MARXIST-LENINIST READING HUB CURRICULUM

STAGE 2: INTERMEDIATE

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FOREWORD

The *Marxist-Leninist Reading Hub Curriculum* is crafted to guide readers toward a foundational understanding of Marxism-Leninism, covering topics like Philosophy, Political Economy, Social Science, and more. This selection is meant to be a starting point for those new to, or those trying to cover the fundamentals of, Marxism-Leninism. When first studying Marxism-Leninism, there is so much to learn, from the development of Socialism around the world, colonialism, the exploitation of Africa, fascism, and many more, our understanding of these various topics can be improved greatly by first establishing a solid foundation in Marxism-Leninism.

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Stage 2: Intermediate builds on top of the topics from *Stage 1: Introduction*, but in longer form, and more in-depth.

Socialism: Utopian and Scientific starts this Stage to show how Socialism, once a utopian and idealistic tradition, came to be a scientific one. This text explains the faults of utopian Socialism, some of its most notable thinkers, and how Dialectical Materialism gave a sturdy foothold to Socialism in real world application.

The State and Revolution dives further into the topic of the State. It explains what the State is, what role it plays in class struggle, how and why Marxists want to use it, mistakes from different schools of Communist thought, as well as a broad explanation of the transition from Capitalism to Communism.

Wage-Labor and Capital & *Value, Price, and Profit* are paired together at the end to further build upon the "Introduction to Political Economy" from *Stage 1: Introduction*. In Marx's own words, readers will learn about the labor theory of value, surplus value, labor-power, the boom-and-bust cycles of capitalism, and more.

Marxist-Leninist Reading Hub

SOCIALISM: UTOPIAN AND SCIENTIFIC

Friedrich Engels

Chapter 1: The Development of Utopian Socialism

Modern Socialism is, in its essence, the direct product of the recognition, on the one hand, of the class antagonisms existing in the society of today between proprietors and non-proprietors, between capitalists and wage-workers; on the other hand, of the anarchy existing in production. But, in its theoretical form, modern Socialism originally appears ostensibly as a more logical extension of the principles laid down by the great French philosophers of the 18th 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 recognized no external authority of any kind whatsoever. 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;[1] 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 today that this kingdom of reason was nothing more than the idealized kingdom of the bourgeoisie; that this eternal Right found its realization 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, came into being, and only could come into being, as a democratic bourgeois republic. The great thinkers of the 18th century could, no more than their predecessors, go beyond the limits imposed upon them by their epoch.

But, side by side with the antagonisms 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

[1] 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 around 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 men come to recognize that the Idea must rule the mental reality. And this was a magnificent sunrise. All thinking Beings have participated in celebrating this holy day. A sublime emotion swayed men at that time, an enthusiasm of reason pervaded the world, as if now had come the reconciliation of the Divine Principle with the world." [Hegel: *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte* [*The Philosophy of History]*, 1840, p. 535]

Is it not high time to set the anti-Socialist law in action against such teachings, subversive and to the common danger, by the late Professor Hegel?

bourgeoisie was saddled with its antithesis: capitalists cannot exist without wage-workers, and, in the same proportion as the medieval burgher of the guild developed into the modern bourgeois, the guild journeyman and the day-laborer, outside the guilds, developed into the proletarian. And although, upon the whole, the bourgeoisie, in their struggle with the nobility, could claim to represent at the same time the interests of the different working classes of that period, yet in every great bourgeois movement there were independent outbursts of that class which was the forerunner, more or less developed, of the modern proletariat. For example, at the time of the German Reformation and the Peasants' War, the Anabaptists and Thomas Münzer; in the great English Revolution, the Levellers; in the great French Revolution, Babeuf.

These were theoretical enunciations, corresponding with these revolutionary uprisings of a class not yet developed; in the 16th and 17th centuries, Utopian pictures of ideal social conditions; in the 18th century, actual communistic theories (Morelly and Mably).[2] The demand for equality was no longer limited to political rights; it was extended also to the social conditions of individuals. It was not simply class privileges that were to be abolished, but class distinctions themselves. A Communism, ascetic, denouncing all the pleasures of life, Spartan, was the first form of the new teaching. Then came the three great Utopians: Saint-Simon, to whom the middle-class movement, side by side with the proletarian, still had a certain significance; Fourier; and Owen, who in the country where capitalist production was most developed, and under the influence of the antagonisms begotten of this, worked out his proposals for the removal of class distinction systematically and in direct relation to French materialism.

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

For, to our three social reformers, the bourgeois world, based upon the principles of these philosophers, is quite as irrational and unjust, and, therefore, finds its way to the dust-hole quite as readily as feudalism and all the earlier stages of society. If pure reason and justice have not, hitherto, ruled the world, this has been the case only because men have not rightly understood them. What was wanted was the individual man of genius, who has now arisen and who understands the truth. That he has now arisen, that the truth has now been clearly understood, is not an inevitable event, following of necessity in the chains 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 18th 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 idealized understanding of the 18th century citizen, just then evolving into the bourgeois. The French Revolution had realized this rational society and government.

[2] Engels refers here to the works of the utopian Socialists Thomas More (16th century) and Tommaso Campanella (17th century). See *Code de la nature*, Morelly, Paris 1841 and *De la législation, ou principe des lois*, Mably, Amsterdam 1776.

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 realization 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, 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,[3] the sole nexus between man and man. The number of crimes increased from year to year. Formerly, the feudal vices had openly stalked about in broad daylight; though not eradicated, they were now at any rate thrust into the background. In their stead, the bourgeois vices, hitherto practiced in secret, began to blossom all the more luxuriantly. Trade became to a greater and greater extent cheating. The "fraternity" of the revolutionary motto was realized in the chicanery and rivalries of the battle of competition. Oppression by force was replaced by corruption; the sword, as the first social lever, by gold. The right of the first night was transferred from the feudal lords to the bourgeois manufacturers. Prostitution increased to an extent never heard of. Marriage itself remained, as before, the legally recognized 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 wanted was the men to formulate this disappointment, and they came with the turn of the century. In 1802, Saint-Simon's Geneva letters appeared; in 1808 appeared Fourier's first work, although the groundwork of his theory dated from 1799; on January 1, 1800, Robert Owen undertook the direction of New Lanark.

At this time, however, the capitalist mode of production, and with it the antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, was still very incompletely developed. Modern Industry, which had just arisen in England, was still unknown in France. But Modern Industry develops, on the one hand, the conflicts which make absolutely necessary a revolution in the mode of production, and the doing away with its capitalistic character—conflicts not only between the classes begotten of it, but also between the very productive forces and the forms of exchange created by it. And, on the other hand, it develops, in these very gigantic productive forces, the means of ending these conflicts. If, therefore, about the year 1800, the conflicts arising from the new social order were only just beginning to take shape, this holds still more fully as to the means of ending them. The "have-nothing" masses of Paris, during the Reign of Terror, were able for a moment to gain the mastery, and thus to lead the bourgeois revolution to victory in spite of the bourgeoisie themselves. But, in doing so, they only proved how impossible it was for their domination to last under the conditions then obtained. 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

[3] See Carlyle, *Past and Present*, p. 198—*Ed.*

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 correspond to 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 fantasies.

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 fantasies, which today only make us smile, and to crow over the superiority of their own bald reasoning, as compared with such "insanity". For ourselves, we delight in the stupendously grand thoughts and germs of thought that everywhere break out through their phantastic covering, and to which these Philistines are blind.

Saint-Simon was a son of the great French Revolution, at the outbreak of which he was not yet 30. The Revolution was the victory of the 3rd 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 3rd estate soon revealed itself as exclusively the victory of a smaller part of this "estate", as the conquest of political power by the socially privileged section of it—i.e., the propertied bourgeoisie. And the bourgeoisie had certainly developed rapidly during the Revolution, partly by speculation in the lands of the nobility and of the Church, confiscated and afterwards put up for sale, and partly by frauds upon the nation by means of army contracts. It was the domination of these swindlers that, under the Directorate, brought France to the verge of ruin, and thus gave Napoleon the pretext for his *coup d'état*.

Hence, to Saint-Simon the antagonism between the 3rd Estate and the privileged classes took the form of an antagonism between "workers" and "idlers". The idlers were not merely the old privileged classes, but also all who, without taking any part in production or distribution, lived on their incomes. And the workers were not only the wage-workers, but also the manufacturers, the merchants, the bankers. That the idlers had lost the capacity for intellectual leadership and political supremacy had been proven, 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 bourgeois 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 pauvr*e").

Already in his Geneva letters, Saint-Simon lays down the proposition that "all men ought to work". In the same work he recognizes 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."[4]

But to recognize the French Revolution as a class war, and not simply one between nobility and bourgeoisie, but between nobility, bourgeoisie, and the non-possessors, was, in the year 1802, a most pregnant discovery. In 1816, he declares that politics is the science of production, and foretells the complete absorption of politics by economics. The knowledge that economic conditions are the basis of political institutions appears here only in embryo. Yet what is here, already very plainly expressed, is the idea of the future conversion of political rule over men into an administration of things and a direction of processes of production—that is to say, the "abolition of the state", about which recently there has been so much noise.

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

If in Saint-Simon we find a comprehensive breadth of view, by virtue of which almost all the ideas of later Socialists that are not strictly economic are found in him in embryo, we find in Fourier a criticism of the existing conditions of society, genuinely French and witty, but not upon that account any the less thorough. Fourier takes the bourgeoisie, their inspired prophets before the Revolution, and their interested eulogists after it, at their own word. He lays bare remorselessly the material and moral misery of the bourgeois world. He confronts it with the earlier philosophers' dazzling promises of a society in which reason alone should reign, of a civilization in which happiness should be universal, of an illimitable human perfectibility, and with the rose-colored 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 imperturbable 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 sexes, and the position of women in bourgeois society. He was the first to declare that in any given society the degree of woman's emancipation is the natural measure of the general emancipation.

But Fourier is at his greatest in his conception of the history of society. He divides its whole course, thus far, into four stages of evolution—savagery, barbarism, the patriarchate, civilization. This last is identical with the so-called civil, or bourgeois, society of today—i.e., with the social order that came in with the 16th century. He proves "that the civilized stage raises every vice practiced by barbarism in a simple fashion into a form of existence, complex, ambiguous, equivocal, hypocritical"—that civilization moves "in a vicious circle", in

[4] Engels quotes the second letter from Saint-Simon, *Lettres d'un habitant de Genève à ses contemporains*.

contradictions which it constantly reproduces without being able to solve them; hence it constantly arrives at the very opposite to that which it wants to attain, or pretends to want to attain, so that, e.g., "under civilization poverty is born of superabundance itself".

Fourier, as we see, uses the dialectic method in the same masterly way as his contemporary, Hegel. Using these same dialectics, he argues against talk about illimitable human perfectibility, that every historical phase has its period of ascent and also its period of descent, and he applies this observation to the future of the whole human race. As Kant introduced into natural science the idea of the ultimate destruction of the Earth, Fourier introduced into historical science that of the ultimate destruction of the human race.

Whilst in France the hurricane of the Revolution swept over the land, in England a quieter, but not on that account less tremendous, revolution was going on. Steam and the new tool-making machinery were transforming manufacture into modern industry, and thus revolutionizing 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 into large capitalists and non-possessing proletarians went on. Between these, instead of the former stable middle-class, an unstable mass of artisans and small shopkeepers, the most fluctuating portion of the population, now led a precarious existence.

The new mode of production was, as yet, only at the beginning of its period of ascent; as yet it was the normal, regular method of production—the only one possible under existing conditions. Nevertheless, even then it was producing crying social abuses—the herding together of a homeless population in the worst quarters of the large towns; the loosening of all traditional moral bonds, of patriarchal subordination, of family relations; overwork, especially of women and children, to a frightful extent; complete demoralization 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 change 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 favorite theory, and so of bringing order out of chaos. He had already tried it with success, as superintendent of more than 500 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 demoralized 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 get home again. Whilst his competitors worked their people 13 or 14 hours a day, in New Lanark the working-day was only 10.5 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 favorable 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?"[5]

The answer was clear. It had been used to pay the proprietors of the establishment 5 percent 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."[6]

To them, therefore, the fruits of this new power belonged. The newly-created gigantic productive forces, hitherto used only to enrich individuals and to enslave the masses, offered to Owen the foundations for a reconstruction of society; they were destined, as the common property of all, to be worked for the common good of all.

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

His advance in the direction of Communism was the turning-point in Owen's life. As long as he was simply a philanthropist, he was rewarded with nothing but wealth, applause, honor, 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 30 years. Every

[5] 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."

[6] Note, l. c., p. 22

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 labor of women and children in factories. He was president of the first Congress at which all the Trade Unions of England united in a single great trade association. He introduced as transition measures to the complete communistic organization of society, on the one hand, cooperative 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 labor bazaars for the exchange of the products of labor through the medium of labor-notes, whose unit was a single hour of work; institutions necessarily doomed to failure, but completely anticipating Proudhon's bank of exchange of a much later period, and differing entirely from this in that it did not claim to be the panacea for all social ills, but only a first step towards a much more radical revolution of society.

The Utopians' mode of thought has for a long time governed the Socialist ideas of the 19th 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 an 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 of one another. 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 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.

Chapter 2: Dialectics

In the meantime, along with and after the French philosophy of the 18th 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 encyclopedic of them, had already analyzed 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 18th century were almost wholly dominated, at all events in their special philosophical work. Outside philosophy in the restricted sense, the French nevertheless produced masterpieces of dialectic. We need only call to mind Diderot's *Le Neveu de Rameau*, and Rousseau's *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inegalite 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.[1]

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, special causes, effects, etc. This is, primarily, the task of natural science and historical research: branches of science which the Greek 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,[2] and later on, in the Middle Ages, by the Arabs. Real natural science dates from the second half of the 15th century, and then onward it had 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 organized 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 400 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 constraints, 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 brought forth the narrow, metaphysical mode of thought peculiar to the last century.

To the metaphysician, things and their mental reflexes, ideas, are isolated, are to be considered one after the other and apart from each other, are objects of investigation fixed, rigid, given once for all. He thinks in absolutely irreconcilable antitheses. His communication is ‘yea, yea; nay, nay’; for whatsoever is more than these “cometh of evil.” For him, a thing either exists or does not exist; a thing cannot at the same time be itself and something else. Positive and negative absolutely exclude one another; cause and effect stand in a rigid antithesis, one to the other.

At first sight, this mode of thinking seems to us very luminous, because it is that of so-called sound commonsense. Only sound commonsense, respectable fellow that he is, in the homely realm of his own four

[1] Unknown to the Western world until the 20th-century, the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu was a predecessor of or possibly contemporary to Heraclitus. Lao Tzu wrote the renowned *Tao Te Ching* in which he also espouses the fundamental principles of dialectics.

[2] The Alexandrian period of the development of science comprises the period extending from the 3rd century B.C. to the 17th century A.D. It derives its name from the town of Alexandria in Egypt, which was one of the most important centers of international economic intercourses at that time. In the Alexandrian period, mathematics (Euclid and Archimedes), geography, astronomy, anatomy, physiology, etc., attained considerable development.

China also began development in natural sciences in the third century B.C.E.

