children); washing; articles of hygiene, bath, soap etc.;

d) various expenses, such as for mail, loan and payment for keeping things in pawnshops; expenses for teaching children in school, paying for apprenticeship, purchase of journals, books etc. Contributions to societies for mutual relief, to strike fund, to associations, TRADES-UNIONS etc.;

e) expenses, if there are any, connected with the exercise of your trade;

f) taxes.

25) Try to arrange in form of a budget your weekly and yearly income (and that of your family, if you have one) and your weekly and yearly expense.

26) Have you remarked during your personal experience a greater rising in the necessities of life (such as house-rent, price of food etc.) than in that of wages?

27) State changes in the *taux de salaires* for as long a time as you can remember.

28) State fall of wages during the times of stagnation or crisis.

29) State rise of wages in so-called times of prosperity.

30) State interruption of work through change of fashion, and partial or general crises.

31) State the changes in the price of the articles you produce or the services you render as compared with the simultaneous changes or permanency of your wages.

32) Have in the time of your experience workmen been displaced by the introduction of machines or other improvements?

33) Has with the development of machinery and the productive power of labour the intensity and the duration of labour decreased or increased?

^a Points a-f were written by Marx in French.— Ed.

34) Are you aware of any rise of wages in consequence of improved production?

35) Have you ever known instances wherein an ordinary operative was enabled to retire, at 50 years of age, on money earned as a wages-labourer?

36) What is the number of years for which, in your branch of industry, an operative of average health can continue his work?

IV

1) Do trades-unions exist in your trade, and how are they managed?

2) How many strikes have occurred in your trade during your personal experience?

3) How long did those strikes last?

4) Were they partial or general?

5) Was their purpose an increase of wages or resistance to the reduction of the same; or did they relate to the length of the working day; or did they arise from any other motive?

6) What was their result?

7) Does your trade support the strikes of workmen belonging to other trades?

8) State the rules and the penalties for breach of them established by your master for the government of his wages-labourers.^a

9) Do there exist combinations between the masters for imposing upon the workmen reduction of wages, increase of working day, interference with strikes, and generally for enforcing their behests upon the working class?

10) Has, in your experience, the government abused the public force in the service of the masters against their men?

11) Has the same government, in your experience, ever interfered for the men against the encroachments and unlawful combinations of the masters?

12) Does the same government enforce the factory laws, as far as they exist, against the masters? Do its inspectors—if there are any—strictly fulfil their duties?

^a The following passage is crossed out in the manuscript: "in his workshop, where he, of course, unites the supreme legislative, judiciary and executive powers in his hands".—*Ed.*

13) Do there exist in your workshop or your trade, societies for mutual relief and assistance in cases of accidents, sickness, death, temporary incapacity for work, old age etc.?

14) Is the membership in such societies voluntary or compulsory? Are their funds exclusively under the control of the workmen?

15) If the contributions to such funds are compulsory and under the control of the master, does he deduct the contributions from the wages; does he pay interest for them? Have the working-men giving or receiving leave their instalments returned?

16) Are there working-men's co-operative enterprises in your department of industry? How are they managed? Do they also employ extraneous operatives for wages in the same way as the capitalists do?

17) Are there in your trade workshops where part of the retribution of the operative is paid under the name of wages and another part in so-called shares in the master's profit? Compare the entire income of those operatives with that of others where there does not exist this so-called partnership. State the engagements of workmen living under this regime. State whether they are allowed to participate in strikes etc. or whether they are only permitted to be the obedient "subjects" of their master.

18) Which is the general physical, intellectual and moral condition of working-men and working-women in your branch of trade?

Drawn up in the first half of April 1880

Reproduced from the manuscript

First published in *La Revue socialiste*,
No. 4, April 20, 1880

Karl Marx

[INTRODUCTION TO THE FRENCH EDITION
OF ENGELS' SOCIALISM: UTOPIAN AND SCIENTIFIC]³⁷⁶

The pages which form the subject of the present pamphlet, first published as three articles in the *Revue socialiste*,^a have been translated from the latest book by Engels *Revolution in Science*.^b

Frederick Engels, one of the foremost representatives of contemporary socialism, distinguished himself in 1844 with his *Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy*, which first appeared in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, published in Paris by Marx and Ruge. The *Outlines* already formulates certain general principles of scientific socialism. Engels was then living in Manchester, where he wrote (in German) *The Condition of the Working-Class in England* (1845), an important work to which Marx did full justice in *Capital*.^c During his first stay in England he also contributed—as he later did from Brussels—to *The Northern Star*, the official journal of the socialist^d movement, and to the *New Moral World* of Robert Owen.

During his stay in Brussels he and Marx founded the German workers' communist club,³⁷⁷ linked with Flemish and Walloon

^a F. Engels, "Le socialisme utopique et le socialisme scientifique, I-III", *La Revue socialiste*, Nos. 3-5, March 20, April 20 and May 5, 1880 (see this volume, pp. 281-325).—*Ed.*

^b F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring. Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science*. In the Introduction to the French edition of Engels' *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* the following sentence was added: "They were revised by the author who introduced diverse additions in the third chapter in order to make the dialectical movement of the economic forces of capitalist production more comprehensible to the French reader."—*Ed.*

^c K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Part III, Chapter X; Part IV, Chapter XV; Part VII, Chapters XXIV, XXV (present edition, Vol. 35).—*Ed.*

^d The 1880 edition has "Chartist" instead of "socialist".—*Ed.*

working men's clubs, and, with Bornstedt, the *Deutsche-Brüsseler Zeitung*. At the invitation of the German committee (residing in London) of the *League of the Just*,³⁷⁸ they joined this society, which had originally been set up by Karl Schapper after his flight from France, where he had taken part in the Blanqui conspiracy of 1839.³⁷⁹ From then on the League was transformed into an international *League of Communists* after the suppression of the usual formalism of secret societies. Nevertheless, in those circumstances the society had to remain a secret as far as governments were concerned. In 1847 at the International Congress held by the League in London, Marx and Engels were instructed to draft the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*,³⁸⁰ published immediately before the February Revolution and translated^a into almost all the European languages.^b

In the same year they were involved in founding the *Democratic Association of Brussels*,³⁸¹ an international and public association, where the delegates of the radical bourgeois and those of the proletarian^c workers met.

After the February Revolution, Engels became one of the editors of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung (Nouvelle Gazette Rhénane)*, founded in 1848 by Marx in Cologne and suppressed in June 1849^d by a Prussian coup d'état. After taking part in the rising at Ellerbeld Engels fought in the Baden campaign^e against the Prussians (June and July 1849) as the aide-de-camp of Willich, who was then colonel of a battalion of *francs-tireurs*.³⁸²

In 1850, in London, he contributed to the Review of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*^f edited by Marx and printed in Hamburg. There Engels for the first time published *The Peasant War in Germany*, which 19 years later appeared again in Leipzig as a pamphlet and ran into three editions.

After the resumption of the socialist movement in Germany, Engels contributed to the *Volksstaat* and *Vorwärts* his most

^a The 1880 edition further has: "at once into almost".—Ed.

^b The following passage was added in the French edition which appeared in 1880: "The *Communist Manifesto* is one of the most valuable documents of modern socialism; even today it remains one of the most vigorous and clearest expositions of the development of bourgeois society and the formation of the proletariat which must put an end to capitalist society; as in *The Poverty of Philosophy* by Marx, published a year earlier, here, for the first time, the theory of class struggle is clearly formulated."—Ed.

^c The 1880 edition has here: "socialist".—Ed.

^d The last issue of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* came out on May 19, 1849.—Ed.

^e The 1880 edition has: "the Baden and Palatinate campaign".—Ed.