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

Further, we find upon closer investigation that the two poles of an antithesis, positive and negative, e.g., are as inseparable as they are opposed, and that despite all their opposition, they mutually interpenetrate. And we find, in like manner, that cause and effect are conceptions which only hold good in their application to individual cases; but as soon as we consider the individual cases in their general connection with the universe as a whole, they run into each other, and they become confounded when we contemplate that universal action and reaction in which causes and effects are eternally changing places, so that what is effect here and now will be cause there and then, and vice versa.

None of these processes and modes of thought enters into the framework of metaphysical reasoning. Dialectics, on the other 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 that it has furnished this proof with very rich materials increasingly daily, and thus has shown that, in the last resort, Nature works dialectically and not metaphysically; that she does not move in the eternal oneness of a perpetually recurring circle, but goes through a real historical evolution. In this connection, Darwin must be named before all others. He dealt the metaphysical conception of Nature the heaviest blow by his proof that all organic beings, plants, animals, and man himself, are the products of a process of evolution going on through millions of years. But, the naturalists, who have learned to think dialectically, are few and far between, and this conflict of the results of discovery with preconceived modes of thinking, explains the endless confusion now reigning in theoretical natural science, the despair of teachers as well as learners, of authors and readers alike.

An exact representation of the universe, of its evolution, of the development of mankind, and of the reflection of this evolution in the minds of men, can therefore only be obtained by the methods of dialectics with its constant regard to the innumerable actions and reactions of life and death, of progressive or retrogressive changes. And in this spirit, the new German philosophy has worked. Kant began his career by resolving the stable Solar system of

Newton and its eternal duration, after the famous initial impulse had once been given, into the result of a historical process, the formation of the Sun and all the planets out of a rotating, nebulous mass. From this, he at the same time drew the conclusion that, given this origin of the Solar system, its future death followed by necessity. His theory, half a century later, was established mathematically by Laplace, and half a century after that, the spectroscope proved the existence in space of such incandescent masses of gas in various stages of condensation.

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

That the Hegelian system did not solve the problem it propounded is here immaterial. Its epoch-making merit was that it propounded the problem. This problem is one that no single individual will ever be able to solve. Although Hegel was—with Saint-Simon—the most encyclopedic mind of his time, yet he was limited, first, by the necessary 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 realized 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 groups of facts were grasped by Hegel, yet, for the reasons just given, there is much that is botched, artificial, labored, in a word, wrong in point of detail. The Hegelian system, in itself, was a colossal miscarriage—but it was also the last of its kind.

It was suffering, in fact, from an internal and incurable contradiction. Upon the one hand, its essential proposition was the conception that human history is a process of evolution, which, by its very nature, cannot find its intellectual final term in the discovery of any so-called absolute truth. But, on the other hand, it laid claim to being the very essence of this absolute truth. A system of natural and historical knowledge, embracing everything, and final for all time, is a contradiction to the fundamental law of dialectic reasoning.

This law, indeed, by no means excludes, but, on the contrary, includes the idea that the systematic knowledge of the external universe can make giant strides from age to age.

The perception of the fundamental contradiction in German idealism led necessarily back to materialism, but—*nota bene*—not to the simply metaphysical, exclusively mechanical materialism of the 18th century. Old materialism looked upon all previous history as a crude heap of irrationality and violence; modern materialism sees in it the process of evolution of humanity, and aims at discovering the laws thereof. With the French of the 18th 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. 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 favorable 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 law—formal logic and dialectics. Everything else is subsumed in the positive science of Nature and history.

Whilst, however, the revolution in the conception of Nature could only be made in proportion to the corresponding positive materials furnished by research, already much earlier certain historical facts had occurred which led to a decisive change in the conception of history. In 1831, the first working-class rising took place in Lyons; between 1838 and 1842, the first national working-class movement, that of the English Chartists, 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 labor, 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 civilization".

The new facts made imperative a new examination of all past history. Then it was seen that *all* past history, with the exception of its primitive stages, was the history of class struggles; that these warring classes of society are always the products of the modes of production and of exchange—in a word, of the *economic* conditions of their time; that the economic structure of society always furnishes the real basis, starting from which we can alone work out the ultimate explanation of the whole superstructure of juridical and political institutions as well as of the religious, philosophical, and other ideas of a given historical period. Hegel has freed history from metaphysics—he made it dialectic; but his conception of history was essentially idealistic. But now idealism was driven from its last refuge, the philosophy of history; now a materialistic treatment of history was propounded, and a method found of explaining man's "knowing" by his "being", instead of, as heretofore, his "being" by his "knowing".

From that time forward, Socialism was no longer an accidental discovery of this or that ingenious brain, but the necessary outcome of the struggle between two historically developed classes—the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Its task was no longer to manufacture a system of society as perfect as possible, but to examine the historical-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 materialist conception as the conception of Nature of the French materialists was with dialectics and modern natural science. The Socialism of earlier days certainly criticized the existing capitalist 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 exploitations 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—to present the capitalist mode of production in its historical connection and its inevitableness during a particular historical period, and therefore, also, to present its inevitable downfall; and 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 labor 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 labor power of his laborer 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 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 capitalist 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.

Chapter 3: Historical Materialism

The materialist conception of history starts from the proposition that the production of the means to support human life and, next to production, the exchange of things produced, is the basis of all social structure; that in every society that has appeared in history, the manner in which wealth is distributed and society divided into classes or orders is dependent upon what is produced, how it is produced, and how the products are exchanged. From this point of view, the final causes of all social changes and political revolutions are to be sought, not in men's brains, not in men's better insights 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,[1] is only proof that in the modes of production and exchange changes have silently taken place with which the social order, adapted to earlier economic conditions, is no longer in keeping. From this it also follows that the means of getting rid of the incongruities that have been brought to light must also be present, in a more or less developed condition, within the changed modes of production themselves. These means are not to be invented by deduction from fundamental principles, but are to be discovered in the stubborn facts of the existing system of production.

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

The present situation of society—this is now pretty generally conceded—is the creation of the ruling class of today, of the bourgeoisie. The mode of production peculiar to the bourgeoisie, known, since Marx, as the capitalist mode of production, was incompatible with the feudal system, with the privileges it conferred upon individuals, entire social ranks and local corporations, as well as with the hereditary ties of subordination which constituted the framework of its social organization. The bourgeoisie broke up the feudal system and built upon its ruins the capitalist order of society, the kingdom of free competition, of personal liberty, of the equality, before the law, of all commodity owners, of all the rest of the capitalist blessings. From there forward, the capitalist mode of production could develop in freedom. Since steam, machinery, and the making of machines by machinery

[1] Mephistopheles in Goethe's *Faust*

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 complete development, comes into collision with the bounds within which the capitalist mode of production holds it confined. The new productive forces have already outgrown the capitalist 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, what does this conflict consist of?

Before capitalist production—i.e., in the Middle Ages—the system of petty industry obtained generally, based upon the private property of the laborers in their means of production; in the country, the agriculture of the small peasant, freeman, or serf; in the towns, the handicrafts organized in guilds. The instruments of labor—land, agricultural implements, the workshop, the tool—were the instruments of labor 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*, Marx has explained in detail how since the 15th century this has been historically worked out through the three phases of simple cooperation, manufacture, and modern industry. But the bourgeoisie, as is 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 cooperation 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 production from individual to social products. The yarn, the cloth, the metal articles that now come 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 labor which creeps in gradually and not upon any preconceived plan, there the products take on the form of *commodities*, whose mutual exchange, buying and selling, enable the individual producers to satisfy their manifold wants. And this was the case in the Middle Ages. The peasant, e.g., sold to the artisan agricultural products and bought from him the products of handicraft. Into this society of individual producers, of commodity producers, the new mode of production thrust itself. In the midst of the old division of labor, grown up spontaneously and upon *no definite plan*, which had governed the whole of society, now arose division of labor upon *a definite plan*, as organized 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 organization upon a definite plan was stronger than spontaneous division of labor. 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 producers succumbed in one department after another. Socialized production revolutionized all the old methods of production. But its revolutionary character was, at the same time, so little recognized 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-labor. Socialized 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 medieval stage of evolution of the production of commodities, the question as to the owner of the product of labor 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 labor 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 labor*. 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 socialized means of production and socialized producers. But the socialized producers and means of production and their products were still treated, after this change, just as they had been before—i.e., as the means of production and the products of individuals. Hitherto, the owner of the instruments of labor 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 labor always appropriated to himself the product, although it was no longer *his* product but exclusively the product of the *labor 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 socialized. 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.[2]

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

The first capitalists found, as we have said, alongside other forms of labor, wage-labor ready-made for them on the market. But it was exceptional, complementary, accessory, transitory wage-labor. The agricultural laborer, though, upon occasion, he hired himself out by the day, had a few acres of his own land on which he could at all

[2] It is hardly necessary in this connection to point out that, even if the form of appropriation remains the same, the *character* of the appropriation is just as much revolutionized 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-labor, which contains the whole capitalist mode of production in embryo, is very ancient; in a sporadic, scattered form, it existed for centuries alongside slave-labor. But the embryo could duly develop into the capitalist mode of production only when the necessary historical pre-conditions had been furnished.

events live at a pinch. The guilds were so organized that the journeyman of today became the master of tomorrow. But all this changed, as soon as the means of production became socialized 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-labor, aforetime the exception and accessory, now became the rule and basis of all production; aforetime 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 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 labor-power, on the other. *The contradiction between socialized production and capitalistic appropriation manifested itself as the antagonism of proletariat and bourgeoisie*.

We have seen that the capitalist 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 costs of production or even to sell his commodity at all. Anarchy reigns in socialized production.

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

In medieval society, especially in the earlier centuries, production was essentially directed toward 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 the 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 lords, only then did it also produce commodities. This surplus, thrown into socialized exchange and offered for sale, became commodities.

The artisan in the towns, it is true, had from the first to produce for exchange. But they, also, themselves supplied the greatest part of their individual wants. They had gardens and plots of land. They turned their cattle out into the communal forest, which, also, yielded them timber and firing. The women spun flax, wool, and so forth. Production for the purpose of exchange, production of commodities, was only in its infancy. Hence,

exchange was restricted, the market narrow, the methods of production stable; there was local exclusiveness without, local unity within; the mark in the country; in the town, the guild.

But with the extension of the production of commodities, and especially with the introduction of the capitalist mode of production, the laws of commodity-production, hitherto latent, came into action more openly and with greater force. The old bonds were loosened, the old exclusive limits broken through, the producers were more and more turned into independent, isolated producers of commodities. It became apparent that the production of society at large was ruled by absence of plan, by accident, by anarchy; and this anarchy grew to greater and greater heights. But the chief means by aid of which the capitalist mode of production intensified this anarchy of socialized production was the exact opposite of anarchy. It was the increasing organization of production, upon a social basis, in every individual productive establishment. By this, the old, peaceful, stable condition of things was ended. Wherever this organization of production was introduced into a branch of industry, it allowed no other method of production by its side. The field of labor became a battleground. The great geographical discoveries, and the colonization following them, multiplied markets and quickened the transformation of handicraft into manufacture. The war did not simply break out between the individual producers of particular localities. The local struggles begat, in their turn, national conflicts, the commercial wars of the 17th and 18th centuries.

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 socialized production and capitalistic appropriation now presents itself as *an antagonism between the organization of production in the individual workshop and the anarchy of production in society generally*.

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

But the perfecting of machinery is making human labor superfluous. If the introduction and increase of machinery means the displacement of millions of manual-workers 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,[3] 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

[3] Engels, *The Conditions of the Working-Class in England*, Sonnenschein & Co., p. 84.

upon the limbs of the working class in its struggle for existence with capital, a regulator for keeping 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 labor constantly tear the means of subsistence out of the hands of the laborer; that they very product of the worker is turned into an instrument for his subjugation.

Thus, it comes about that the economizing of the instruments of labor becomes at the same time, from the outset, the most reckless waste of labor-power, and robbery based upon the normal conditions under which labor functions; that machinery,

> "the most powerful instrument for shortening labor time, becomes the most unfailing means for placing every moment of the laborer's time and that of his family at the disposal of the capitalist for the purpose of expanding the value of his capital."[4]

Thus, it comes about that the overwork of some becomes the preliminary condition for the idleness of others, and that modern industry, which hunts after new consumers all 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 laborer to capital more firmly than the wedges of Vulcan did Prometheus to the rock. It establishes an accumulation of misery, corresponding with the 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.*"[5]

And to expect any other division of the products from the capitalist 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 perfection 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 similarly compulsory law. The enormous expansive force of modern industry, compared with that of gasses 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 civilized peoples and their more or less barbaric hangers-on, are thrown out of joint about once every 10 years. Commerce is at a stand-still, 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

[4] Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, English edition, p. 406
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 661

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 "crise plethorique", a crisis from plethora.

In these crises, the contradiction between socialized 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 socialized organization 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 capitalist 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 laborers, all the elements of production and of general wealth, are present in abundance. But "abundance becomes the source of distress and want" (Fourier), because it is the very thing that prevents the transformation of the means of production and subsistence into capital. For in capitalistic society, the means of production can only function when they have undergone a preliminary transformation into capital, into the means of exploiting human labor-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 capitalist mode of production stands convicted of its own incapacity to further direct these productive forces. On the other hand, 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 production 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 recognized, forces the capital 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 socialization of great masses of the 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 railways, they exclude all other forms of capitalist expansion. At a further stage of evolution, this form also becomes insufficient. The producers on a large scale in a particular branch of an 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 a 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 pounds.

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.[6] 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 distribution into joint-stock companies, trusts, and State property, show how unnecessary the bourgeoisie are for that purpose. All the social functions of the capitalist has no further social function than that of pocketing dividends, tearing off coupons, and gambling on the Stock Exchange, where the different capitalists despoil one another of their capital. At first, the capitalist 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 capitalist nature of the productive forces. In the joint-stock companies and trusts, this is obvious. And the modern State, again, is only the organization that bourgeois society takes on in order to support the external conditions of the capitalist mode of production against the encroachments as well of the workers as of individual capitalists. The modern state, no matter what its form, is essentially a capitalist machine—the state of the capitalists, the ideal personification of the total national capital. The more it proceeds to the taking over of

[6] I say "have to". For only when the means of production and distribution have *actually* outgrown the form of management by joint-stock companies, and when, therefore, the taking them over by the State has become *economically* inevitable, only then—even if it is the State of today that affects 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 Bismarkian sort, to be socialistic. Certainly, if the taking over by the State of the tobacco industry is socialistic, then Napoleon and Metternich must be numbered among the founders of Socialism.

If the Belgian State, for quite ordinary political and financial reasons, itself constructed its chief railway lines; if Bismarck, not under any economic compulsion, took over for the State the chief Prussian lines, simply to be the better able to have them in hand in case of war, to bring up the railway employees as voting cattle for the Government, and especially to create for himself a new source of income independent of parliamentary votes—this was, in no sense, a socialistic measure, directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously. Otherwise, the Royal Maritime Company, the Royal porcelain manufacture, and even the regimental tailor of the army would also be socialistic institutions, or even, as was seriously proposed by a sly dog in Frederick William III's reign, the taking over by the State of the brothels.

productive forces, the more it actually becomes the national capitalist, the more citizens it exploits. 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 harmonizing with the socialized character of the means of production. And this can only come about by society openly and directly taking possession of the productive forces which have outgrown all control, except that of society as a whole. The social character of the means of production and of the products today reacts against the producers, periodically disrupting 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 utilized by the producers with a perfect understanding of its nature, and instead of being a source of disturbance and periodical collapse, will become the most powerful lever of production itself.

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

But when once their nature is understood, they can, in the hands of the producers working together, be transformed from master demons into willing servants. The difference is that between the destructive force of electricity in the lightning in the storm, and electricity under command in the telegraph and the voltaic arc; the difference between a conflagration, and fire working in the service of man. With this recognition, at last, of the real nature of the productive forces of today, the social anarchy of production gives place to a social regulation of production upon a definite plan, according to the needs of the community and of each individual. Then the capitalist mode of appropriation, in which the product enslaves first the producer, and then the appropriator, is replaced by the mode of appropriation of the products that is based upon the nature of the modern means of production; upon the one hand, direct social appropriation, as means to the maintenance and extension of production—on the other, direct individual appropriation, as means of subsistence and of enjoyment.

Whilst the capitalist mode of production more and more completely transforms the great majority of the population into proletarians, it creates the power which, under penalty of its own destruction, is forced to accomplish this revolution. Whilst it forces on more and more of the transformation of the vast means of production, already socialized, 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, and also abolishes the State as State. Society, thus far, based upon class antagonisms, had need of the State. That is, of an organization of the particular class which was, pro tempore, the exploiting class, an organization 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-labor). 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 times, the bourgeoisie.

When, at last, it becomes the real representative of the whole of society, it renders itself unnecessary. As soon as there is no longer any social class to be held in subjection; as soon as class rule, and the individual struggle for existence based upon our present anarchy in production, with the collisions and excesses arising from these, are removed, nothing more remains to be repressed, and a special repressive force, a State, is no longer necessary. The first act by virtue of which the State really constitutes itself the representative of the whole of society—the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society—this is, at the same time, its last independent act as a State. State interference in social relations becomes, in one domain after another, superfluous, and then dies out of itself; the government of persons is replaced by the administration of things, and by the conduct of processes of production. The State is not "abolished". *It dies out*. This gives the measure of the value of the phrase: "a free State", both as to its justifiable use at times by agitators, and as to its ultimate scientific insufficiency; 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 realization were there. Like every other social advance, it becomes practicable, not by men understanding that the existence of classes is in contradiction to justice, equality, etc., not by the mere willingness to abolish these classes, but by virtue of certain new economic conditions. The separation of society into an exploiting and an exploited class, a ruling and an oppressed class, was the necessary consequences of the deficient and restricted development of production in former times. So long as the total social labor only yields a produce which but slightly exceeds that barely necessary for the existence of all; so long, therefore, as labor engages all or almost all the time of the great majority of the members of society—so long, of necessity, this society is divided into classes. Side by side with the great majority, exclusively bond slaves to labor, arises a class freed from directly productive labor, which looks after the general affairs of society: the direction of labor, State business, law, science, art, etc. It is, therefore, the law of division of labor 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 its 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 10 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 socialized 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 today, and their political representatives. The possibility of securing for every member of society, by means of socialized 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*.[7]

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 organization. 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 organization. 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 organization, hitherto confronting him as a 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.

I. Medieval 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 his feudal lord. Only where an excess of production over this consumption occurs is such excess offered

[7] A few figures may serve to give an approximate idea of the enormous expansive force of the modern means of production, even under capitalist pressure. According to Mr. Giffen, the total wealth of Great Britain and Ireland amounted, in round numbers in: 1814 to £2,200,000,000; 1865 to £6,100,000,000; 1875 to £8,500,000,000. As an instance of the squandering of means of production and of products during a crisis, the total loss in the German iron industry alone, in the crisis of 1873-78, was given at the second German Industrial Congress (Berlin, February 21, 1878), as 22,750,000 pounds.

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 be means of simple cooperation 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-labor 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 socialized organization in the individual factory and social anarchy in the production as a whole.*
c) On the one hand, perfecting of machinery, made by competition compulsory for each individual manufacturer, and complemented by a constantly growing displacement of laborers. *Industrial reserve-army*. On the other hand, unlimited extension of production, also compulsory under competition, for every manufacturer. On both sides, unheard-of development of productive forces, excess of supply over demand, overproduction and products—excess there, of laborers, 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.*
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 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 socialized 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 socialized character complete freedom to work itself out. Socialized 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 organization, 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.

THE STATE AND REVOLUTION

V. I. Lenin

Prefaces

Preface to the First Edition

The question of the state is now acquiring particular importance both in theory and in practical politics. The imperialist war has immensely accelerated and intensified the process of transformation of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism. The monstrous oppression of the working people by the state, which is merging more and more with the all-powerful capitalist associations, is becoming increasingly monstrous. The advanced countries—we mean their hinterland—are becoming military convict prisons for the workers.

The unprecedented horrors and miseries of the protracted war are making the people's position unbearable and increasing their anger. The world proletarian revolution is clearly maturing. The question of its relation to the state is acquiring practical importance.

The elements of opportunism that accumulated over the decades of comparatively peaceful development have given rise to the trend of social-chauvinism which dominated the official socialist parties throughout the world. This trend—socialism in words and chauvinism in deeds (Plekhanov, Potresov, Breshkovskaya, Rubanovich, and, in a slightly veiled form, Tsereteli, Chernov and Co. in Russia; Scheidemann. Legien, David and others in Germany; Renaudel, Guesde and Vandervelde in France and Belgium; Hyndman and the Fabians[1] in England, etc., etc.)—is conspicuous for the base, servile adaptation of the "leaders of socialism" to the interests not only of "their" national bourgeoisie, but of "their" state, for the majority of the so-called Great Powers have long been exploiting and enslaving a whole number of small and weak nations. And the imperialist war is a war for the division and redivision of this kind of booty. The struggle to free the working people from the influence of the bourgeoisie in general, and of the imperialist bourgeoisie in particular, is impossible without a struggle against opportunist prejudices concerning the "state".

First of all, we examine the theory of Marx and Engels of the state, and dwell in particular detail on those aspects of this theory which are ignored or have been distorted by the opportunists. Then we deal specially with the one who is chiefly responsible for these distortions, Karl Kautsky, the best-known leader of the Second International (1889-1914), which has met with such miserable bankruptcy in the present war. Lastly, we sum up the main results of the experience of the Russian revolutions of 1905 and particularly of 1917. Apparently, the latter is now (early August 1917) completing the first stage of its development; but this revolution as a whole can only be understood as a link in a chain of socialist proletarian revolutions being caused by the imperialist war. The question of the relation of the socialist proletarian revolution to the state, therefore, is acquiring not only

[1] Fabians – members of the Fabian Society, a British reformist organization founded in 1884. It grouped mostly bourgeois intellectuals—scholars, writers, politicians—including Sydney and Beatrice Webb, Ramsay MacDonald and Bernard Shaw. The Fabians denied the necessity for the proletarian class struggle and for the socialist revolution. They contended that the transition from capitalism to socialism could only be affected through minor social reforms, that is, gradual changes. Lenin described Fabian ideas as "an extremely opportunist trend". In 1900 the Fabian Society became part of the British Labor Party. "Fabian socialism" is a source of the Labor Party's ideology. During the First World War the Fabians took a social-chauvinist stand. For Lenin's characterization of Fabian principles, see Lenin's article, *British Pacifism and the British Dislike of Theory*.

practical political importance, but also the significance of a most urgent problem of the day, the problem of explaining to the masses what they will have to do before long to free themselves from capitalist tyranny.

The Author
August 1917

Preface to the Second Edition

The present, second edition is published virtually unaltered, except that section 3 had been added to Chapter 2.

The Author
December 17, 1918

Chapter 1: Class Society and State

1. The State: A Product of the Irreconcilability of Class Antagonisms

What is now happening to Marx's theory has, in the course of history, happened repeatedly to the theories of revolutionary thinkers and leaders of oppressed classes fighting for emancipation. During the lifetime of great revolutionaries, the oppressing classes constantly hounded them, received their theories with the most savage malice, the most furious hatred and the most unscrupulous campaigns of lies and slander. After their death, attempts are made to convert them into harmless icons, to canonize them, so to say, and to hallow their *names* to a certain extent for the "consolation" of the oppressed classes and with the object of duping the latter, while at the same time robbing the revolutionary theory of its *substance*, blunting its revolutionary edge and vulgarizing it. Today, the bourgeoisie and the opportunists within the labor movement concur in this doctoring of Marxism. They omit, obscure, or distort the revolutionary side of this theory, its revolutionary soul. They push to the foreground and extol what is or seems acceptable to the bourgeoisie. All the social-chauvinists are now "Marxists" (don't laugh!). And more and more frequently German bourgeois scholars, only yesterday specialists in the annihilation of Marxism, are speaking of the "national-German" Marx, who, they claim, educated the labor unions which are so splendidly organized for the purpose of waging a predatory war!

In these circumstances, in view of the unprecedently wide-spread distortion of Marxism, our prime task is to reestablish what Marx really taught on the subject of the state. This will necessitate a number of long quotations from the works of Marx and Engels themselves. Of course, long quotations will render the text cumbersome and not help at all to make it popular reading, but we cannot possibly dispense with them. All, or at any rate all, the most essential passages in the works of Marx and Engels on the subject of the state must by all means be quoted as fully as possible so that the reader may form an independent opinion of the totality of the views of the founders of scientific socialism, and of the evolution of those views, and so that their distortion by the "Kautskyism" now prevailing may be documentarily proved and clearly demonstrated.

Let us begin with the most popular of Engels' works, The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, the sixth edition of which was published in Stuttgart as far back as 1894. We have to translate the quotations from the German originals, as the Russian translations, while very numerous, are for the most part either incomplete or very unsatisfactory.

Summing up his historical analysis, Engels says:

> "The state is, therefore, by no means a power forced on society from without; just as little is it 'the reality of the ethical idea', 'the image and reality of reason', as Hegel maintains. Rather, it is a product of society at a certain stage of development; it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself, that it has split into irreconcilable antagonisms which it is powerless to dispel. But in order that these antagonisms, these classes with conflicting economic interests, might not consume themselves and society in fruitless struggle, it became necessary to have a power, seemingly standing above society, that would alleviate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of 'order'; and this power, arisen out of society but placing itself above it, and alienating itself more and more from it, is the state."[1]

This expresses with perfect clarity the basic idea of Marxism with regard to the historical role and the meaning of the state. The state is a product and a manifestation of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms. The state arises where, when and insofar as class antagonism objectively cannot be reconciled. And, conversely, the existence of the state proves that the class antagonisms are irreconcilable.

It is on this most important and fundamental point that the distortion of Marxism, proceeding along two main lines, begins.

On the one hand, the bourgeois, and particularly the petty-bourgeois, ideologists, compelled under the weight of indisputable historical facts to admit that the state only exists where there are class antagonisms and a class struggle, "correct" Marx in such a way as to make it appear that the state is an organ for the reconciliation of classes. According to Marx, the state could neither have arisen nor maintained itself had it been possible to reconcile classes. From what the petty-bourgeois and philistine professors and publicists say, with quite frequent and benevolent references to Marx, it appears that the state does reconcile classes. According to Marx, the state is an organ of class rule, an organ for the oppression of one class by another; it is the creation of "order", which legalizes and perpetuates this oppression by moderating the conflict between classes. In the opinion of the petty-bourgeois politicians, however, order means the reconciliation of classes, and not the oppression of one class by another; to alleviate the conflict means reconciling classes and not depriving the oppressed classes of definite means and methods of struggle to overthrow the oppressors.

For instance, when, in the revolution of 1917, the question of the significance and role of the state arose in all its magnitude as a practical question demanding immediate action, and, moreover, action on a mass scale, all the Social-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks descended at once to the petty-bourgeois theory that the "state" "reconciles" classes. Innumerable resolutions and articles by politicians of both these parties are thoroughly saturated with this petty-bourgeois and philistine "reconciliation" theory. That the state is an organ of the rule of a definite class which cannot be reconciled with its antipode (the class opposite to it) is something the petty-bourgeois democrats will never be able to understand. Their attitude to the state is one of the most striking manifestations of the fact that our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks are not socialists at all (a point that we Bolsheviks have always maintained), but petty-bourgeois democrats using near-socialist phraseology.

On the other hand, the "Kautskyite" distortion of Marxism is far more subtle. "Theoretically", it is not denied that the state is an organ of class rule, or that class antagonisms are irreconcilable. But what is overlooked or glossed over is this: if the state is the product of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms, if it is a power standing above society and "alienating itself more and more from it", it is clear that the liberation of the oppressed class is impossible not only without a violent revolution, but also without the destruction of the apparatus of state power which was created by the ruling class and which is the embodiment of this "alienation". As we shall see later,

[1] Engels, "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State", Marx and Engels, *Selected Works,* Vol. III, Moscow, 1973, pp. 326-27.

Marx very explicitly drew this theoretically self-evident conclusion on the strength of a concrete historical analysis of the tasks of the revolution. And—as we shall show in detail further on—it is this conclusion which Kautsky has "forgotten" and distorted.

2. Special Bodies of Armed Men, Prisons, etc.

Engels continues:

> "As distinct from the old gentile [tribal or clan] order,[2] the state, first, divides its subjects according to territory...."

This division seems "natural" to us, but it costs a prolonged struggle against the old organization according to generations or tribes.

> "The second distinguishing feature is the establishment of a public power which no longer directly coincides with the population organizing itself as an armed force. This special, public power is necessary because a self-acting armed organization of the population has become impossible since the split into classes.... This public power exists in every state; it consists not merely of armed men but also of material adjuncts, prisons, and institutions of coercion of all kinds, of which gentile [clan] society knew nothing...."

Engels elucidates the concept of the "power" which is called the state, a power which arose from society but places itself above it and alienates itself more and more from it. What does this power mainly consist of? It consists of special bodies of armed men having prisons, etc., at their command.

We are justified in speaking of special bodies of armed men, because the public power which is an attribute of every state "does not directly coincide" with the armed population, with its "self-acting armed organization".

Like all great revolutionary thinkers, Engels tries to draw the attention of the class-conscious workers to what prevailing philistinism regards as least worthy of attention, as the most habitual thing, hallowed by prejudices that are not only deep-rooted but, one might say, petrified. A standing army and police are the chief instruments of state power. But how can it be otherwise?

From the viewpoint of the vast majority of Europeans of the end of the 19th century, whom Engels was addressing, and who had not gone through or closely observed a single great revolution, it could not have been otherwise. They could not understand at all what a "self-acting armed organization of the population" was. When asked why it became necessary to have special bodies of armed men placed above society and alienating themselves from it (police and a standing army), the West-European and Russian philistines are inclined to utter a few phrases borrowed from Spencer or Mikhailovsky, to refer to the growing complexity of social life, the differentiation of functions, and so on.

Such a reference seems "scientific", and effectively lulls the ordinary person to sleep by obscuring the important and basic fact, namely, the split of society into irreconcilable antagonistic classes.

Were it not for this split, the "self-acting armed organization of the population" would differ from the primitive organization of a stick-wielding herd of monkeys, or of primitive men, or of men united in clans, by its complexity, its high technical level, and so on. But such an organization would still be possible.

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[2] Gentile, or tribal, organization of society – the primitive communal system, or the first socio-economic formation in history. The tribal commune was a community of blood relatives linked by economic and social ties. The tribal system went through the matriarchal and the patriarchal periods. The patriarchate culminated in primitive society becoming a class society and in the rise of the state. Relations of production under the primitive communal system were based on social ownership of the means of production and equalitarian distribution of all products. This corresponded in the main to the low level of the productive forces and to their character at the time.