^f *Neue Rheinische Zeitung, Politisch-ökonomische Revue*.—Ed.

important articles, most of which were reprinted in the form of pamphlets such as *On Social Relations in Russia*, *The Prussian Schnapps in the German Reichstag*, *The Housing Question*, *The Cantonist Rising in Spain*,^a etc.

In 1870, after leaving Manchester for London, Engels joined the General Council of the International, where he was entrusted with the correspondence with Spain, Portugal and Italy.

The series of final articles which he contributed to the *Vorwärts* under the ironic title of *Herr Dühring's Revolution in Science*^b (in response to the allegedly new theories of Mr. E. Dühring on science in general and socialism in particular) were assembled in one volume and were a great success among German socialists. In the present pamphlet we reproduce the most topical excerpt from the theoretical section of the book, which constitutes what might be termed an *introduction to scientific socialism*.

Written on about May 4-5, 1880

First published in a pamphlet: F. Engels, *Socialisme utopique et socialisme scientifique*, Paris, 1880

Printed according to the manuscript, checked with the 1880 edition

Translated from the French

Published in English for the first time

^a A reference to *The Bakuninists at Work*—Ed.

^b In the 1880 edition the title is given in French and, in brackets, in German—*Herrn Dühring's Umwälzung der Wissenschaft*—Ed.

Karl Marx

[PREAMBLE TO THE PROGRAMME
OF THE FRENCH WORKERS' PARTY]³⁸³

Considering

That the emancipation of the producing class is that of all human beings without distinction of sex or race;

That the producers cannot be free unless they are in possession of the means of production;

That there are only two forms in which the means of production can belong to them:

1) the individual form, which has never existed as a general state of affairs and which is increasingly eliminated by industrial progress;

2) the collective form, whose material and intellectual elements are shaped by the very development of capitalist society;

Considering

That this collective appropriation can only spring from the revolutionary action of the producing class—or proletariat—organised into an independent political^a party;

That such an organisation must be striven for, using all the means at the disposal of the proletariat, including^b universal suffrage, thus transformed from the instrument of deception which it has been hitherto into an instrument of emancipation;

The French socialist workers,

Adopting as the object of their efforts in the economic sphere the return of all the means of production to collective ownership, have decided, as a *means of organisation and struggle*, to take part in the elections with the following *minimum* programme.³⁸⁴

Written on about May 10, 1880

First published in *Le Précurseur*, No. 25,
June 19, 1880

Printed according to *L'Égalité*,
No. 24, June 30, 1880, checked
with the text of *Le Précurseur*

Translated from the French

^a In *Le Précurseur* the word is omitted.—*Ed.*

^b *Le Précurseur* has here: "above all".—*Ed.*

L'ÉGALITÉ

ORGANE COLLECTIVISTE RÉVOLUTIONNAIRE

PARAISANT LE MERCREDI

ABONNEMENTS : 1 an, 6 fr. 6 mois, 4 fr. 3 mois, 1 fr. 50 1 mois, 50 cent.	BUREAUX : 28, RUE ROYALE A SAINT-CLOUD Bureaux de vente : 21, rue du Croissant	PRIX DU NUMÉRO : 15 centimes Pour toute la France
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PROGRAMME ÉLECTORAL DES TRAVAILLEURS SOCIALISTES

Considérant,

- Que l'émancipation de la classe productive est celle de tous les êtres humains sans distinction de sexe ni de race ;
 Que les producteurs ne sauraient être libres qu'autant qu'ils seront en possession des moyens de production ;
 Qu'il n'y a que deux formes sous lesquelles les moyens de production peuvent leur appartenir :
- 1° La forme individuelle qui n'a jamais existé à l'état de fait général et qui est éliminée de plus en plus par le progrès industriel ;
 - 2° La forme collective dont les éléments matériels et intellectuels sont constitués par le développement même de la société capitaliste.

Considérant,

- Que cette appropriation collective ne peut agir que de l'action révolutionnaire de la classe productive — ou prolétariat — organisée en parti politique distinct ;
 Qu'une pareille organisation doit être poursuivie par tous les moyens dont dispose le prolétariat, y compris le sabotage universel transformé ainsi d'instrument de dépense qu'il a été jusqu'ici en instrument d'émancipation ;
 Les travailleurs socialistes français en donnant tout leur effort, dans l'ordre économique, le retour à la collectivité de tous les moyens de production, ont décidé comme moyen d'organisation et de lutte d'entrer dans les élections avec le programme minimum suivant :

A. — Programme politique.

- 1° Abolition de toutes les lois sur la presse, les réunions et les associations et surtout de la loi contre l'Association Internationale des Travailleurs. — Suppression du livret, cette mise en carte de la classe ouvrière, et de tous les articles du Code établissant l'infirmité de l'ouvrier vis-à-vis du patron.
- 2° Suppression du budget des cultes et retour à la nation, y des biens dits de main-morte, meubles et immeubles, appartenant aux corporations religieuses (Décret de la Commune du 2 avril 1875), y compris toutes les annonces industrielles et commerciales de ces corporations.
- 3° Armement général du peuple.
- 4° La Commune maîtresse de son administration et de sa police.

B. — Programme économique.

- 1° Repos du lundi ou interdiction légale pour les employeurs de faire travailler le lundi. — Réduction légale de la journée de travail à 8 heures pour les adultes. — Interdiction du travail des enfants dans les ateliers privés au-dessous de 14 ans, et de 14 à 18 ans, réduction légale de la journée de travail à 6 heures.
- 2° Minimum légal des salaires, déterminé, chaque année, d'après le prix local des denrées.
- 3° Égalité de salaire pour les travailleurs des deux sexes.
- 4° Instruction scientifique et technologique de tous les enfants, mise pour leur entretien à la charge de la société représentée par l'État et par les Communes.
- 5° Suppression de toute intrusion des employeurs dans l'administration des caisses ouvrières de secours mutuels, de prévoyance, etc., restituées à la gestion exclusive des ouvriers.
- 6° Responsabilité des patrons en matière d'accidents, garantie par un cautionnement versé par l'employeur, et proportionné au nombre des ouvriers employés et aux dangers que présente l'industrie.

L'Égalité, No. 24, June 30, 1880, containing Marx's "Preamble to the Programme of the French Workers' Party"

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels
 TO THE MEETING IN GENEVA HELD
 TO COMMEMORATE THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY
 OF THE POLISH REVOLUTION OF 1830³⁸⁵

Citizens!

After the first partition of their country, Poles who had left their fatherland crossed the Atlantic in order to defend the great American republic, which had just come into being.³⁸⁶ Kościuszko fought side by side with Washington. In 1794, when the French Revolution was resisting the coalition forces with difficulty, the glorious Polish revolt deflected danger away from it.³⁸⁷ Poland lost its independence, but the Revolution survived. The defeated Poles joined the army of the sans-culottes and helped to smash feudal Europe.³⁸⁸ Finally, in 1830, when Tsar Nicholas and the Prussian King^a sought to carry out their plans to restore the Legitimist monarchy with a new attack on France, the Polish Revolution,³⁸⁹ whose memory you are celebrating today, blocked their path: "Order was restored in Warsaw."

The cry "Long live Poland!" which then resounded throughout Western Europe was not merely an expression of sympathy and admiration for the patriotic fighters who were crushed with brutal force—with this cry men hailed the people whose revolts all ended so unhappily for itself but always halted the advance of the counter-revolution, the people whose best sons never ceased to fight the struggle of resistance by everywhere going into battle under the banner of the popular revolutions. On the other hand, the partition of Poland consolidated the Holy Alliance, which served as a disguise for the Tsar's hegemony over all the governments of Europe. Thus the cry "Long live Poland!" has

^a Frederick William III.—*Ed.*

really meant: Death to the Holy Alliance, death to the military despotism of Russia, Prussia and Austria, death to Mongol rule over modern society.