It is impossible because civilized society is split into antagonistic, and, moreover, irreconcilably antagonistic classes, whose "self-acting" arming would lead to an armed struggle between them. A state arises, a special power is created, special bodies of armed men, and every revolution, by destroying the state apparatus, shows us the naked class struggle, clearly shows us how the ruling class strives to restore the special bodies of armed men which serve it, and how the oppressed class strives to create a new organization of this kind, capable of serving the exploited instead of the exploiters.

In the above argument, Engels raises theoretically the very same question which every great revolution raises before us in practice, palpably and, what is more, on a scale of mass action, namely, the question of the relationship between "special" bodies of armed men and the "self-acting armed organization of the population". We shall see how this question is specifically illustrated by the experience of the European and Russian revolutions.

But to return to Engels' exposition.

He points out that sometimes—in certain parts of North America, for example—this public power is weak (he has in mind a rare exception in capitalist society, and those parts of North America in its pre-imperialist days where the free colonists predominated), but that, generally speaking, it grows stronger:

> "It [the public power] grows stronger, however, in proportion as class antagonisms within the state become more acute, and as adjacent states become larger and more populous. We have only to look at our present-day Europe, where class struggle and rivalry in conquest have tuned up the public power to such a pitch that it threatens to swallow the whole of society and even the state."

This was written not later than the early nineties of the last century, Engels' last preface being dated June 16, 1891. The turn towards imperialism—meaning the complete domination of the trusts, the omnipotence of the big banks, a grand-scale colonial policy, and so forth—was only just beginning in France, and was even weaker in North America and in Germany. Since then, "rivalry in conquest" has taken a gigantic stride, all the more because by the beginning of the second decade of the 20th century the world had been completely divided up among these "rivals in conquest", i.e., among the predatory Great Powers. Since then, military and naval armaments have grown fantastically and the predatory war of 1914-17 for the domination of the world by Britain or Germany, for the division of the spoils, has brought the "swallowing" of all the forces of society by the rapacious state power close to complete catastrophe.

Engels could, as early as 1891, point to "rivalry in conquest" as one of the most important distinguishing features of the foreign policy of the Great Powers, while the social-chauvinist scoundrels have ever since 1914, when this rivalry, many time intensified, gave rise to an imperialist war, been covering up the defense of the predatory interests of "their own" bourgeoisie with phrases about "defense of the fatherland", "defense of the republic and the revolution", etc.!

3. The State: An Instrument for the Exploitation of the Oppressed Class

The maintenance of the special public power standing above society requires taxes and state loans.

> "Having public power and the right to levy taxes," Engels writes, "the officials now stand, as organs of society, above society. The free, voluntary respect that was accorded to the organs of the gentile [clan] constitution does not satisfy them, even if they could gain it...."

Special laws are enacted proclaiming the sanctity and immunity of the officials. "The shabbiest police servant" has more "authority" than the representative of the clan, but even the head of the military power of a civilized state may well envy the elder of a clan the "unrestrained respect" of society.

The question of the privileged position of the officials as organs of state power is raised here. The main point indicated is: what is it that places them above society? We shall see how this theoretical question was answered in practice by the Paris Commune in 1871 and how it was obscured from a reactionary standpoint by Kautsky in 1912.

> "Because the state arose from the need to hold class antagonisms in check, but because it arose, at the same time, in the midst of the conflict of these classes, it is, as a rule, the state of the most powerful, economically dominant class, which, through the medium of the state, becomes also the politically dominant class, and thus acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class...."

The ancient and feudal states were organs for the exploitation of the slaves and serfs; likewise,

> "the modern representative state is an instrument of exploitation of wage-labor by capital. By way of exception, however, periods occur in which the warring classes balance each other so nearly that the state power as ostensible mediator acquires, for the moment, a certain degree of independence of both...."

Such were the absolute monarchies of the 17th and 18th centuries, the Bonapartism of the First and Second Empires in France, and the Bismarck regime in Germany.

Such, we may add, is the Kerensky government in republican Russia since it began to persecute the revolutionary proletariat, at a moment when, owing to the leadership of the petty-bourgeois democrats, the Soviets have already become impotent, while the bourgeoisie are not yet strong enough simply to disperse them.

In a democratic republic, Engels continues, "wealth exercises its power indirectly, but all the more surely", first, by means of the "direct corruption of officials" (America); secondly, by means of an "alliance of the government and the Stock Exchange" (France and America).

At present, imperialism and the domination of the banks have "developed" into an exceptional art both these methods of upholding and giving effect to the omnipotence of wealth in democratic republics of all descriptions. Since, for instance, in the very first months of the Russian democratic republic, one might say during the honeymoon of the "socialist" S.R.s and Mensheviks joined in wedlock to the bourgeoisie, in the coalition government. Mr. Palchinsky obstructed every measure intended for curbing the capitalists and their marauding practices, their plundering of the state by means of war contracts; and since later on Mr. Palchinsky, upon resigning from the Cabinet (and being, of course, replaced by another quite similar Palchinsky), was "rewarded" by the capitalists with a lucrative job with a salary of 120,000 rubles per annum—what would you call that? Direct or indirect bribery? An alliance of the government and the syndicates, or "merely" friendly relations? What role do the Chernovs, Tseretelis, Avksentyevs and Skobelevs play? Are they the "direct" or only the indirect allies of the millionaire treasury-looters?

Another reason why the omnipotence of "wealth" is more certain in a democratic republic is that it does not depend on defects in the political machinery or on the faulty political shell of capitalism. A democratic republic is the best possible political shell for capitalism, and, therefore, once capital has gained possession of this very best shell (through the Palchinskys, Chernovs, Tseretelis and Co.), it establishes its power so securely, so firmly, that no change of persons, institutions or parties in the bourgeois-democratic republic can shake it.

We must also note that Engels is most explicit in calling universal suffrage as well an instrument of bourgeois rule. Universal suffrage, he says, obviously taking account of the long experience of German Social-Democracy, is "the gauge of the maturity of the working class. It cannot and never will be anything more in the present-day state."

The petty-bourgeois democrats, such as our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, and also their twin brothers, all the social-chauvinists and opportunists of Western Europe, expect just this "more" from universal suffrage. They themselves share, and instill into the minds of the people, the false notion that universal suffrage "in the present-day state" is really capable of revealing the will of the majority of the working people and of securing its realization.

Here, we can only indicate this false notion, only point out that Engels' perfectly clear statement is distorted at every step in the propaganda and agitation of the "official" (i.e., opportunist) socialist parties. A detailed exposure of the utter falsity of this notion which Engels brushes aside here is given in our further account of the views of Marx and Engels on the "present-day" state.

Engels gives a general summary of his views in the most popular of his works in the following words:

> "The state, then, has not existed from all eternity. There have been societies that did without it, that had no idea of the state and state power. At a certain stage of economic development, which was necessarily bound up with the split of society into classes, the state became a necessity owing to this split. We are now rapidly approaching a stage in the development of production at which the existence of these classes not only will have ceased to be a necessity, but will become a positive hindrance to production. They will fall as they arose at an earlier stage. Along with them the state will inevitably fall. Society, which will reorganize production on the basis of a free and equal association of the producers, will put the whole machinery of state where it will then belong: into a museum of antiquities, by the side of the spinning-wheel and the bronze ax."

We do not often come across this passage in the propaganda and agitation literature of the present-day Social-Democrats. Even when we do come across it, it is mostly quoted in the same manner as one bows before an icon, i.e., it is done to show official respect for Engels, and no attempt is made to gauge the breadth and depth of the revolution that this relegating of "the whole machinery of state to a museum of antiquities" implies. In most cases we do not even find an understanding of what Engels calls the state machine.

4. The "Withering Away" of the State, and Violent Revolution

Engels' words regarding the "withering away" of the state are so widely known, they are often quoted, and so clearly reveal the essence of the customary adaptation of Marxism to opportunism that we must deal with them in detail. We shall quote the whole argument from which they are taken.

> "The proletariat seizes from state power and turns the means of production into state property to begin with. But thereby it abolishes itself as the proletariat, abolishes all class distinctions and class antagonisms, and also abolishes the state as state. Society thus far, operating amid class antagonisms, needed the state, that is, an organization of the particular exploiting class, for the maintenance of its external conditions of production, and, therefore, especially, for the purpose of forcibly keeping the exploited class in the conditions of oppression determined by the given mode of production (slavery, serfdom or bondage, wage-labor). The state was the official representative of society as a whole, its concentration in a visible corporation. But it was this only insofar as it was the state of that class which itself represented, for its own time, society as a whole: in ancient times, the state of slave-owning citizens; in the Middle Ages, of the feudal nobility; in our own time, of 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 the present anarchy in production, with the collisions and excesses arising from this struggle, are removed, nothing more remains to be held in subjection—nothing necessitating a special coercive force, a state. The first act by which the state really comes forward as the representative of the whole of society—the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society—is also its last independent act as a state. State interference in social relations becomes, in one domain after another, superfluous, and then dies down 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 withers away. This gives the measure of the value of the phrase 'a free people's state',

> both as to its justifiable use for a long time from an agitational point of view, and as to its ultimate scientific insufficiency; and also, of the so-called anarchists' demand that the state be abolished overnight."[3]

It is safe to say that of this argument of Engels', which is so remarkably rich in ideas, only one point has become an integral part of socialist thought among modern socialist parties, namely, that according to Marx that state "withers away"—as distinct from the anarchist doctrine of the "abolition" of the state. To prune Marxism to such an extent means reducing it to opportunism, for this "interpretation" only leaves a vague notion of a slow, even, gradual change, of absence of leaps and storms, of absence of revolution. The current, widespread, popular, if one may say so, conception of the "withering away" of the state undoubtedly means obscuring, if not repudiating, revolution.

Such an "interpretation", however, is the crudest distortion of Marxism, advantageous only to the bourgeoisie. In its theory, it is based on disregard for the most important circumstances and considerations indicated in, say, Engels' "summary" argument we have just quoted in full.

In the first place, at the very outset of his argument, Engels says that, in seizing state power, the proletariat thereby "abolishes the state as state". It is not done to ponder over the meaning of this. Generally, it is either ignored altogether, or is considered to be something in the nature of "Hegelian weakness" on Engels' part. As a matter of fact, however, these words briefly express the experience of one of the greatest proletarian revolutions, the Paris Commune of 1871, of which we shall speak in greater detail in its proper place. As a matter of fact, Engels speaks here of the proletariat revolution "abolishing" the bourgeois state, while the words about the state withering away refer to the remnants of the proletarian state after the socialist revolution. According to Engels, the bourgeois state does not "wither away", but is "abolished" by the proletariat in the course of the revolution. What withers away after this revolution is the proletarian state or semi-state.

Secondly, the state is a "special coercive force". Engels gives this splendid and extremely profound definition here with the utmost lucidity. And from it follows that the "special coercive force" for the suppression of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie, of millions of working people by handfuls of the rich, must be replaced by a "special coercive force" for the suppression of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat (the dictatorship of the proletariat). This is precisely what is meant by "abolition of the state as state". This is precisely the "act" of taking possession of the means of production in the name of society. And it is self-evident that such a replacement of one (bourgeois) "special force" by another (proletarian) "special force" cannot possibly take place in the form of "withering away".

Thirdly, in speaking of the state "withering away", and the even more graphic and colorful "dying down of itself", Engels refers quite clearly and definitely to the period after "the state has taken possession of the means of production in the name of the whole of society", that is, after the socialist revolution. We all know that the political form of the "state" at that time is the most complete democracy. But it never enters the head of any of the opportunists, who shamelessly distort Marxism, that Engels is consequently speaking here of democracy "dying down of itself", or "withering away". This seems very strange at first sight. But it is "incomprehensible" only to those who have not thought about democracy also being a state and, consequently, also disappearing when the state disappears. Revolution alone can "abolish" the bourgeois state. The state in general, i.e., the most complete democracy, can only "wither away".

[3] Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Moscow, 1969, pp. 332-33.

Fourthly, after formulating his famous proposition that "the state withers away", Engels at once explains specifically that this proposition is directed against both the opportunists and the anarchists. In doing this, Engels puts in the forefront that conclusion, drawn from the proposition that "the state withers away", which is directed against the opportunists.

One can wager that out of every 10,000 persons who have read or heard about the "withering away" of the state, 9,990 are completely unaware, or do not remember, that Engels directed his conclusions from that proposition not against anarchists alone. And of the remaining 10, probably nine do not know the meaning of a "free people's state" or why an attack on this slogan means an attack on opportunists. This is how history is written! This is how a great revolutionary teaching is imperceptibly falsified and adapted to prevailing philistinism. The conclusion directed against the anarchists has been repeated thousands of times; it has been vulgarized, and rammed into people's heads in the shallowest form, and has acquired the strength of a prejudice, whereas the conclusion directed against the opportunists has been obscured and "forgotten"!

The "free people's state" was a program demand and a catchword current among the German Social-Democrats in the seventies. This catchword is devoid of all political content except that it describes the concept of democracy in a pompous philistine fashion. Insofar as it hinted in a legally permissible manner at a democratic republic, Engels was prepared to "justify" its use "for a time" from an agitational point of view. But it was an opportunist catchword, for it amounted to nothing more than prettifying bourgeois democracy, and was also a failure to understand the socialist criticism of the state in general. We are in favor of a democratic republic as the best form of state for the proletariat under capitalism. But we have no right to forget that wage slavery is the lot of the people even in the most democratic bourgeois republic. Furthermore, every state is a "special force" for the suppression of the oppressed class. Consequently, every state is not "free" and not a "people's state". Marx and Engels explained this repeatedly to their party comrades in the seventies.

Fifthly, the same work of Engels', whose arguments about the withering away of the state everyone remembers, also contains an argument of the significance of violent revolution. Engels' historical analysis of its role becomes a veritable panegyric on violent revolution. This, "no one remembers". It is not done in modern socialist parties to talk or even think about the significance of this idea, and it plays no part whatever in their daily propaganda and agitation among the people. And yet it is inseparably bound up with the "withering away" of the state into one harmonious whole.

Here is Engels' argument:

> "...That force, however, plays yet another role [other than that of a diabolical power] in history, a revolutionary role; that, in the words of Marx, it is the midwife of every old society which is pregnant with a new one, that it is the instrument with which social movement forces its way through and shatters the dead, fossilized political forms—of this there is not a word in Herr Dühring. It is only with sighs and groans that he admits the possibility that force will perhaps be necessary for the overthrow of an economy based on exploitation—unfortunately, because all use of force demoralizes, he says, the person who uses it. And this in Germany, where a violent collision—which may, after all, be forced on the people—would at least have the advantage of wiping out the servility which has penetrated the nation's mentality following the humiliation of the Thirty Years' War.[4] And

[4] Thirty Years' War (1618-48), the first European war, resulted from an aggravation of the antagonisms between various alignments of European states, and took the form of a struggle between Protestants and Catholics. It began with a revolt in Bohemia against the tyranny of the Hapsburg monarchy and the onslaught of Catholic reaction. The states which then entered the war formed two camps. The Pope, the Spanish and Austrian Hapsburgs and the Catholic princes of Germany, who rallied to the Catholic Church, opposed the Protestant countries—Bohemia, Denmark, Sweden, the Dutch Republic, and a number of German states that had accepted the Reformation. The Protestant countries were backed by the French kings, enemies of the Hapsburgs. Germany became the chief battlefield

> this person's mode of thought—dull, insipid, and impotent—presumes to impose itself on the most revolutionary party that history has ever known!"[5]

How can this panegyric on violent revolution, which Engels insistently brought to the attention of the German Social-Democrats between 1878 and 1894, i.e., right up to the time of his death, be combined with the theory of the "withering away" of the state to form a single theory?

Usually the two are combined by means of eclecticism, by an unprincipled or sophistic selection made arbitrarily (or to please the powers that be) of first one, then another argument, and in 99 cases out of 100, if not more, it is the idea of the "withering away" that is placed in the forefront. Dialectics are replaced by eclecticism—this is the most usual, the most wide-spread practice to be met with in present-day official Social-Democratic literature in relation to Marxism. This sort of substitution is, of course, nothing new; it was observed even in the history of classical Greek philosophy. In falsifying Marxism in opportunist fashion, the substitution of eclecticism for dialectics is the easiest way of deceiving the people. It gives an illusory satisfaction; it seems to take into account all sides of the process, all trends of development, all the conflicting influences, and so forth, whereas in reality it provides no integral and revolutionary conception of the process of social development at all.

We have already said above, and shall show more fully later, that the theory of Marx and Engels of the inevitability of a violent revolution refers to the bourgeois state. The latter cannot be superseded by the proletarian state (the dictatorship of the proletariat) through the process of "withering away", but, as a general rule, only through a violent revolution. The panegyric Engels sang in its honor, and which fully corresponds to Marx's repeated statements (see the concluding passages of *The Poverty of Philosophy*[6] and the *Communist Manifesto*,[7] with their proud and open proclamation of the inevitability of a violent revolution; see what Marx wrote nearly 30 years later, in criticizing the Gotha Program of 1875,[8] when he mercilessly castigated the opportunist character of that program)—this panegyric is by no means a mere "impulse", a mere declamation or a polemical sally. The necessity of systematically imbuing the masses with this and precisely this view of violent revolution lies at the root of the entire theory of Marx and Engels. The betrayal of their theory by the now prevailing social-chauvinist and Kautskyite trends expresses itself strikingly in both these trends ignoring such propaganda and agitation.

The supersession of the bourgeois state by the proletarian state is impossible without a violent revolution. The abolition of the proletarian state, i.e., of the state in general, is impossible except through the process of "withering away".

A detailed and concrete elaboration of these views was given by Marx and Engels when they studied each particular revolutionary situation, when they analyzed the lessons of the experience of each particular revolution. We shall now pass to this, undoubtedly the most important, part of their theory.

and object of military plunder and predatory claims. The war ended in 1648 with the signing of the Peace Treaty of Westphalia, which completed the political dismemberment of Germany.

[5] Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, 3rd German edition, p. 193.

[6] Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Moscow, 1973, pp. 151-52.

[7] Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1973, p. 137.

[8] *Gotha Program* – the program adopted by the Socialist Workers' Party of Germany in 1875, at the Gotha Congress, which united two German socialist parties, namely, the Eisenachers—led by August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht and influenced by Marx and Engels—and the Lassalleans. The program betrayed eclecticism and was opportunist, because the Eisenachers had made concessions to the Lassalleans on major issues and accepted Lassallean formulations. Marx in his *Critique of the Gotha Program*, and Engels in his letter to Bebel of March 18-28, 11475, devastated the Gotha Program, which they regarded as a serious step backwards compared with the Eisenach program of 1869.

Chapter 2: The Experience of 1848-51

1. The Eve of Revolution

The first works of mature Marxism—*The Poverty of Philosophy* and the *Communist Manifesto*—appeared just on the eve of the revolution of 1848. For this reason, in addition to presenting the general principles of Marxism, they reflect to a certain degree the concrete revolutionary situation of the time. It will, therefore, be more expedient, perhaps, to examine what the authors of these works said about the state immediately before they drew conclusions from the experience of the years 1848-51.

In *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx wrote:

> "The working class, in the course of development, will substitute for the old bourgeois society an association which will preclude classes and their antagonism, and there will be no more political power groups, since the political power is precisely the official expression of class antagonism in bourgeois society."[1]

It is instructive to compare this general exposition of the idea of the state disappearing after the abolition of classes with the exposition contained in the *Communist Manifesto*, written by Marx and Engels a few months later—in November 1847, to be exact:

> "...In depicting the most general phases of the development of the proletariat, we traced the more or less veiled civil war, raging within existing society up to the point where that war breaks out into open revolution, and where the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat....
>
> "...We have seen above that the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of the ruling class to win the battle of democracy.
>
> "The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degree, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the state, i.e., of the proletariat organized as the ruling class; and to increase the total productive forces as rapidly as possible."[2]

Here we have a formulation of one of the most remarkable and most important ideas of Marxism on the subject of the state, namely, the idea of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" (as Marx and Engels began to call it after the Paris Commune); and, also, a highly interesting definition of the state, which is also one of the "forgotten words" of Marxism: "the state, i.e., the proletariat organized as the ruling class."

This definition of the state has never been explained in the prevailing propaganda and agitation literature of the official Social-Democratic parties. More than that, it has been deliberately ignored, for it is absolutely irreconcilable with reformism, and is a slap in the face for the common opportunist prejudices and philistine illusions about the "peaceful development of democracy".

The proletariat needs the state—this is repeated by all the opportunists, social-chauvinists and Kautskyites, who assure us that this is what Marx taught. But they "forget" to add that, in the first place, according to Marx, the proletariat needs only a state which is withering away, i.e., a state so constituted that it begins to wither away immediately, and cannot but wither away. And, secondly, the working people need a "state, i.e., the proletariat organized as the ruling class".

The state is a special organization of force: it is an organization of violence for the suppression of some class. What class must the proletariat suppress? Naturally, only the exploiting class, i.e., the bourgeoisie. The working people need the state only to suppress the resistance of the exploiters, and only the proletariat can direct this

[1] Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Moscow, 1973, p. 151.
[2] Marx and Engels, "The Manifesto of the Communist Party", *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1973, pp. 118-19 and 126.

suppression, can carry it out. For the proletariat is the only class that is consistently revolutionary, the only class that can unite all the working and exploited people in the struggle against the bourgeoisie, in completely removing it.

The exploiting classes need political rule to maintain exploitation, i.e., in the selfish interests of an insignificant minority against the vast majority of all people. The exploited classes need political rule in order to completely abolish all exploitation, i.e., in the interests of the vast majority of the people, and against the insignificant minority consisting of the modern slave-owners—the landowners and capitalists.

The petty-bourgeois democrats, those sham socialists who replaced the class struggle by dreams of class harmony, even pictured the socialist transformation in a dreamy fashion—not as the overthrow of the rule of the exploiting class, but as the peaceful submission of the minority to the majority which has become aware of its aims. This petty-bourgeois utopia, which is inseparable from the idea of the state being above classes, led in practice to the betrayal of the interests of the working classes, as was shown, for example, by the history of the French revolutions of 1848 and 1871, and by the experience of "socialist" participation in bourgeois Cabinets in Britain, France, Italy and other countries at the turn of the century.

All his life Marx fought against this petty-bourgeois socialism, now revived in Russia by the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties. He developed his theory of the class struggle consistently, down to the theory of political power, of the state.

The overthrow of bourgeois rule can be accomplished only by the proletariat, the particular class whose economic conditions of existence prepare it for this task and provide it with the possibility and the power to perform it. While the bourgeoisie break up and disintegrate the peasantry and all the petty-bourgeois groups, they weld together, unite and organize the proletariat. Only the proletariat—by virtue of the economic role it plays in large-scale production—is capable of being the leader of all the working and exploited people, whom the bourgeoisie exploit, oppress and crush, often not less but more than they do the proletarians, but who are incapable of waging an independent struggle for their emancipation.

The theory of class struggle, applied by Marx to the question of the state and the socialist revolution, leads as a matter of course to the recognition of the political rule of the proletariat, of its dictatorship, i.e., of undivided power directly backed by the armed force of the people. The overthrow of the bourgeoisie can be achieved only by the proletariat becoming the ruling class, capable of crushing the inevitable and desperate resistance of the bourgeoisie, and of organizing all the working and exploited people for the new economic system.

The proletariat needs state power, a centralized organization of force, an organization of violence, both to crush the resistance of the exploiters and to lead the enormous mass of the population—the peasants, the petty bourgeoisie, and semi-proletarians—in the work of organizing a socialist economy.

By educating the workers' party, Marxism educates the vanguard of the proletariat, capable of assuming power and leading the whole people to socialism, of directing and organizing the new system, of being the teacher, the guide, the leader of all the working and exploited people in organizing their social life without the bourgeoisie and against the bourgeoisie. By contrast, the opportunism now prevailing trains the members of the workers' party to be the representatives of the better-paid workers, who lose touch with the masses, "get along" fairly well under capitalism, and sell their birthright for a mass of pottage, i.e., renounce their role as revolutionary leaders of the people against the bourgeoisie.

Marx's theory of "the state, i.e., the proletariat organized as the ruling class", is inseparably bound up with the whole of his doctrine of the revolutionary role of the proletariat in history. The culmination of this rule is the proletarian dictatorship, the political rule of the proletariat.

But since the proletariat needs the state as a special form of organization of violence against the bourgeoisie, the following conclusion suggests itself: is it conceivable that such an organization can be created without first abolishing, destroying the state machine created by the bourgeoisie for themselves? The *Communist Manifesto* leads straight to this conclusion, and it is of this conclusion that Marx speaks when summing up the experience of the revolution of 1848-51.

2. The Revolution Summed Up

Marx sums up his conclusions from the revolution of 1848-51, on the subject of the state we are concerned with, in the following argument contained in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*:

> "But the revolution is throughgoing. It is still journeying through purgatory. It does its work methodically. By December 2, 1851 [the day of Louis Bonaparte's coup d'état], it had completed one half of its preparatory work. It is now completing the other half. First it perfected the parliamentary power, in order to be able to overthrow it. Now that it has attained this, it is perfecting the executive power, reducing it to its purest expression, isolating it, setting it up against itself as the sole object, in order to concentrate all its forces of destruction against it. And when it has done this second half of its preliminary work, Europe will leap from its seat and exultantly exclaim: well grubbed, old mole!
>
> "This executive power with its enormous bureaucratic and military organization, with its vast and ingenious state machinery, with a host of officials numbering half a million, besides an army of another half million, this appalling parasitic body, which enmeshes the body of French society and chokes all its pores, sprang up in the days of the absolute monarchy, with the decay of the feudal system, which it helped to hasten." The first French Revolution developed centralization, "but at the same time" it increased "the extent, the attributes and the number of agents of governmental power. Napoleon completed this state machinery". The legitimate monarchy and the July monarchy "added nothing but a greater division of labor"....
>
> "...Finally, in its struggle against the revolution, the parliamentary republic found itself compelled to strengthen, along with repressive measures, the resources and centralization of governmental power. All revolutions perfected this machine instead of smashing it. The parties that contended in turn for domination regarded the possession of this huge state edifice as the principal spoils of the victor."[3]

In this remarkable argument, Marxism takes a tremendous step forward compared with the *Communist Manifesto*. In the latter, the question of the state is still treated in an extremely abstract manner, in the most general terms and expressions. In the above-quoted passage, the question is treated in a concrete manner, and the conclusion is extremely precise, definite, practical and palpable: all previous revolutions perfected the state machine, whereas it must be broken, smashed.

This conclusion is the chief and fundamental point in the Marxist theory of the state. And it is precisely this fundamental point which has been completely ignored by the dominant official Social-Democratic parties and, indeed, distorted (as we shall see later) by the foremost theoretician of the Second International, Karl Kautsky.

The *Communist Manifesto* gives a general summary of history, which compels us to regard the state as the organ of class rule and leads us to the inevitable conclusion that the proletariat cannot overthrow the bourgeoisie without first winning political power, without attaining political supremacy, without transforming the state into the "proletariat organized as the ruling class"; and that this proletarian state will begin to wither away immediately after its victory because the state is unnecessary and cannot exist in a society in which there are no class

[3] Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte", Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1973, p. 477.

antagonisms. The question as to how, from the point of view of historical development, the replacement of the bourgeois by the proletarian state is to take place is not raised here.

This is the question Marx raises and answers in 1852. True to his philosophy of dialectical materialism, Marx takes as his basis the historical experience of the great years of revolution, 1848 to 1851. Here, as everywhere else, his theory is a summing up of experience, illuminated by a profound philosophical conception of the world and a rich knowledge of history.

The problem of the state is put specifically: How did the bourgeois state, the state machine necessary for the rule of the bourgeoisie, come into being historically? What changes did it undergo, what evolution did it perform in the course of bourgeois revolutions and in the face of the independent actions of the oppressed classes? What are the tasks of the proletariat in relation to this state machine?

The centralized state power that is peculiar to bourgeois society came into being in the period of the fall of absolutism. Two institutions most characteristic of this state machine are the bureaucracy and the standing army. In their works, Marx and Engels repeatedly show that the bourgeoisie are connected with these institutions by thousands of threads. Every worker's experience illustrates this connection in an extremely graphic and impressive manner. From its own bitter experience, the working class learns to recognize this connection. That is why it so easily grasps and so firmly learns the doctrine which shows the inevitability of this connection, a doctrine which the petty-bourgeois democrats either ignorantly and flippantly deny, or still more flippantly admit "in general", while forgetting to draw appropriate practical conclusions.

The bureaucracy and the standing army are a "parasite" on the body of bourgeois society—a parasite created by the internal antagonisms which rend that society, but a parasite which "chokes" all its vital pores. The Kautskyite opportunism now prevailing in official Social-Democracy considers the view that the state is a parasitic organism to be the peculiar and exclusive attribute of anarchism. It goes without saying that this distortion of Marxism is of vast advantage to those philistines who have reduced socialism to the unheard-of disgrace of justifying and prettifying the imperialist war by applying to it the concept of "defense of the fatherland"; but it is unquestionably a distortion, nevertheless.

The development, perfection, and strengthening of the bureaucratic and military apparatus proceeded during all the numerous bourgeois revolutions which Europe has witnessed since the fall of feudalism. In particular, it is the petty bourgeois who are attracted to the side of the big bourgeoisie and are largely subordinated to them through this apparatus, which provides the upper sections of the peasants, small artisans, tradesmen, and the like with comparatively comfortable, quiet, and respectable jobs raising the holders above the people. Consider what happened in Russia during the six months following February 27, 1917. The official posts which formerly were given by preference to the Black Hundreds have now become the spoils of the Cadets, Mensheviks, and Social-Revolutionaries. Nobody has really thought of introducing any serious reforms. Every effort has been made to put them off "until the Constituent Assembly meets", and to steadily put off its convocation until after the war! But there has been no delay, no waiting for the Constituent Assembly, in the matter of dividing the spoils of getting the lucrative jobs of ministers, deputy ministers, governors-general, etc., etc.! The game of combinations that has been played in forming the government has been, in essence, only an expression of this division and redivision of the "spoils", which has been going on above and below, throughout the country, in every department of central and local government. The six months between February 27 and August 27, 1917, can be summed up,

objectively summed up beyond all dispute, as follows: reforms shelved, distribution of official jobs accomplished and "mistakes" in the distribution corrected by a few redistributions.