Since 1830, when the bourgeoisie in France and England more or less took power in their hands, the proletarian movement began to grow. Since 1840 the propertied classes of England were already obliged to resort to force of arms to resist the Chartist Party, this first militant organisation of the working class. Then in 1846 in the last corner of independent Poland, Cracow, the first political revolution to proclaim socialist demands broke out.³⁹⁰ From that time on, Poland forfeited all the ostensible sympathies of the whole of Europe.^a

In 1847 the first international congress of the proletariat³⁹¹ met secretly in London. One outcome of this congress was the writing of the *Communist Manifesto*, which ended with the new revolutionary watchword: "Working Men of All Countries, Unite!" Poland had its representatives at this congress, and at a public meeting in Brussels³⁹² the famous Lelewel and his supporters declared their adhesion to the resolutions of the congress.—In 1848 and 1849 numerous Poles served in the revolutionary German, Italian, Hungarian and Romanian armies, distinguishing themselves as soldiers and commanders.³⁹³ Although the socialist aspirations of this age were drowned in the bloodbath of the June days,³⁹⁴ the revolution of 1848 nevertheless—and this should not be forgotten—turned Europe for a moment into one community by seizing it almost entirely with its flame, and in this way prepared the ground for the International Working Men's Association. The Polish insurrection of 1863,³⁹⁵ by giving rise to a joint protest of English and French workers at the international machinations of their governments, formed the starting point for the International, which was founded with the participation of Polish exiles. Finally, the Paris Commune³⁹⁶ found its true champions among the Polish refugees and after its fall, it was sufficient to be a Pole to be shot by the war tribunals in Versailles.

Thus outside the borders of their country the Poles have played a major part in the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat; in this struggle they were predominantly its international combat force.

May this struggle develop among the Polish people itself, may our propaganda and the refugee press^b support it, and may it unite with

^a The Polish pamphlet has here: "property-owning Europe".—*Ed.*

^b The Polish pamphlet has: "revolutionary press".—*Ed.*

the unequalled^a endeavours of our Russian brothers; this will be yet another reason to echo the cry of old: "Long live Poland!" Fraternal Greetings!

London, November 27, 1880

(Signed) *Karl Marx, Frederick Engels,
Paul Lafargue, F. Lessner^b*

First published in *Le Précurseur*, No. 49,
December 4, 1880

Printed according to the newspaper, checked with the text of the Polish pamphlet *Sprawozdanie z międzynarodowego zebrania zwołanego w 50-letnią rocznicę listopadowego powstania*, Geneva, 1881

Translated from the French

^a This word is omitted in the Polish pamphlet.—*Ed*

^b The Polish pamphlet further has: "Former members of the General Council of the International Working Men's Association".—*Ed*

Karl Marx

[DRAFTS OF THE LETTER TO VERA ZASULICH]³⁹⁷[FIRST DRAFT]³⁹⁸

1) In dealing with the genesis of capitalist production I stated that it is founded on "the complete separation of the producer from the means of production" (p. 315, column I, French edition of *Capital*) and that "the basis of this whole development is the *expropriation of the agricultural producer*. To date this has not been accomplished in a radical fashion anywhere except in England... But *all the other countries of Western Europe* are undergoing the same process" (l.c., column II).^a

I thus *expressly* limited the "historical inevitability" of this process³⁹⁹ to the *countries of Western Europe*. And why? Be so kind as to compare Chapter XXXII, where it says:

The "process of elimination transforming individualised and scattered means of production into socially concentrated means of production, of the pigmy property of the many into the huge property of the few, this painful and fearful expropriation of the working people, forms the origin, the genesis of capital... *Private property*, based on personal labour ... will be supplanted by *capitalist private property*, based on the exploitation of the labour of others, on wage labour" (p. 341, column II).^b

Thus, in the final analysis, it is a question of the *transformation of one form of private property into another form of private property*. Since the land in the hands of the Russian peasants has never been *their private property*, how could this development be applicable?

^a Karl Marx, *Le Capital*, Paris, [1872-1875,] p. 315 (see *Capital*, Vol. I, Part VIII, "The So-Called Primitive Accumulation", Chapter XXVI: "The Secret of Primitive Accumulation", present edition, Vol. 35).— *Ed.*

^b *Ibid.*

2) From the historical point of view the only serious argument put forward in favour of the *fatal dissolution* of the *Russian peasants' commune* is this: By going back a long way communal property of a more or less archaic type⁴⁰⁰ may be found throughout Western Europe; everywhere it has disappeared with increasing social progress. Why should it be able to escape the same fate in Russia alone? I reply: because in Russia, thanks to a unique combination of circumstances, the rural commune, still established on a nationwide scale, may gradually detach itself from its primitive features and develop directly as an element of collective production on a nationwide scale. It is precisely thanks to its contemporaneity with capitalist production that it may appropriate the latter's *positive acquisitions* without experiencing all its frightful misfortunes. Russia does not live in isolation from the modern world; neither is it the prey of a foreign invader like the East Indies.

If the Russian admirers of the capitalist system denied the *theoretical* possibility of such a development, I would ask them this question: In order to utilise machines, steam engines, railways, etc., was Russia forced, like the West, to pass through a long incubation period in the engineering industry? Let them explain to me, too, how they managed to introduce in their own country, in the twinkling of an eye, the entire mechanism of exchange (banks, credit institutions, etc.), which it took the West centuries to devise?

If at the time of emancipation the rural communes had first been placed in conditions of normal prosperity; if the immense public debt, mostly paid for at the expense of the peasants, with the other enormous sums provided through the agency of the State (and still at the expense of the peasants) to the "new pillars of society",⁴⁰¹ transformed into capitalists,—if all this expenditure had been applied to further developing the rural commune, no one would today be envisaging the "historical inevitability" of the destruction of the commune: everyone would recognise in it the element of regeneration of Russian society and an element of superiority over the countries still enslaved by the capitalist regime.

Another circumstance favouring the preservation of the Russian commune (by the path of development) is the fact that it is not only contemporaneous with capitalist production but has outlasted the era when this social system still appeared to be intact; that it now finds it, on the contrary, in Western Europe as well as in the United States, engaged in battle both with science, with the

popular masses, and with the very productive forces which it engenders.^a In a word, it finds it in a crisis which will only end in its elimination, in the return of modern societies to the "archaic" type of communal property, a form in which, in the words of an American writer^b quite free from any suspicion of revolutionary tendencies and subsidised in his work by the Washington government, "the new system" towards which modern society tends "will be A REVIVAL IN A SUPERIOR FORM of an archaic social type". So we must not let ourselves to be alarmed at the word "archaic".

But then we would at least have to be familiar with these vicissitudes. We know nothing about them. In one way or another this commune perished in the midst of incessant wars, foreign and internal; it probably died a violent death. When the Germanic tribes came to conquer Italy, Spain, Gaul, etc.,⁴⁰² the commune of the archaic type no longer existed. Yet its *natural viability* is demonstrated by two facts. There are sporadic examples which survived all the vicissitudes of the Middle Ages and have been preserved into our own day, for instance the district of Trier, in my native country. But more importantly, it imprinted its own characteristics so effectively on the commune which replaced it—a commune in which the arable land has become private property, whereas forests, pastures, common lands, etc., still remain communal property—that Maurer,^c when analysing this commune of secondary formation, was able to reconstruct the archaic prototype. Thanks to the characteristic features borrowed from the latter, the new commune introduced by the Germanic peoples in all the countries they invaded was the sole centre of popular liberty and life throughout the Middle Ages.