But the more the bureaucratic apparatus is "redistributed" among the various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties (among the Cadets, Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks in the case of Russia), the more keenly aware the oppressed classes, and the proletariat at their head, become of their irreconcilable hostility to the whole of bourgeois society. Hence the need for all bourgeois parties, even for the most democratic and "revolutionary-democratic" among them, to intensify repressive measures against the revolutionary proletariat, to strengthen the apparatus of coercion, i.e., the state machine. This course of events compels the revolution "to concentrate all its forces of destruction" against the state power, and to set itself the aim, not of improving the state machine, but of smashing and destroying it.

It was not logical reasoning, but actual developments, the actual experience of 1848-51, that led to the matter being presented in this way. The extent to which Marx held strictly to the solid ground of historical experience can be seen from the fact that, in 1852, he did not yet specifically raise the question of what was to take the place of the state machine to be destroyed. Experience had not yet provided material for dealing with this question, which history placed on the agenda later on, in 1871. In 1852, all that could be established with the accuracy of scientific observation was that the proletarian revolution had approached the task of "concentrating all its forces of destruction" against the state power, of "smashing" the state machine.

Here the question may arise: is it correct to generalize the experience, observations and conclusions of Marx, to apply them to a field that is wider than the history of France during the three years 1848-51? Before proceeding to deal with this question, let us recall a remark made by Engels and then examine the facts. In his introduction to the third edition of *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, Engels wrote:

> "France is the country where, more than anywhere else, the historical class struggles were each time fought out to a finish, and where, consequently, the changing political forms within which they move and in which their results are summarized have been stamped in the sharpest outlines. The center of feudalism in the Middle Ages, the model country, since the Renaissance, of a unified monarchy based on social estates, France demolished feudalism in the Great Revolution and established the rule of the bourgeoisie in a classical purity unequaled by any other European land. And the struggle of the upward-striving proletariat against the ruling bourgeoisie appeared here in an acute form unknown elsewhere."[4]

The last remark is out of date insomuch as since 1871 there has been a lull in the revolutionary struggle of the French proletariat, although, long as this lull may be, it does not at all preclude the possibility that in the coming proletarian revolution France may show herself to be the classic country of the class struggle to a finish.

Let us, however, cast a general glance over the history of the advanced countries at the turn of the century. We shall see that the same process went on more slowly, in more varied forms, in a much wider field: on the one hand, the development of "parliamentary power" both in the republican countries (France, America, Switzerland), and in the monarchies (Britain, Germany to a certain extent, Italy, the Scandinavia countries, etc.); on the other hand, a struggle for power among the various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties which distributed and redistributed the "spoils" of office, with the foundations of bourgeois society unchanged; and, lastly, the perfection and consolidation of the "executive power", of its bureaucratic and military apparatus.

There is not the slightest doubt that these features are common to the whole of the modern evolution of all capitalist states in general. In the last three years, 1848-51, France displayed, in a swift, sharp, concentrated form,

[4] *Ibid*., p. 396.

the very same processes of development which are peculiar to the whole capitalist world. Imperialism—the era of bank capital, the era of gigantic capitalist monopolies, of the development of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism—has clearly shown an unprecedented growth in its bureaucratic and military apparatus in connection with the intensification of repressive measures against the proletariat both in the monarchical and in the freest, republican countries.

World history is now undoubtedly leading, on an incomparably larger scale than in 1852, to the "concentration of all the forces" of the proletarian revolution on the "destruction" of the state machine.

What the proletariat will put in its place is suggested by the highly instructive material furnished by the Paris Commune.

3. The Presentation of the Question by Marx in 1852

In 1907, Mehring, in the magazine *Neue Zeit*[5] (Vol. XXV-2, p. 164), published extracts from Marx's letter to Weydemeyer dated March 5, 1852. This letter, among other things, contains the following remarkable observation:

> "And now as to myself, no credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society or the struggle between them. Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle and bourgeois economists, the economic anatomy of classes. What I did that was new was to prove: (1) that the existence of classes is only bound up with the particular, historical phases in the development of production (*historische Entwicklungsphasen der Produktion*), (2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat, (3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society."[6]

In these words, Marx succeeded in expressing with striking clarity, first, the chief and radical difference between his theory and that of the foremost and most profound thinkers of the bourgeoisie; and, secondly, the essence of his theory of the state.

It is often said and written that the main point in Marx's theory is the class struggle. But this is wrong. And this wrong notion very often results in an opportunist distortion of Marxism and its falsification in a spirit acceptable to the bourgeoisie. For the theory of the class struggle was created not by Marx, but by the bourgeoisie before Marx, and, generally speaking, it is acceptable to the bourgeoisie. Those who recognize only the class struggle are not yet Marxists; they may be found to be still within the bounds of bourgeois thinking and bourgeois politics. To confine Marxism to the theory of the class struggle means curtailing Marxism, distorting it, reducing it to something acceptable to the bourgeoisie. Only he is a Marxist who extends the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat. That is what constitutes the most profound distinction between the Marxist and the ordinary petty (as well as big) bourgeois. This is the touchstone on which the real understanding and recognition of Marxism should be tested. And it is not surprising that when the history of Europe brought the working class face-to-face with this question as a practical issue, not only all the opportunists and reformists, but all the Kautskyites (people who vacillate between reformism and Marxism)

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[5] *Die Neue Zeit* (New Times) – theoretical journal of the German Social-Democratic Party, published in Stuttgart from 1883 to 1923. It was edited by Karl Kautsky till October 1917 and by Heinrich Cunow in the subsequent period. It published some of Marx's and Engels's writings for the first time. Engels offered advice to its editors and often criticized them for departures from Marxism.

In the second half of the nineties, upon Engels's death, the journal began systematically to publish revisionist articles, including a serial by Bernstein entitled "Problems of Socialism". which initiated a revisionist campaign against Marxism. During the First World War the journal adhered to a Centrist position, and virtually hacked the social-chauvinists.

[6] Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1965.

proved to be miserable philistines and petty-bourgeois democrats repudiating the dictatorship of the proletariat. Kautsky's pamphlet, *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, published in August 1918, i.e., long after the first edition of the present book, is a perfect example of petty-bourgeois distortion of Marxism and base renunciation of it in deeds, while hypocritically recognizing it in words (see my pamphlet, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, Petrograd and Moscow, 1918).

Opportunism today, as represented by its principal spokesman, the ex-Marxist Karl Kautsky, fits in completely with Marx's characterization of the bourgeois position quoted above, for this opportunism limits recognition of the class struggle to the sphere of bourgeois relations. (Within this sphere, within its framework, not a single educated liberal will refuse to recognize the class struggle "in principle"!) Opportunism does not extend recognition of the class struggle to the cardinal point, to the period of transition from capitalism to communism, of the overthrow and the complete abolition of the bourgeoisie. In reality, this period inevitably is a period of an unprecedentedly violent class struggle in unprecedentedly acute forms, and, consequently, during this period the state must inevitably be a state that is democratic in a new way (for the proletariat and the propertyless in general) and dictatorial in a new way (against the bourgeoisie).

Further. The essence of Marx's theory of the state has been mastered only by those who realize that the dictatorship of a single class is necessary not only for every class society in general, not only for the proletariat which has overthrown the bourgeoisie, but also for the entire historical period which separates capitalism from "classless society", from communism. Bourgeois states are most varied in form, but their essence is the same: all these states, whatever their form, in the final analysis are inevitably the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The transition from capitalism to communism is certainly bound to yield a tremendous abundance and variety of political forms, but the essence will inevitably be the same: the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Chapter 3: Experience of the Paris Commune of 1871. Marx's Analysis

1. What Made the Communards' Attempt Heroic?

It is well known that in the autumn of 1870, a few months before the Commune, Marx warned the Paris workers that any attempt to overthrow the government would be the folly of despair. But when, in March 1871, a decisive battle was forced upon the workers and they accepted it, when the uprising had become a fact, Marx greeted the proletarian revolution with the greatest enthusiasm, in spite of unfavorable auguries. Marx did not persist in the pedantic attitude of condemning an "untimely" movement as did the ill-famed Russian renegade from Marxism, Plekhanov, who in November 1905 wrote encouragingly about the workers' and peasants' struggle, but after December 1905 cried, liberal fashion: "They should not have taken up arms."

Marx, however, was not only enthusiastic about the heroism of the Communards, who, as he expressed it, "stormed heaven". Although the mass revolutionary movement did not achieve its aim, he regarded it as a historic experience of enormous importance, as a certain advance of the world proletarian revolution, as a practical step that was more important than hundreds of programs and arguments. Marx endeavored to analyze this experiment, to draw tactical lessons from it and re-examine his theory in the light of it.

The only "correction" Marx thought it necessary to make to the *Communist Manifesto* he made on the basis of the revolutionary experience of the Paris Commune.

The last preface to the new German edition of the *Communist Manifesto*, signed by both its authors, is dated June 24, 1872. In this preface the authors, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, say that the program of the *Communist Manifesto* "has in some details become out-of-date", and the go on to say:

> "... One thing especially was proved by the Commune, viz., that 'the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes'...."[1]

The authors took the words that are in single quotation marks in this passage from Marx's book, *The Civil War in France*.

Thus, Marx and Engels regarded one principal and fundamental lesson of the Paris Commune as being of such enormous importance that they introduced it as an important correction into the *Communist Manifesto*.

Most characteristically, it is this important correction that has been distorted by the opportunists, and its meaning probably is not known to nine-tenths, if not ninety-nine-hundredths, of the readers of the *Communist Manifesto*. We shall deal with this distortion more fully farther on, in a chapter devoted specially to distortions. Here it will be sufficient to note that the current, vulgar "interpretation" of Marx's famous statement just quoted is that Marx here allegedly emphasizes the idea of slow development in contradistinction to the seizure of power, and so on.

As a matter of fact, the exact opposite is the case. Marx's idea is that the working class must break up, smash the "ready-made state machinery", and not confine itself merely to laying hold of it.

On April 12, 1871, i.e., just at the time of the Commune, Marx wrote to Kugelmann:

> "If you look up the last chapter of my Eighteenth Brumaire, you will find that I declare that the next attempt of the French Revolution will be no longer, as before, to transfer the bureaucratic-military machine from one hand to another, but to *smash* it [Marx's italics—the original is *zerbrechen*], and this is the precondition for every real people's revolution on the continent. And this is what our heroic Party comrades in Paris are attempting."[2]

(The letters of Marx to Kugelmann have appeared in Russian in no less than two editions, one of which I edited and supplied with a preface.)

The words, "to smash the bureaucratic-military machine", briefly express the principal lesson of Marxism regarding the tasks of the proletariat during a revolution in relation to the state. And this is the lesson that has been not only completely ignored, but positively distorted by the prevailing, Kautskyite, "interpretation" of Marxism!

As for Marx's reference to *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, we have quoted the relevant passage in full above.

It is interesting to note, in particular, two points in the above-quoted argument of Marx. First, he restricts his conclusion to the Continent. This was understandable in 1871, when Britain was still the model of a purely capitalist country, but without a militarist clique and, to a considerable degree, without a bureaucracy. Marx therefore excluded Britain, where a revolution, even a people's revolution, then seemed possible, and indeed was possible, without the precondition of destroying "ready-made state machinery".

Today, in 1917, at the time of the first great imperialist war, this restriction made by Marx is no longer valid. Both Britain and America, the biggest and the last representatives—in the whole world—of Anglo-Saxon "liberty", in the sense that they had no militarist cliques and bureaucracy, have completely sunk into the all-European filthy, bloody morass of bureaucratic-military institutions which subordinate everything to themselves,

[1] Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, p. 22.
[2] Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1965, pp. 262-63.

and suppress everything. Today, in Britain and America, too, "the precondition for every real people's revolution" is the *smashing*, the *destruction* of the "ready-made state machinery" (made and brought up to the "European", general imperialist, perfection in those countries in the years 1914-17).

Secondly, particular attention should be paid to Marx's extremely profound remark that the destruction of the bureaucratic-military state machine is "the precondition for every real *people's* revolution". This idea of a "people's revolution seems strange coming from Marx, so that the Russian Plekhanovites and Mensheviks, those followers of Struve who wish to be regarded as Marxists, might possibly declare such an expression to be a "slip of the pen" on Marx's part. They have reduced Marxism to such a state of wretchedly liberal distortion that nothing exists for them beyond the antithesis between bourgeois revolution and proletarian revolution, and even this antithesis they interpret in an utterly lifeless way.

If we take the revolutions of the 20th century as examples we shall, of course, have to admit that the Portuguese and the Turkish revolutions are both bourgeois revolutions. Neither of them, however, is a "people's" revolution, since, in neither, do the mass of the people, their vast majority, come out actively, independently, with their own economic and political demands to any noticeable degree. By contrast, although the Russian bourgeois revolution of 1905-07 displayed no such "brilliant" successes as at time fell to the Portuguese and Turkish revolutions, it was undoubtedly a "real people's" revolution, since the mass of the people, their majority, the very lowest social groups, crushed by oppression and exploitation, rose independently and stamped on the entire course of the revolution the imprint of *their* own demands, *their* attempt to build in their own way a new society in place of the old society that was being destroyed.

In Europe, in 1871, the proletariat did not constitute the majority of the people in any country on the Continent. A "people's" revolution, one actually sweeping the majority into its stream, could be such only if it embraced both the proletariat and the peasants. These two classes then constituted the "people". These two classes are united by the fact that the "bureaucratic-military state machine" oppresses, crushes, and exploits them. To smash this machine, to break it up, is truly in the interest of the "people", of their majority, of the workers and most of the peasants, is "the precondition" for a free alliance of the poor peasant and the proletarians, whereas without such an alliance democracy is unstable and socialist transformation is impossible.

As is well known, the Paris Commune was actually working its way toward such an alliance, although it did not reach its goal owing to a number of circumstances, internal and external.

Consequently, in speaking of a "real people's revolution", Marx, without in the least discounting the special features of the petty bourgeois (he spoke a great deal about them and often), took strict account of the actual balance of class forces in most of the continental countries of Europe in 1871. On the other hand, he stated that the "smashing" of the state machine was required by the interests of both the workers and the peasants, that it united them, that it placed before them the common task of removing the "parasite" and of replacing it by something new.

By what exactly?

2. What is to Replace the Smashed State Machine?

In 1847, in the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx's answer to this question was as yet a purely abstract one; to be exact, it was an answer that indicated the tasks, but not the ways of accomplishing them. The answer given in the *Communist Manifesto* was that this machine was to be replaced by "the proletariat organized as the ruling class", by the "winning of the battle of democracy".

Marx did not indulge in utopias; he expected the *experience* of the mass movement to provide the reply to the question as to the specific forms this organization of the proletariat as the ruling class would assume and as to the exact manner in which this organization would be combined with the most complete, most consistent "winning of the battle of democracy."

Marx subjected the experience of the Commune, meager as it was, to the most careful analysis in *The Civil War in France*. Let us quote the most important passages of this work. [All the following quotes in this Chapter, with one exception, are so cited—*Ed.*]

Originating from the Middle Ages, there developed in the 19th century "the centralized state power, with its ubiquitous organs of standing army, police, bureaucracy, clergy, and judicature." With the development of class antagonisms between capital and labor, "state power assumed more and more the character of a public force organized for the suppression of the working class, of a machine of class rule. After every revolution, which marks an advance in the class struggle, the purely coercive character of the state power stands out in bolder and bolder relief." After the revolution of 1848-49, state power became "the national war instruments of capital against labor". The Second Empire consolidated this.

"The direct antithesis to the empire was the Commune." It was the "specific form" of "a republic that was not only to remove the monarchical form of class rule, but class rule itself."

What was this "specific" form of the proletarian, socialist republic? What was the state it began to create?

"The first decree of the Commune, therefore, was the suppression of the standing army, and the substitution for it of the armed people."

This demand now figures in the program of every party calling itself socialist. The real worth of their program, however, is best shown by the behavior of our Social-Revolutionists and Mensheviks, who, right after the revolution of February 27, refused to carry out this demand!

> "The Commune was formed of the municipal councilors, chosen by universal suffrage in the various wards of the town, responsible and revocable at any time. The majority of its members were naturally working men, or acknowledged representatives of the working class.... The police, which until then had been the instrument of the Government, was at once stripped of its political attributes, and turned into the responsible, and at all times revocable, agent of the Commune. So were the officials of all other branches of the administration. From the members of the Commune downwards, the public service had to be done at *workmen's wages*. The privileges and the representation allowances of the high dignitaries of state disappeared along with the high dignitaries themselves.... Having once got rid of the standing army and the police, the instruments of physical force of the old government, the Commune proceeded at once to break the instrument of spiritual suppression, the power of the priests.... The judicial functionaries lost that sham independence... they were thenceforward to be elective, responsible, and revocable."[3]

The Commune, therefore, appears to have replaced the smashed state machine "only" by fuller democracy: abolition of the standing army; all officials to be elected and subject to recall. But as a matter of fact, this "only" signifies a gigantic replacement of certain institutions by other institutions of a fundamentally different type. This is exactly a case of "quantity being transformed into quality": democracy, introduced as fully and consistently as is at all conceivable, is transformed from bourgeois into proletarian democracy; from the state (a special force for the suppression of a particular class) into something which is no longer the state proper.

It is still necessary to suppress the bourgeoisie and crush their resistance. This was particularly necessary for the Commune; and one of the reasons for its defeat was that it did not do this with sufficient determination. The organ of suppression, however, is here the majority of the population, and not a minority, as was always the case

[3] Marx, "The Civil War in France", Marx and Engels, *Selected Works,* Vol. II, Moscow, 1973, pp. 217-21.

under slavery, serfdom, and wage slavery. And since the majority of people itself suppresses its oppressors, a "special force" for suppression is no longer necessary! In this sense, the state begins to wither away. Instead of the special institutions of a privileged minority (privileged officialdom, the chiefs of the standing army), the majority itself can directly fulfill all these functions, and the more the functions of state power are performed by the people as a whole, the less need there is for the existence of this power.

In this connection, the following measures of the Commune, emphasized by Marx, are particularly noteworthy: the abolition of all representation allowances, and of all monetary privileges to officials, the reduction of the remuneration of all servants of the state to the level of "workmen's wages". This shows more clearly than anything else the turn from bourgeois to proletarian democracy, from the democracy of the oppressors to that of the oppressed classes, from the state as a "special force" for the suppression of a particular class to the suppression of the oppressors by the general force of the majority of the people—the workers and the peasants. And it is on this particularly striking point, perhaps the most important as far as the problem of the state is concerned, that the ideas of Marx have been most completely ignored! In popular commentaries, the number of which is legion, this is not mentioned. The thing done is to keep silent about it as if it were a piece of old-fashioned "naivete", just as Christians, after their religion had been given the status of state religion, "forgot" the "naivete" of primitive Christianity with its democratic revolutionary spirit.

The reduction of the remuneration of high state officials seem "simply" a demand of naive, primitive democracy. One of the "founders" of modern opportunism, the ex-Social-Democrat Eduard Bernstein, has more than once repeated the vulgar bourgeois jeers at "primitive" democracy. Like all opportunists, and like the present Kautskyites, he did not understand at all that, first of all, the transition from capitalism to socialism is impossible without a certain "reversion" to "primitive" democracy (for how else can the majority, and then the whole population without exception, proceed to discharge state functions?); and that, secondly, "primitive democracy" based on capitalism and capitalist culture is not the same as primitive democracy in prehistoric or pre-capitalist times. Capitalist culture has created large-scale production, factories, railways, the postal service, telephones, etc., and on this basis the great majority of the functions of the old "state power" have become so simplified and can be reduced to such exceedingly simple operations of registration, filing, and checking that they can be easily performed by every literate person, can quite easily be performed for ordinary "workmen's wages", and that these functions can (and must) be stripped of every shadow of privilege, of every semblance of "official grandeur".

All officials, without exception, elected and subject to recall at any time, their salaries reduced to the level of ordinary "workmen's wages"—these simple and "self-evident" democratic measures, while completely uniting the interests of the workers and the majority of the peasants, at the same time serve as a bridge leading from capitalism to socialism. These measures concern the reorganization of the state, the purely political reorganization of society; but of course, they acquire their full meaning and significance only in connection with the "expropriation of the expropriators" either bring accomplished or in preparation, i.e., with the transformation of capitalist private ownership of the means of production into social ownership.

> "The Commune," Marx wrote, "made the catchword of all bourgeois revolutions, cheap government, a reality, by abolishing the two greatest sources of expenditure—the army and the officialdom."

From the peasants, as from other sections of the petty bourgeoisie, only an insignificant few "rise to the top", "get on in the world" in the bourgeois sense, i.e., become either well-to-do, bourgeois, or officials in secure and privileged positions. In every capitalist country where there are peasants (as there are in most capitalist countries),

the vast majority of them are oppressed by the government and long for its overthrow, long for "cheap" government. This can be achieved only by the proletariat; and by achieving it, the proletariat at the same time takes a step towards the socialist reorganization of the state.

3. Abolition of Parliamentarism

> "The Commune," Marx wrote, "was to be a working, not a parliamentary, body, executive and legislative at the same time....
>
> "Instead of deciding once in three or six years which member of the ruling class was to represent and repress [*ver-* and *zertreten*] the people in parliament, universal suffrage was to serve the people constituted in communes, as individual suffrage serves every other employer in the search for workers, foremen and accountants for his business."

Owing to the prevalence of social-chauvinism and opportunism, this remarkable criticism of parliamentarism, made in 1871, also belongs now to the "forgotten words" of Marxism. The professional Cabinet Ministers and parliamentarians, the traitors to the proletariat and the "practical" socialists of our day, have left all criticism of parliamentarism to the anarchists, and, on this wonderfully reasonable ground, they denounce all criticism of parliamentarism as "anarchism"!! It is not surprising that the proletariat of the "advanced'' parliamentary countries, disgusted with such "socialists'' as the Scheidemanns, Davids, Legiens, Sembats, Renaudels, Hendersons, Vanderveldes, Staunings, Brantings, Bissolatis, and Co., has been with increasing frequency giving its sympathies to anarcho-syndicalism, in spite of the fact that the latter is merely the twin brother of opportunism.

For Marx, however, revolutionary dialectics was never the empty fashionable phrase, the toy rattle, which Plekhanov, Kautsky and others have made of it. Marx knew how to break with anarchism ruthlessly for its inability to make use even of the "pigsty" of bourgeois parliamentarism, especially when the situation was obviously not revolutionary; but at the same time, he knew how to subject parliamentarism to genuinely revolutionary proletarian criticism.

To decide once every few years which members of the ruling class is to repress and crush the people through parliament—this is the real essence of bourgeois parliamentarism, not only in parliamentary-constitutional monarchies, but also in the most democratic republics.

But if we deal with the question of the state, and if we consider parliamentarism as one of the institutions of the state, from the point of view of the tasks of the proletariat in this field, what is the way out of parliamentarism? How can it be dispensed with?

Once again, we must say: the lessons of Marx, based on the study of the Commune, have been so completely forgotten that the present-day "Social-Democrat" (i.e., present-day traitor to socialism) really cannot understand any criticism of parliamentarism other than anarchist or reactionary criticism.

The way out of parliamentarism is not, of course, the abolition of representative institutions and the elective principle, but the conversion of the representative institutions from talking shops into "working" bodies. "The Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary, body, executive and legislative at the same time."

"A working, not a parliamentary body"—this is a blow straight from the shoulder at the present-day parliamentarian country, from America to Switzerland, from France to Britain, Norway and so forth—in these countries the real business of "state" is performed behind the scenes and is carried on by the departments, chancelleries, and General Staffs. Parliament is given up to talk for the special purpose of fooling the "common people''. This is so true that even in the Russian republic, a bourgeois-democratic republic, all these sins of parliamentarism came out at once, even before it managed to set up a real parliament. The heroes of rotten philistinism, such as the Skobelevs and Tseretelis, the Chernovs and Avksentyevs, have even succeeded in

polluting the Soviets after the fashion of the most disgusting bourgeois parliamentarism, in converting them into mere talking shops. In the Soviets, the "socialist" Ministers are fooling the credulous rustics with phrase-mongering and resolutions. In the government itself a sort of permanent shuffle is going on in order that, on the one hand, as many Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks as possible may in turn get near the "pie", the lucrative and honorable posts, and that, on the other hand, the "attention" of the people may be "engaged". Meanwhile the chancelleries and army staffs "do" the business of "state".

Dyelo Naroda, the organ of the ruling Socialist-Revolutionary Party, recently admitted in a leading article—with the matchless frankness of people of "good society", in which "all" are engaged in political prostitution—that even in the ministeries headed by the "socialists" (save the mark!), the whole bureaucratic apparatus is in fact unchanged, is working in the old way and quite "freely" sabotaging revolutionary measures! Even without this admission, does not the actual history of the participation of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks in the government prove this? It is noteworthy, however, that in the ministerial company of the Cadets, the Chernovs, Rusanovs, Zenzinovs, and other editors of *Dyelo Naroda* have so completely lost all sense of shame as to brazenly assert, as if it were a mere bagatelle, that in "their" ministeries everything is unchanged!! Revolutionary-democratic phrases to gull the rural Simple Simons, and bureaucracy and red tape to "gladden the hearts" of the capitalists—that is the essence of the "honest" coalition.

The Commune substitutes for the venal and rotten parliamentarism of bourgeois society institutions in which freedom of opinion and discussion does not degenerate into deception, for the parliamentarians themselves have to work, have to execute their own laws, have themselves to test the results achieved in reality, and to account directly to their constituents. Representative institutions remain, but there is no parliamentarism here as a special system, as the division of labor between the legislative and the executive, as a privileged position for the deputies. We cannot imagine democracy, even proletarian democracy, without representative institutions, but we can and must imagine democracy without parliamentarism, if criticism of bourgeois society is not mere words for us, if the desire to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie is our earnest and sincere desire, and not a mere "election" cry for catching workers' votes, as it is with the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, and also the Scheidemanns and Legiens, the Smblats and Vanderveldes.

It is extremely instructive to note that, in speaking of the function of those officials who are necessary for the Commune and for proletarian democracy, Marx compares them to the workers of "every other employer", that is, of the ordinary capitalist enterprise, with its "workers, foremen, and accountants".

There is no trace of utopianism in Marx, in the sense that he made up or invented a "new" society. No, he studied the birth of the new society out of the old, and the forms of transition from the latter to the former, as a mass proletarian movement and tried to draw practical lessons from it. He "learned" from the Commune, just as all the great revolutionary thinkers learned unhesitatingly from the experience of great movements of the oppressed classes, and never addressed them with pedantic "homilies" (such as Plekhanov's: "They should not have taken up arms" or Tsereteli's: "A class must limit itself").

Abolishing the bureaucracy at once, everywhere and completely, is out of the question. It is a utopia. But to smash the old bureaucratic machine at once and to begin immediately to construct a new one that will make possible the gradual abolition of all bureaucracy—this is not a utopia, it is the experience of the Commune, the direct and immediate task of the revolutionary proletariat.

Capitalism simplifies the functions of "state" administration; it makes it possible to cast "bossing" aside and to confine the whole matter to the organization of the proletarians (as the ruling class), which will hire "workers, foremen and accountants" in the name of the whole of society.

We are not utopians, we do not "dream" of dispensing at once with all administration, with all subordination. These anarchist dreams, based upon incomprehension of the tasks of the proletarian dictatorship, are totally alien to Marxism, and, as a matter of fact, serve only to postpone the socialist revolution until people are different. No, we want the socialist revolution with people as they are now, with people who cannot dispense with subordination, control, and "foremen and accountants".

The subordination, however, must be to the armed vanguard of all the exploited and working people, i.e., to the proletariat. A beginning can and must be made at once, overnight, to replace the specific "bossing" of state officials by the simple functions of "foremen and accountants", functions which are already fully within the ability of the average town dweller and can well be performed for "workmen's wages".

We, the workers, shall organize large-scale production on the basis of what capitalism has already created, relying on our own experience as workers, establishing strict, iron discipline backed up by the state power of the armed workers. We shall reduce the role of state officials to that of simply carrying out our instructions as responsible, revocable, modestly paid "foremen and accountants" (of course, with the aid of technicians of all sorts, types and degrees). This is our proletarian task; this is what we can and must start with in accomplishing the proletarian revolution. Such a beginning, on the basis of large-scale production, will of itself lead to the gradual "withering away" of all bureaucracy, to the gradual creation of an order—an order without inverted commas, an order bearing no similarity to wage slavery—an order under which the functions of control and accounting, becoming more and more simple, will be performed by each in turn, will then become a habit and will finally die out as the special functions of a special section of the population.

A witty German Social-Democrat of the seventies of the last century called the postal service an example of the socialist economic system. This is very true. At the present the postal service is a business organized on the lines of state-capitalist monopoly. Imperialism is gradually transforming all trusts into organizations of a similar type, in which, standing over the "common" people, who are overworked and starved, one has the same bourgeois bureaucracy. But the mechanism of social management is here already at hand. Once we have overthrown the capitalists, crushed the resistance of these exploiters with the iron hand of the armed workers, and smashed the bureaucratic machinery of the modern state, we shall have a splendidly-equipped mechanism, freed from the "parasite", a mechanism which can very well be set going by the united workers themselves, who will hire technicians, foremen and accountants, and pay them all, as indeed all "state" officials in general, workmen's wages. Here is a concrete, practical task which can immediately be fulfilled in relation to all trusts, a task whose fulfillment will rid the working people of exploitation, a task which takes account of what the Commune had already begun to practice (particularly in building up the state).

To organize the whole economy on the lines of the postal service so that the technicians, foremen and accountants, as well as all officials, shall receive salaries no higher than "a workman's wage", all under the control and leadership of the armed proletariat—that is our immediate aim. This is what will bring about the abolition of parliamentarism and the preservation of representative institutions. This is what will rid the laboring classes of the bourgeoisie's prostitution of these institutions.

4. Organization of National Unity

"In a brief sketch of national organization which the Commune had no time to develop, it states explicitly that the Commune was to be the political form of even the smallest village...."

The communes were to elect the "National Delegation" in Paris.

"... The few but important functions which would still remain for a central government were not to be suppressed, as had been deliberately misstated, but were to be transferred to communal, i.e., strictly responsible, officials.