If we know nothing about the life of the *commune* or about the manner and time of its disappearance after the age of Tacitus, at least we know the starting point, thanks to Julius Caesar.^d In his day the land was already shared out annually, but between the *gentes* and the tribes of the Germanic confederations, and not yet between the individual members of the commune. The *rural commune* in Germany is therefore descended from a more archaic

^a The following passage is crossed out in the manuscript: "In a word, that it has turned into an arena of blatant antagonisms, of periodic crises, conflicts, disasters; that, increasingly blind, it reveals its incompetence; that it is a transitory system of production destined to be eliminated by the return of society..."—Ed.

^b L. H. Morgan, *Ancient Society or Researches in the Lines of Human Progress from Savagery, through Barbarism to Civilisation*, London, 1877, p. 552.—Ed.

^c G. L. von Maurer, *Einleitung zur Geschichte der Mark-, Hof-, Dorf- und Stadt-Verfassung und der öffentlichen Gewalt*, Munich, 1854.—Ed.

^d Gaius Julius Caesar, *Commentarii de bello Gallico*.—Ed.

type; it was the product of a spontaneous development instead of being imported fully developed from Asia. There—in the East Indies—we also encounter it, and always as the *final stage* or final period of the archaic formation.

To assess the possible outcomes from a purely theoretical point of view, that is to say, assuming normal conditions of life, I must now point out certain characteristic features which distinguish the “agricultural commune” from the more archaic types.

Firstly, previous primitive communities are all based on the natural kinship of their members; by breaking this strong but tight bond, the agricultural commune is better able to spread and to withstand contact with strangers.

Next, in this form the house and its complement, the courtyard, are already the private property of the cultivator, whereas long before the introduction of agriculture the communal house was one of the material bases of previous communities.

Finally, although arable land remains communal property, it is divided periodically between the members of the agricultural commune, so that each cultivator tills the fields assigned to him on his own account and appropriates as an individual the fruits thereof, whereas in more archaic communities production took place communally and only the yield was shared out. This primitive type of cooperative or collective production resulted, of course, from the weakness of the isolated individual, and not from the socialisation of the means of production. It is easy to see that the dualism inherent in the “agricultural commune” might endow it with a vigorous life, since on the one hand communal property and all the social relations springing from it make for its solid foundation, whereas the private house, the cultivation of arable land in parcels and the private appropriation of its fruits permit a development of individuality which is incompatible with conditions in more primitive communities.

But it is no less evident that this very dualism might in time become a source of decay. Apart from all the influences of hostile surroundings, the mere gradual accumulation of chattels which begins with wealth in the form of cattle (even admitting wealth in the form of serfs), the increasingly pronounced role which the movable element plays in agriculture itself, and a host of other circumstances inseparable from this accumulation but which it would take me too long to go into here, will eat away at economic and social equality and give rise to a conflict of interests at the very heart of the commune, entailing first the conversion of arable land into private property and ending with the private appropria-

tion of the forests, pastures, common lands, etc., which have already become *communal appendages* of private property.

This is why the "agricultural commune" occurs everywhere as the *most recent type* of the archaic form of societies, and why in the historical development of Western Europe, ancient and modern, the period of the agricultural commune appears as a period of transition from communal property to private property, as a period of transition from the primary form to the secondary one. But does this mean that in all circumstances the development of the "agricultural commune" must follow this path? Not at all. Its constitutive form allows this alternative: either the element of private property which it implies will gain the upper hand over the collective element, or the latter will gain the upper hand over the former. Both these solutions are *a priori* possible, but for either one to prevail over the other it is obvious that quite different historical surroundings are needed.^a All this depends on the historical surroundings in which it finds itself (see p. 10^b).^c

Russia is the sole European country where the "agricultural commune" has kept going on a nationwide scale up to the present day. It is not the prey of a foreign conqueror, as the East Indies, and neither does it lead a life cut off from the modern world. On the one hand, the common ownership of land allows it to transform individualist farming in parcels directly and gradually into collective farming, and the Russian peasants are already practising it in the undivided grasslands; the physical lie of the land invites mechanical cultivation on a large scale; the peasant's familiarity with the contract of *artel*⁴⁰³ facilitates the transition from parcel labour to cooperative labour; and, finally, Russian society, which has so long lived at his expense, owes him the necessary advances for such a transition.^d On the other hand, the

^a This sentence was written by Marx on p. 8 of his manuscript with the indication of the place it referred to ("ad 5*****"). A version of this sentence is also on p. 9 where it was not, probably by mistake, crossed out.— *Ed.*

^b Marx is presumably referring to p. 10 of his manuscript, to the following passage: "The best proof that this development of the 'rural commune'... the most archaic type—collective production and appropriation" (see this volume, p. 357).— *Ed.*

^c The following passage is crossed out in the manuscript: "Coming now to the agrarian commune in Russia, I discount for the time being all the miseries which overwhelm it. I consider only the capacity for further development which its constitutive form and its historical surroundings allow it."— *Ed.*

^d The following passage is crossed out in the manuscript: "Certainly, it would be necessary to begin by placing the commune in a normal state *on its present basis*, on the

contemporaneity of western production, which dominates the world market, allows Russia to incorporate in the commune all the positive acquisitions devised by the capitalist system without passing through its Caudine Forks.⁴⁰⁴

If the spokesmen of the "new pillars of society" were to deny the *theoretical* possibility of the suggested evolution of the modern rural commune, one might ask them: Was Russia forced to pass through a long incubation period in the engineering industry, as was the West, in order to arrive at the machines, the steam engines, the railways, etc.? One would also ask them how they managed to introduce in their own country in the twinkling of an eye the entire mechanism of exchange (banks, joint-stock companies, etc.), which it took the West centuries to devise?

There is one characteristic of the "agricultural commune" in Russia which afflicts it with weakness, hostile in every sense. That is its isolation, the lack of connexion between the life of one commune and that of the others, this *localised microcosm* which is not encountered everywhere as an immanent characteristic of this type but which, wherever it is found, has caused a more or less centralised despotism to arise on top of the communes. The federation of Russian republics of the North proves that this isolation, which seems to have been originally imposed by the vast expanse of the territory, was largely consolidated by the political destinies which Russia had to suffer after the Mongol invasion.⁴⁰⁵ Today it is an obstacle which could easily be eliminated. It would simply be necessary to replace the *volost*,⁴⁰⁶ the government body, with an assembly of peasants elected by the communes themselves, serving as the economic and administrative organ for their interests.

One circumstance very favourable, from the historical point of view, to the preservation of the "agricultural commune" by the path of its further development is the fact that it is not only the contemporary of Western capitalist production and is thus able to appropriate its fruits without subjecting itself to its *modus operandi*, but has outlasted the era when the capitalist system still appeared to be intact; that it now finds it, on the contrary, in Western Europe as well as in the United States, engaged in battle both with the working-class masses, with science, and with the very productive forces which it engenders—in a word, in a crisis which will end in its elimination, in the return of modern societies to a

other hand, since the peasant is everywhere the enemy of too many sudden changes."—*Ed.*

superior form of an "archaic" type of collective property and production.

It goes without saying that the evolution of the commune would be carried out gradually, and that the first step would be to place it in normal conditions on *its present basis*.

Theoretically speaking, then, the Russian "rural commune" can preserve itself by developing its basis, the common ownership of land, and by eliminating the principle of private property which it also implies; it can become a *direct point of departure* for the economic system towards which modern society tends; it can turn over a new leaf without beginning by committing suicide; it can gain possession of the fruits with which capitalist production has enriched mankind, without passing through the capitalist regime, a regime which, considered solely from the point of view of its possible *duration* hardly counts in the life of society. But we must descend from pure theory to the Russian reality.^a

3) To expropriate the agricultural producers it is not necessary to chase them off their land, as was done in England and elsewhere; nor is it necessary to abolish communal property by means of an ukase. Go and seize from the peasants the product of their agricultural labour beyond a certain measure, and despite your gendarmerie and your army you will not succeed in chaining them to their fields! In the last years of the Roman Empire, the provincial decurions⁴⁰⁷—not peasants but landowners—fled from their houses, abandoning their lands, even selling themselves into slavery, all in order to get rid of a property which was no longer anything more than an official pretext for extorting money from them, mercilessly and pitilessly.

From the time of the so-called emancipation of the peasants the Russian commune has been placed by the State in abnormal economic conditions and ever since then it has never ceased to overwhelm it with the social forces concentrated in its hands. Exhausted by its fiscal exactions, the commune became an inert thing, easily exploited by trade, landed property and usury. This oppression from without unleashed in the heart of the commune

^a This paragraph is to be found on p. 10 of Marx's manuscript with the exact indication to transfer it to p. 7 ("ad p. 7"). On p. 7 of the manuscript the following passage is crossed out: "If we descend from theory to reality no one can conceal the fact that the Russian commune is today faced with a conspiracy of interests and powerful forces. Apart from its incessant exploitation by the State, which exists at the expense of the peasants, the establishment of a certain part of the capitalist system—finance, stock exchange, bank, railway construction speculation, commerce".—*Ed.*

itself the conflict of interests already present, and rapidly developed the seeds of decay. But that is not all. At the expense of the peasants the State has forced, as in a hothouse, some branches of the Western capitalist system which, without developing the productive forces of agriculture in any way, are most calculated to facilitate and precipitate the theft of its fruits by unproductive middlemen. It has thus cooperated in the enrichment of a new capitalist vermin, sucking the already impoverished blood of the "rural commune".^a

...In a word, *the State* has given its assistance to the precocious development of the technical and economic means most calculated to facilitate and precipitate the exploitation of the agricultural producer, that is to say, of the largest productive force in Russia, and to enrich the "new pillars of society".

5) This combination of destructive influences, unless smashed by a powerful reaction, is bound to lead to the death of the rural commune.

But one wonders why all these interests (including the large industries placed under government protection), seeing that they are doing so well out of the current state of the rural commune—why would they deliberately conspire to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs? Precisely because they sense that this "current state" is no longer tenable, and that consequently the current method of exploiting it is now outdated. Already the poverty of the agricultural producer has affected the land, which is becoming barren. Good harvests succeed famines by turns. The average of the last ten years showed agricultural production not simply standing still but actually declining. Finally, for the first time Russia now has to import cereals instead of exporting them. So there is no time to lose. There must be an end to it. It is necessary to make an intermediate rural class of the more or less prosperous minority of the peasants, and turn the majority into proletarians, without mincing matters. To this end the spokesmen of the "new pillars of society" denounce the very wounds which they have inflicted on the commune as being as many natural symptoms of its decrepitude.

Disregarding all the miseries which are at present overwhelming the Russian "rural commune", and considering only its constitutive form and its historical surroundings, it is first of all evident

^a The passage from the words "At the expense of the peasants..." till the end of the paragraph was transferred by Marx to page 7 of the manuscript from page 10 with a special mark ("ad p. 7").—Ed

that one of its fundamental characteristics, communal ownership of the land, forms the natural basis of collective production and appropriation. What is more, the Russian peasant's familiarity with the contract of *artel* would ease the transition from parcel labour to collective labour, which he already practises to a certain extent in the undivided grasslands, in land drainage and other undertakings of general interest. But for collective labour to supplant parcel labour—the source of private appropriation—in agriculture in the strict sense, two things are required: the economic need for such a change, and the material conditions to bring it about.

As for the economic need, it will be felt by the "rural commune" itself from the moment it is placed in normal conditions, that is to say, as soon as the burdens weighing on it are removed and its cultivable land has assumed a normal extent. Gone are the days when Russian agriculture called for nothing but land and its parcel cultivator, armed with more or less primitive tools. These days have passed all the more swiftly as the oppression of the agricultural producer infects and lays waste his fields. What he needs now is cooperative labour, organised on a large scale. Moreover, will the peasant who lacks^a the necessary things for cultivating two or three *dessiatines*^b be better off with ten times the number of *dessiatines*?

But where are the tools, the manure, the agronomic methods, etc., all the means that are indispensable to collective labour, to come from? It is precisely this point which demonstrates the great superiority of the Russian "rural commune" over archaic communes of the same type. Alone in Europe it has kept going on a vast, nationwide scale. It thus finds itself in historical surroundings in which its contemporaneity with capitalist production endows it with all the conditions necessary for collective labour. It is in a position to incorporate all the positive acquisitions devised by the capitalist system without passing through its Caudine Forks. The physical lie of the land in Russia invites agricultural exploitation with the aid of machines, organised on a vast scale and managed by cooperative labour. As for the costs of establishment—the intellectual and material costs—Russian society owes this much to the "rural commune", at whose expense it has lived for so long and to which it must still look for its "element of regeneration".

^a Crossed out in the manuscript: "the necessary capital, tools, horses and other necessary technical means for cultivating two or three *dessiatines*".—*Ed*

^b Marx transliterated this Russian measure of land (=approximately 2.7 acres) in Latin characters.—*Ed*

The best proof that this development of the "rural commune" is in keeping with the historical trend of our age is the fatal crisis which capitalist production has undergone in the European and American countries where it has reached its highest peak, a crisis that will end in its destruction, in the return of modern society to a higher form of the most archaic type—collective production and appropriation.

Since so many different interests, and especially those of the "new pillars of society" erected under the benign rule of Alexander II, have gained a good deal from the *present state* of the "rural commune", why would they deliberately plot to bring about its death? Why do their spokesmen denounce the wounds inflicted on it as so much irrefutable proof of its natural decrepitude? Why do they wish to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs?

Simply because the economic facts, which it would take me too long to analyse here, have revealed the mystery that the *current state of the commune is no longer tenable* and that soon, by sheer force of circumstances, the current method of exploiting the mass of the people will no longer be in fashion. So new measures are needed—and the innovation stealthily introduced in widely differing forms always comes down to this: abolish communal property, make an intermediate rural class of the more or less prosperous minority of the peasants, and turn the majority into proletarians, without mincing matters.

On the one hand, the "rural commune" has nearly been brought to the point of extinction; on the other, a powerful conspiracy is keeping watch with a view to administering the final blow. To save the Russian commune, a Russian revolution is needed. For that matter, the holders of political and social power are doing their very best to prepare the masses for just such a disaster.

And the historical situation of the Russian "rural commune" is unparalleled! Alone in Europe, it has kept going not merely as scattered debris such as the rare and curious miniatures in a state of the archaic type which one could still come across until quite recently in the West, but as the virtually predominant form of popular life covering an immense empire. If it possesses in the communal ownership of the soil the basis of collective appropriation, its historical surroundings, its contemporaneity with capitalist production, lend it all the material conditions of communal labour on a vast scale. It is thus in a position to incorporate all the positive acquisitions devised by the capitalist system without passing through its Caudine Forks. It can gradually replace parcel farming with large-scale agriculture assisted by machines, which

the physical lie of the land in Russia invites. It can thus become *the direct point of departure* for the economic system towards which modern society tends, and turn over a new leaf without beginning by committing suicide. On the contrary, it would be necessary to begin by putting it on a normal footing.

But opposing it is landed property controlling almost half the land—and the best land, at that—not to mention the domains of the State. That is where the preservation of the “rural commune” by way of its further development merges with the general trend of Russian society, of whose regeneration it is the price.

Even from the economic point of view alone, Russia can emerge from its agrarian *cul-de-sac* by developing its rural commune; it would try in vain to get out of it by capitalised farming on the English model, to which all the social conditions of the country are inimical.^a

In order to be able to develop, it needs above all to live, and there is no escaping the fact that at the moment the life of the “rural commune” is in jeopardy.

Apart from the reaction of any other destructive element from hostile surroundings, the gradual growth of chattels in the hands of private families, e.g. their wealth in the form of cattle, and sometimes even slaves or serfs—this sort of private accumulation is, in itself, enough to eat away at primitive economic and social equality in the long run, and give rise in the very heart of the commune to a conflict of interests which first undermines the communal ownership of arable land and ends by removing that of the forests, pastures, common lands, etc., after first converting them into a *communal appendage* of private property.

4) The history of the decline of primitive communities (it would be a mistake to place them all on the same level; as in geological formations, these historical forms contain a whole series of primary, secondary, tertiary types, etc.) has still to be written. All we have seen so far are some rather meagre outlines. But in any event the research has advanced far enough to establish that: (1) the vitality of primitive communities was incomparably greater

^a This paragraph is taken from the third draft of the letter to Vera Zasulich where Marx indicated with a mark “ad 12□” the necessity of transferring this paragraph to p. 12 of the first draft, while on p. 12 he marked with □ the exact place of insertion. Then the following text is crossed out on p. 12 of the manuscript: “Therefore it is only in the midst of a general uprising that the isolation of the rural commune, the lack of connexion between the life of one commune and that of the others, in a word the *localised microcosm* which deprives it of historical initiative, can be broken...”—*Ed.*

than that of Semitic, Greek, Roman, etc. societies, and, *a fortiori*, that of modern capitalist societies; (2) the causes of their decline stem from economic facts which prevented them from passing a certain stage of development, from historical surroundings not at all analogous with the historical surroundings of the Russian commune of today.

When reading the histories of primitive communities written by bourgeois writers it is necessary to be on one's guard. They do not even shrink from falsehoods. Sir Henry Maine, for example, who was a keen collaborator of the British Government in carrying out the violent destruction of the Indian communes, hypocritically assures us that all the government's noble efforts to support the communes were thwarted by the spontaneous forces of economic laws!^a

5) You know perfectly well that today the very existence of the Russian commune has been jeopardised by a conspiracy of powerful interests; crushed by the direct extortions of the State, fraudulently exploited by the "capitalist" intruders, merchants, etc., and the land "owners", it is undermined, into the bargain, by the village usurers, by conflicts of interests provoked in its very heart by the situation prepared for it.

To expropriate the agricultural producers it is not necessary to chase them off their land, as was done in England and elsewhere; nor is it necessary to abolish communal property by an ukase. On the contrary: go and seize the *product* of their agricultural labour beyond a certain point and, despite all the gendarmes at your command, you will not succeed in keeping them on the land! In the last years of the Roman Empire the provincial decurions—large landowners—left their lands, becoming vagabonds, even selling themselves into slavery, simply in order to get rid of a "property" which was no more than an official pretext for extorting money from them.

At the same time as the commune is bled dry and tortured, its land rendered barren and poor, the literary lackeys of the "new pillars of society" ironically depict the wounds inflicted on it as so many symptoms of its spontaneous decrepitude. They allege that it is dying a natural death and they would be doing a good job by shortening its agony. As far as this is concerned, it is no longer a matter of solving a problem; it is simply a matter of beating an enemy. To save the Russian commune, a Russian revolution is needed. For that matter, the government and the "new pillars of

^a H. S. Maine, *Village-Communities in the East and West*, London, 1871.—Ed.

society" are doing their best to prepare the masses for just such a disaster. If revolution comes at the opportune moment, if it concentrates all its forces so as to allow the rural commune full scope, the latter will soon develop as an element of regeneration in Russian society and an element of superiority over the countries enslaved by the capitalist system.

[SECOND DRAFT]⁴⁰⁸

1) I showed in *Capital* that the metamorphosis of *feudal production* into *capitalist production* had its starting point in the *expropriation of the producer*, and more particularly that "*the basis of this whole development is the expropriation of the agricultural producer*" (p. 315 of the French ed.). I continue: "To date this (the expropriation of the agricultural producer) has not been accomplished in a radical fashion anywhere except in England ... *all the other countries of Western Europe* are undergoing the same process" (l.c.).

So I expressly *limited* this "historical inevitability" to the "*countries of Western Europe*". In order to eliminate the slightest doubt about my thinking, I state on p. 341:

"*Private property*, as the antithesis to social, collective property, exists only where ... *the external conditions of labour* belong to *private individuals*. But according as these private individuals are labourers or not labourers, private property changes its form."

Thus the process which I analysed has replaced one form of the private and parcelled property of the labourers with the capitalist property of a tiny minority (l.c., p. 342),^a *caused one kind of property to be substituted for another*. How could this be applicable to Russia, where land is not and never has been the "private property" of the agricultural producer? *So the only conclusion* which they would be justified in drawing from the progress of things in the West is this: to establish capitalist production in Russia it would be necessary to start by abolishing communal property and expropriating the peasants, i.e. the great mass of the people. This, by the way, is the wish of the Russian liberals,^b but does their *wish* prove

^a See this volume, p. 346.—*Ed.*

^b Crossed out in the manuscript: "who wish to naturalise capitalist production in their country and, consistent with themselves, transform the great mass of peasants into simple wage-earners".—*Ed.*

any more than the wish of Catherine II to transplant into Russian soil the Western guild system of the Middle Ages?⁴⁰⁹

1) Thus the expropriation of the agricultural producers in the West served to "transform the private and parcelled property of the labourers" into the private and concentrated property of the capitalists.⁴¹⁰ But none the less it is the substitution of one form of private property for another form of private property. In Russia, on the contrary, it would be a question of substituting capitalist property for communist property.

2) From the historical point of view there is only one serious argument in favour of *the fatal dissolution* of Russian communist property. It is this: communist property existed everywhere throughout Western Europe; everywhere it has disappeared with social progress. Why would it escape the same fate in Russia alone?

Certainly! If capitalist production is to establish its sway in Russia, the great majority of the peasants, i.e. of the Russian people, must be converted into wage-earners and consequently expropriated by the advance abolition of their communist property. But in any event, the Western precedent would not prove anything at all!^a

2) The Russian "Marxists" of whom you speak are quite unknown to me.⁴¹¹ To the best of my knowledge, the Russians with whom I am in personal contact hold diametrically opposed views.⁴¹²

3) From the historical point of view the only serious argument in favour of *the fatal dissolution* of Russian communal property is this: communal property existed everywhere throughout Western Europe, yet everywhere it has disappeared with social progress; how would it be able to escape the same fate in Russia?

In the first place, in Western Europe the death of communal property and the birth of capitalist production are separated from one another by an immense interval^b embracing a whole series of successive economic revolutions and evolutions, of which capitalist production is merely the most recent. On the one hand, it has resulted in a wondrous development of the social productive forces^c; but on the other hand, it has revealed its own

^a The crossed-out version of this sentence reads: "...does not prove anything at all as regards 'the historical inevitability' of this process".— *Ed.*

^b Then there follows a sentence crossed out in the manuscript: "The death of communal property did not give birth to capitalist production".— *Ed.*

^c Crossed out in the manuscript: "On the other hand, although it only dates from yesterday, it has already revealed its purely transitory nature, and, even more, the incompatibility between itself and the life of society".— *Ed.*

incompatibility with the very forces which it engenders. Its history is henceforth no more than a history of antagonisms, crises, conflicts and disasters. In the last place, it has revealed to the entire world, except those blinded by self-interest, its purely transitory nature. The nations in which it has attained its highest peak in Europe and America aspire only to break its chains^a by replacing capitalist production with cooperative production, and capitalist property with a *higher form* of the archaic type of property, i.e. communist^b property.

If Russia were isolated in the world, if it therefore had to work out for itself the economic conquests which Western Europe has only acquired by passing through a long series of evolutions, from the existence of its primitive communities to its present state, there would be no doubt, at least in my eyes, that its communities would be fatally condemned to perish with the progressive development of Russian society. But the situation of the Russian commune is absolutely different from that of the primitive communities of the West. Russia is the only country in Europe where communal property has kept going on a vast, nationwide scale, but at the same time Russia exists in modern historical surroundings, it is contemporary with a higher culture, it is linked to a world market dominated by capitalist production. By appropriating the positive results of this mode of production, it is thus in a position to develop and transform the still archaic form of its rural commune, instead of destroying it. (Let me note in passing that the form of communist property found in Russia is the most modern form of the archaic type, which has itself passed through a whole series of evolutions.) If the supporters of the capitalist system in Russia deny the feasibility of such a plan, let them prove that to exploit machines Russia was forced to pass through the incubation period of mechanical production! Let them explain to me how they succeeded in introducing in their own country in a few days, so to speak, the mechanism of exchange (banks, credit institutions, etc.), which it took the West centuries to devise.^c

4) What is threatening the life of the Russian commune is neither

^a Crossed out in the manuscript: "of capitalist production and capitalist property, which corresponds to it, and appropriate the positive results of capitalist production by returning to a higher form of an archaic type".— *Ed.*

^b Originally, for the word "communist" Marx had written "collective".— *Ed.*

^c Further, the following passage is crossed out in the manuscript: "Although the capitalist system is on the decline in the West and is approaching the time when it will be no more than an 'archaic' formation, its Russian supporters are..."— *Ed.*

historical inevitability nor a theory; it is oppression by the State and exploitation by capitalist intruders, who have been made powerful at the expense of the peasants by the very same State.

4) The archaic or primary formation of our globe itself contains a series of layers of differing ages, one superimposed on the other; in the same way, the archaic form of society reveals to us a series of different types, marking progressive epochs. The Russian rural commune belongs to the most recent type of this chain. Under it, the agricultural producer already has private ownership of the house in which he lives and the garden which forms the complement to it. This is the first element of decay in the archaic form, an element unknown in older forms. On the other hand, the latter are all based on the natural relations of kinship between the members of the commune, whereas the type to which the Russian commune belongs, released from this tight bond, is thereby capable of further development. The isolation of rural communes, the lack of connexion between the life of one and the life of another, this localised microcosm is not encountered everywhere as an immanent characteristic of the last of the primitive types; but everywhere it is found it always gives rise to a central despotism over and above the communes. In Russia it seems to me an easy matter to do away with this primitive isolation, imposed by the vast extent of the territory, as soon as the government shackles have been cast off.

I am now coming to the heart of the matter. There is no denying that the archaic type, to which the Russian commune belongs, conceals an intimate dualism which, given certain historical conditions, might entail ruin. The ownership of the land is communal, but each peasant tills and uses his field on his own account, just like the small peasant in the West. Communal ownership, parcel farming of the land—this combination, useful in more distant times, becomes dangerous in our own age.^a On the one hand, the possession of chattels, an element which is playing an increasingly important part in agriculture itself, progressively differentiates the fortune of the members of the commune and there gives rise to a conflict of interests, especially under fiscal pressure from the State; on the other hand, the economic superiority of communal property, as the basis of cooperative and combined labour, is lost. But it should not be forgotten that in

^a Crossed out in the manuscript: "especially under fiscal pressure from the State", "especially in a society in which exchange is already heavily commercial".—*Ed.*

farming the undivided grasslands the Russian peasants already practise the collective method, that their familiarity with the contract of *artel* would greatly facilitate the transition from parcel farming to collective farming, that the physical lie of the land in Russia encourages combined mechanised farming on a large scale, and that finally Russian society, which has so long lived at the expense of the rural commune, owes it the first advances necessary for this change. Of course, it is only a question of a gradual change which would commence by placing the commune on a normal footing on its *present* basis.

5) Leaving aside any more or less theoretical question, I need not tell you that today the very existence of the Russian commune is threatened by a conspiracy of powerful interests. A certain kind of capitalism, nourished at the expense of the peasants through the agency of the State, has risen up in opposition to the commune; it is in its interest to crush the commune. It is also in the interest of the landed proprietors to set up the more or less well-off peasants as an intermediate agrarian class, and to turn the poor peasants—that is to say the majority—into simple wage-earners. This will mean cheap labour! And how would a commune be able to resist, crushed by the extortions of the State, robbed by business, exploited by the landowners, undermined from within by usury?

[THIRD DRAFT]⁴¹³

Dear Citizen,

To deal thoroughly with the questions posed in your letter of February 16 I would have to go into matters in detail and break off urgent work, but the concise exposé which I have the honour of presenting to you will, I trust, suffice to dispel any misunderstandings with regard to my so-called theory.

I. In analysing the genesis of capitalist production I say: "At the core of the capitalist system, therefore, lies the complete separation of the producer from the means of production ... the basis of this whole development is *the expropriation of the agricultural producer*. To date this has not been accomplished in a radical fashion anywhere except in England... *But all the other countries of Western Europe* are undergoing the same process" (*Capital*, French ed., p. 315).

Hence the "historical inevitability" of this process is *expressly* limited to the *countries of Western Europe*. The cause of that limitation is indicated in the following passage from Chapter XXXII: "*Private property, based on personal labour ... will be supplanted by capitalist*

private property, based on the exploitation of the labour of others, on wage labour" (l.c., p. 341).

In this Western movement, therefore, what is taking place is the *transformation of one form of private property into another form of private property*. In the case of the Russian peasants, *their communal property* would, on the contrary, have to be *transformed into private property*. Whether one asserts or denies the inevitability of that transformation, the reasons for and against have nothing to do with my analysis of the genesis of the capitalist system. At the very most one might infer from it that, given the present state of the great majority of Russian peasants, the act of converting them into small proprietors would merely be the prelude to their rapid expropriation.

II. The most serious argument which has been put forward against the Russian commune amounts to this:

Go back to the origins of Western societies and everywhere you will find communal ownership of the land; with social progress it has everywhere given way to private property; so it will not be able to escape the same fate in Russia alone.

I will not take this argument into account except in so far as it is based on European experiences. As for the East Indies, for example, everyone except Sir Henry Maine and others of his ilk realises that the suppression of communal landownership out there was nothing but an act of English vandalism, pushing the native people not forwards but backwards.

Primitive communities are not all cast from the same die. On the contrary, taken all together, they form a series of social groupings which differ in both type and age, marking successive stages of evolution. One of these types, which convention terms *the agricultural commune*, is also that of the *Russian commune*. Its counterpart in the West is the *Germanic commune*, which is of very recent date. It did not yet exist in the days of Julius Caesar, nor did it exist any longer when the Germanic tribes came to conquer Italy, Gaul, Spain, etc. In Julius Caesar's day there was already an annual share-out of the arable land between groups, the *gentes* and the *tribes*, but not yet between the individual families of a commune; farming was probably also carried out in groups, communally. On Germanic soil itself this community of the archaic type turned, by natural development, into the *agricultural commune* as described by Tacitus. From that time on we lose sight of it. It perished obscurely amidst incessant wars and migrations; perhaps it died a violent death. But its natural viability is proved by two incontestable facts. Some scattered examples of this model survived all the vicissitudes of the Middle Ages and have been

preserved into our own day, for instance the district of Trier in my own country. But, more importantly, we find the imprint of this "agricultural commune" so clearly traced on the commune that succeeded it that Maurer, in analysing the latter, was able to reconstruct the former. The new commune, in which arable land belongs to its cultivators as *private property*, at the same time as forests, pastures, common lands, etc., remain *communal property*, was introduced by the Germanic peoples in all the countries which they conquered. Thanks to the characteristics borrowed from its prototype, it became the sole centre of popular liberty and life throughout the Middle Ages.

The "rural commune" is also found in Asia, among the Afghans, etc., but everywhere it appears as the *most recent type* and, so to speak, as the last word in the *archaic formation* of societies. It is in order to emphasise this fact that I went into the Germanic commune in some detail.

We must now consider the most characteristic features distinguishing the "agricultural commune" from more archaic communities.

1) All other communities are based on blood relations between their members. One cannot enter them unless one is a natural or adopted relative. Their structure is that of a family tree. The "agricultural commune" was the first social grouping of free men not held together by blood-ties.

2) In the agricultural commune, the house and its complement, the courtyard, belonged to the agricultural producer as an individual. The *communal house* and *collective dwelling*, on the other hand, were the economic basis of more primitive communities, long before the introduction of the pastoral or agrarian way of life. True, one finds agricultural communes where the houses, despite having ceased to be collective dwelling places, periodically change owners. Individual usufruct is thus combined with communal property. But such communes still carry their birthmark: they are in a state of transition between a more archaic community and the agricultural commune proper.

3) The arable land, inalienable and communal property, is periodically divided between members of the agricultural commune in such a way that everyone tills the fields assigned to him on his own account and appropriates the fruits thereof as an individual. In more primitive communities the work is carried out communally and the communal product is shared out according as it is required for consumption, excepting the portion reserved for reproduction.

One can understand that the *dualism* inherent in the constitution of the agricultural commune is able to endow it with a vigorous life. Freed from the strong but tight bonds of natural kinship, communal ownership of the land and the social relations stemming from it guarantee it a solid foundation, at the same time as the house and the courtyard, the exclusive domain of the individual family, parcel farming and the private appropriation of its fruits give a scope to individuality incompatible with the organism of more primitive communities.

But it is no less evident that in time this very dualism might turn into the germ of decomposition. Apart from all the malign influences from without, the commune carries the elements of corruption in its own bosom. Private landed property has already slipped into it in the guise of a house with its rural courtyard, which can be turned into a stronghold from which to launch the assault on the communal land. That is nothing new. But the vital thing is parcel labour as a source of private appropriation. It gives way to the accumulation of personal chattels, for example cattle, money and sometimes even slaves or serfs. This movable property, beyond the control of the commune, subject to individual exchanges in which guile and accident have their chance, will weigh more and more heavily on the entire rural economy. There we have the destroyer of primitive economic and social equality. It introduces heterogeneous elements, provoking in the bosom of the commune conflicts of interests and passions designed first to encroach on the communal ownership of arable lands, and then that of the forests, pastures, common lands, etc., which once converted into *communal appendages* of private property will fall to it in the long run.

As the last phase of the primitive formation of society, the agricultural commune is, at the same time, a transitional stage leading to the secondary formation, and hence marks the transition from a society founded on communal property to a society founded on private property. The secondary formation, of course, includes the series of societies resting on slavery and serfdom.

But does this mean to say that the historical career of the agricultural commune must inevitably come to such an end? Not at all. Its innate dualism admits of an alternative: either the property element will gain the upper hand over the collective element, or vice versa. It all depends on the historical environment in which the commune is placed.

Let us discount for the time being all the miseries besetting the

agricultural commune in Russia and consider only its capacity for further development. It occupies a unique position, without precedent in history. Alone in Europe, it is still the predominant organic form of rural life throughout an immense empire. The common ownership of land provides it with the natural basis for collective appropriation, and its historical setting, its contemporaneity with capitalist production, lends it—fully developed—the material conditions for cooperative labour organised on a vast scale. It can thus incorporate the positive acquisitions devised by the capitalist system without passing through its Caudine Forks. It can gradually replace parcel farming with combined agriculture assisted by machines, which the physical lie of the land in Russia invites. Having been first restored to a normal footing in its present form, it may become the *direct starting point* for the economic system towards which modern society tends and turn over a new leaf without beginning by committing suicide.^a

The English themselves attempted some such thing in the East Indies; all they managed to do was to ruin native agriculture and double the number and severity of the famines.

But what about the anathema which affects the commune—its isolation, the lack of connexion between the life of one commune and that of the others, this *localised microcosm* which has hitherto prevented it from taking any historical initiative? It would vanish amidst a general turmoil in Russian society.

The familiarity of the Russian peasant with the *artel* would especially facilitate the transition from parcel labour to cooperative labour, which he already applies anyway, to a certain extent, in the tending of the meadows and such communal undertakings as the land drainage, etc. A quite archaic peculiarity, the pet aversion of modern agronomists, still tends in this direction. If on arriving in any country you find that the arable land shows traces of a strange dismemberment, lending it the appearance of a chessboard composed of small fields, you need be in no doubt that it is the domain of an extinct agricultural commune! Its members, without having studied the theory of ground rent, perceived that the same

^a The following passage is crossed out in the manuscript: "But opposing it is landed property, holding in its clutches almost half the land—and the best land, at that—not to mention the domains of the State. That is where the preservation of the agricultural commune by way of its further development merges with the general trend of Russian society, whose regeneration can only be achieved at this price. Even from the economic point of view alone, Russia would try in vain to escape from the impasse by turning to capitalist farming on the English model, to which all the social conditions of the country are inimical."—*Ed.*

amount of labour, expended on fields differing in natural fertility and location, will give differing yields. To spread the fortunes of labour more evenly, they therefore divided the land first into a certain number of areas, determined by the natural and economic divergences of the soil, and then broke up all these larger areas into as many parcels as there were labourers. Then each man was given a plot of land in each area. It goes without saying that this arrangement, perpetuated by the Russian commune into our own day, is at odds with the requirements of agronomy. Apart from other disadvantages, it entails a waste of energy and time. Nevertheless, it favours the transition to collective farming, with which it seems to be so much at odds at first glance. The parcel...^a

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^a The manuscript breaks off here.— *Ed.*

Karl Marx

[LETTER TO VERA ZASULICH]⁴¹⁴

London, March 8, 1881
41 Maitland Park Road, N.W.

Dear Citizen,

A nervous complaint which has assailed me periodically over the last ten years has prevented me from replying any sooner to your letter of February 16. I am sorry that I cannot provide you with a concise exposé, intended for publication, of the question you have done me the honour of putting to me. Months ago I promised the St. Petersburg Committee⁴¹⁵ to let them have a piece on the same subject. I hope, however, that a few lines will suffice to dispel any doubts you may harbour as to the misunderstanding in regard to my so-called theory.

In analysing the genesis of capitalist production I say:

"At the core of the capitalist system, therefore, lies the complete separation of the producer from the means of production ... the basis of this whole development is the *expropriation of the agricultural producer*. To date this has not been accomplished in a radical fashion anywhere except in England... But *all the other countries of Western Europe* are undergoing the same process" (*Capital*, French ed., p. 315).

Hence the "historical inevitability" of this process is *expressly* limited to the *countries of Western Europe*. The cause of that limitation is indicated in the following passage from Chapter XXXII:

"*Private property, based on personal labour ... will be supplanted by capitalist private property, based on the exploitation of the labour of others, on wage labour*" (l.c., p. 341).

In this Western movement, therefore, what is taking place is the *transformation of one form of private property into another form of*

private property. In the case of the Russian peasants, *their communal property* would, on the contrary, have to be *transformed into private property*.

Hence the analysis provided in *Capital* does not adduce reasons either for or against the viability of the rural commune, but the special study I have made of it, and the material for which I drew from original sources, has convinced me that this commune is the fulcrum of social regeneration in Russia, but in order that it may function as such, it would first be necessary to eliminate the deleterious influences which are assailing it from all sides, and then ensure for it the normal conditions of spontaneous development.

I have the honour to be, dear Citizen,

Yours very faithfully,

Karl Marx

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script

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