"... National unity was not to be broken, but, on the contrary, organized by the communal constitution; it was to become a reality by the destruction of state power which posed as the embodiment of that unity yet wanted to be independent of, and superior to, the nation, on whose body it was but a parasitic excrescence. While the merely repressive organs of the old governmental power were to be amputated, its legitimate functions were to be wrested from an authority claiming the right to stand above society, and restored to the responsible servants of society."

The extent to which the opportunists of present-day Social-Democracy have failed—perhaps it would be more true to say, have refused—to understand these observations of Marx is best shown by that book of Herostratean fame of the renegade Bernstein, *The Premises of Socialism and the Tasks of the Social-Democrats*. It is in connection with the above passage from Marx that Bernstein wrote that "as far as its political content", this program "displays, in all its essential features, the greatest similarity to the federalism of Proudhon.... In spite of all the other points of difference between Marx and the 'petty-bourgeois' Proudhon [Bernstein places the word "petty-bourgeois" in inverted commas, to make it sound ironical] on these points, their lines of reasoning run as close as could be." Of course, Bernstein continues:

"[The importance of the municipalities is growing, but] it seems doubtful to me whether the first job of democracy would be such a dissolution [*Auflosung*] of the modern states and such a complete transformation [*Umwandlung*] of their organization as is visualized by Marx and Proudhon (the formation of a National Assembly from delegates of the provincial of district assemblies, which, in their turn, would consist of delegates from the communes), so that consequently the previous mode of national representation would disappear."[4]

To confuse Marx's view on the "destruction of state power, a parasitic excrescence", with Proudhon's federalism is positively monstrous! But it is no accident, for it never occurs to the opportunist that Marx does not speak here at all about federalism as opposed to centralism, but about smashing the old, bourgeois state machine which exists in all bourgeois countries.

The only thing that does occur to the opportunist is what he sees around him, in an environment of petty-bourgeois philistinism and "reformists" stagnation, namely, only "municipalities"! The opportunist has even grown out of the habit of thinking about proletarian revolution.

It is ridiculous. But the remarkable thing is that nobody argued with Bernstein on this point. Bernstein has been refuted by many, especially by Plekhanov in Russian literature and by Kautsky in European literature, but neither of them has said anything about this distortion of Marx by Bernstein.

The opportunist has so much forgotten how to think in a revolutionary way and to dwell on revolution that he attributes "federalism" to Marx, whom he confuses with the founder of anarchism, Proudhon. As for Kautsky and Plekhanov, who claim to be orthodox Marxists and defenders of the theory of revolutionary Marxism, they are silent on this point! Here is one of the roots of the extreme vulgarization of the views on the difference between

[4] Bernstein, *Premises*, German edition, 1899, pp. 134 and 136.

Marxism and anarchism, which is characteristic of both the Kautskyites and the opportunists, and which we shall discuss again later.

There is not a trace of federalism in Marx's above-quoted observation on the experience of the Commune. Marx agreed with Proudhon on the very point that the opportunist Bernstein did not see. Marx disagreed with Proudhon on the very point on which Bernstein found a similarity between them.

Marx agreed with Proudhon in that they both stood for the "smashing" of the modern state machine. Neither the opportunists nor the Kautskyites wish to see the similarity of views on this point between Marxism and anarchism (both Proudhon and Bakunin) because this is where they have departed from Marxism.

Marx disagreed both with Proudhon and Bakunin precisely on the question of federalism (not to mention the dictatorship of the proletariat). Federalism as a principle follows logically from the petty-bourgeois views of anarchism. Marx was a centralist. There is no departure whatsoever from centralism in his observations just quoted. Only those who are imbued with the philistine "superstitious belief" in the state can mistake the destruction of the bourgeois state machine for the destruction of centralism!

Now if the proletariat and the poor peasants take state power into their own hands, organize themselves quite freely in communes, and unite the action of all the communes in striking at capital, in crushing the resistance of the capitalists, and in transferring the privately-owned railways, factories, land and so on to the entire nation, to the whole of society, won't that be centralism? Won't that be the most consistent democratic centralism and, moreover, proletarian centralism?

Bernstein simply cannot conceive of the possibility of voluntary centralism, of the voluntary fusion of the proletarian communes, for the sole purpose of destroying bourgeois rule and the bourgeois state machine. Like all philistines, Bernstein pictures centralism as something which can be imposed and maintained solely from above, and solely by the bureaucracy and military clique.

As though foreseeing that his views might be distorted, Marx expressly emphasized that the charge that the Commune had wanted to destroy national unity, to abolish the central authority, was a deliberate fraud. Marx purposely used the words: "National unity was... to be organized", so as to oppose conscious, democratic, proletarian centralism to bourgeois, military, bureaucratic centralism.

But there are none so deaf as those who will not hear. And the very thing the opportunists of present-day Social-Democracy do not want to hear about is the destruction of state power, the amputation of the parasitic excrescence.

5. Abolition of the Parasite State

We have already quoted Marx's words on the subject, and we must now supplement them.

> "It is generally the fate of new historical creations," he wrote, "to be mistaken for the counterpart of older and even defunct forms of social life, to which they may bear a certain likeness. Thus, this new Commune, which breaks [*bricht*, smashes] the modern state power, has been regarded as a revival of the medieval communes... as a federation of small states (as Montesquieu and the Girondins[5] visualized it). as an exaggerated form of the old struggle against over centralization....
>
> "... The Communal Constitution would have restored to the social body all the forces hitherto absorbed by that parasitic excrescence, the 'state', feeding upon and hampering the free movement of society. By this one act it would have initiated the regeneration of France....

[5] The Girondists – a political grouping during the French bourgeois revolution of the late eighteenth century, expressed the interests of the moderate bourgeoisie. They wavered between revolution and counter-revolution, and made deals with the monarchy.

> "... The Communal Constitution would have brought the rural producers under the intellectual lead of the central towns of their districts, and there secured to them, in the town working men, the natural trustees of their interests. The very existence of the Commune involved, as a matter of course, local self-government, but no longer as a counterpoise to state power, now become superfluous."

"Breaking state power", which as a "parasitic excrescence"; its "amputation", its "smashing"; "state power, now become superfluous"—these are the expressions Marx used in regard to the state when appraising and analyzing the experience of the Commune.

All this was written a little less than half a century ago; and now one has to engage in excavations, as it were, in order to bring undistorted Marxism to the knowledge of the mass of the people. The conclusions drawn from the observation of the last great revolution which Marx lived through were forgotten just when the time for the next great proletarian revolution arrived.

> "... The multiplicity of interpretations to which the Commune has been subjected, and the multiplicity of interests which expressed themselves in it show that it was a thoroughly flexible political form, while all previous forms of government had been essentially repressive. Its true secret was this: it was essentially a working-class government, the result of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class, the political form at last discovered under which the economic emancipation of labor could be accomplished....
>
> "Except on this last condition, the Communal Constitution would have been an impossibility and a delusion...."

The utopians busied themselves with "discovering" political forms under which the socialist transformation of society was to take place. The anarchists dismissed the question of political forms altogether. The opportunists of present-day Social-Democracy accepted the bourgeois political forms of the parliamentary democratic state as the limit which should not be overstepped; they battered their foreheads praying before this "model", and denounced as anarchism every desire to break these forms.

Marx deduced from the whole history of socialism and the political struggle that the state was bound to disappear, and that the transitional form of its disappearance (the transition from state to non-state) would be the "proletariat organized as the ruling class". Marx, however, did not set out to discover the political forms of this future stage. He limited himself to carefully observing French history, to analyzing it, and to drawing the conclusion to which the year 1851 had led, namely, that matters were moving towards destruction of the bourgeois state machine.

And when the mass revolutionary movement of the proletariat burst forth, Marx, in spite of its failure, in spite of its short life and patent weakness, began to study the forms it had discovered.

The Commune is the form "at last discovered" by the proletarian revolution, under which the economic emancipation of labor can take place.

The Commune is the first attempt by a proletarian revolution to smash the bourgeois state machine; and it is the political form "at last discovered", by which the smashed state machine can and must be replaced.

We shall see further on that the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917, in different circumstances and under different conditions, continue the work of the Commune and confirm Marx's brilliant historical analysis.

Chapter 4: Supplementary Explanations by Engels

Marx gave the fundamentals concerning the significance of the experience of the Commune. Engels returned to the same subject time and again, and explained Marx's analysis and conclusions, sometimes elucidating other aspects of the question with such power and vividness that it is necessary to deal with his explanations specially.

1. The Housing Question

In his work, *The Housing Question* (1872), Engels already took into account the experience of the Commune, and dealt several times with the tasks of the revolution in relation to the state. It is interesting to note that the treatment of this specific subject clearly revealed, on the one hand, points of similarity between the proletarian state and the present state—points that warrant speaking of the state in both cases—and, on the other hand, points of difference between them, or the transition to the destruction of the state.

> "How is the housing question to be settled then? In present-day society, it is settled just as any other social question: by the gradual economic leveling of demand and supply, a settlement which reproduces the question itself again and again and therefore is no settlement. How a social revolution would settle this question not only depends on the circumstances in each particular case, but is also connected with much more far-reaching questions, one of the most fundamental of which is the abolition of the antithesis between town and country. As it is not our task to create utopian systems for the organization of the future society, it would be more than idle to go into the question here. But one thing is certain: there is already a sufficient quantity of houses in the big cities to remedy immediately all real 'housing shortage', provided they are used judiciously. This can naturally only occur through the expropriation of the present owners and by quartering in their houses homeless workers or workers overcrowded in their present homes. As soon as the proletariat has won political power, such a measure prompted by concern for the common good will be just as easy to carry out as are other expropriations and billetings by the present-day state."[1]

The change in the form of state power is not examined here, but only the content of its activity. Expropriations and billetings take place by order even of the present state. From the formal point of view, the proletarian state will also "order" the occupation of dwellings and expropriation of houses. But it is clear that the old executive apparatus, the bureaucracy, which is connected with the bourgeoisie, would simply be unfit to carry out the orders of the proletarian state.

> "...It must be pointed out that the 'actual seizure' of all the instruments of labor, the taking possession of industry as a whole by the working people, is the exact opposite of the Proudhonist 'redemption'. In the latter case the individual worker becomes the owner of the dwelling, the peasant farm, the instruments of labor; in the former case, the 'working people' remain the collective owners of the houses, factories and instruments of labor, and will hardly permit their use, at least during a transitional period, by individuals or associations without compensation for the cost. In the same way, the abolition of property in land is not the abolition of ground rent but its transfer, if in a modified form, to society. The actual seizure of all the instruments of labor by the working people, therefore, does not at all preclude the retention of rent relations."[2]

We shall examine the question touched upon in this passage, namely, the economic basis for the withering away of the state, in the next chapter. Engels expresses himself most cautiously, saying that the proletarian state would "hardly" permit the use of houses without payment, "at least during a transitional period". The letting of houses owed by the whole people to individual families presupposes the collection of rent, a certain amount of control, and the employment of some standard in allotting the housing. All this calls for a certain form of state, but it does not at all call for a special military bureaucratic apparatus, with officials occupying especially

[1] Engels, "The Housing Question", Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1973, pp. 317-18.
[2] *Ibid*., p. 370.

privileged positions. The transition to a situation in which it will be possible to supply dwellings rent-free depends on the complete "withering away" of the state.

Speaking of the Blanquists' adoption of the fundamental position of Marxism after the Commune and under the influence of its experience, Engels, in passing, formulates this position as follows:

> "...Necessity of political action by the proletariat and of its dictatorship as the transition to the abolition of classes and, with them, of the state...."[3]

Addicts of hair-splitting criticism, or bourgeois "exterminators of Marxism", will perhaps see a contradiction between this recognition of the "abolition of the state" and repudiation of this formula as an anarchist one in the above passage from *Anti-Dühring*. It would not be surprising if the opportunists classed Engels, too, as an "anarchist", for it is becoming increasingly common with the social-chauvinists to accuse the internationalists of anarchism.

Marxism has always taught that with the abolition of classes the state will also be abolished. The well-known passage on the "withering away of the state'' in *Anti-Dühring* accuses the anarchists not simply of favoring the abolition of the state, but of preaching that the state can be abolished "overnight".

As the now prevailing "Social-Democratic" doctrine completely distorts the relation of Marxism to anarchism on the question of the abolition of the state, it will be particularly useful to recall a certain controversy in which Marx and Engels came out against the anarchists.

2. Controversy with the Anarchists

This controversy took place in 1873. Marx and Engels contributed articles against the Proudhonists, "autonomists" or "anti-authoritarians", to an Italian socialist annual, and it was not until 1913 that these articles appeared in German in *Neue Zeit*.[4]

> "If the political struggle of the working class assumes revolutionary form," wrote Marx, ridiculing the anarchists for their repudiation of politics, "and if the workers set up their revolutionary dictatorship in place of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, they commit the terrible crime of violating principles, for in order to satisfy their wretched, vulgar everyday needs and to crush the resistance of the bourgeoisie, they give the state a revolutionary and transient form, instead of laying down their arms and abolishing the state."[5]

It was solely against this kind of "abolition" of the state that Marx fought in refuting the anarchists! He did not at all oppose the view that the state would disappear when classes disappeared, or that it would be abolished when classes were abolished. What he did oppose was the proposition that the workers should renounce the use of arms, organized violence, that is, the state, which is to serve to "crush the resistance of the bourgeoisie".

To prevent the true meaning of his struggle against anarchism from being distorted, Marx expressly emphasized the "revolutionary and transient form" of the state which the proletariat needs. The proletariat needs the state only temporarily. We do not after all differ with the anarchists on the question of the abolition of the state as the aim. We maintain that, to achieve this aim, we must temporarily make use of the instruments, resources, and methods of state power against the exploiters, just as the temporary dictatorship of the oppressed class is necessary for the abolition of classes. Marx chooses the sharpest and clearest way of stating his case against the anarchists: After overthrowing the yoke of the capitalists, should the workers "lay down their arms",

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[3] *Ibid*., p. 355.
[4] Lenin is referring to the articles: *L'indifferenza in materia politica* by Marx and *Dell' Autorita* by Engels.
[5] *Neue Zeit*, Vol. XXXII-1, 1913-14, p. 40.

or use them against the capitalists in order to crush their resistance? But what is the systematic use of arms by one class against another if not a "transient form" of state?

Let every Social-Democrat ask himself: Is that how he has been posing the question of the state in controversy with the anarchists? Is that how it has been posed by the vast majority of the official socialist parties of the Second International?

Engels expounds the same ideas in much greater detail and still more popularly. First of all, he ridicules the muddled ideas of the Proudhonists, who call themselves "anti-authoritarians", i.e., repudiating all authority, all subordination, all power. Take a factory, a railway, a ship on the high seas, said Engels: is it not clear that not one of these complex technical establishments, based on the use of machinery and the systematic cooperation of many people, could function without a certain amount of subordination and, consequently, without a certain amount of authority or power?

> "...When I counter the most rabid anti-authoritarians with these arguments, the only answer they can give me is the following: Oh, that's true, except that here it is not a question of authority with which we vest our delegates, but of a commission! These people imagine they can change a thing by changing its name..."

Having thus shown that authority and autonomy are relative terms, that the sphere of their application varies with the various phases of social development, that it is absurd to take them as absolutes, and adding that the sphere of application of machinery and large-scale production is steadily expanding, Engels passes from the general discussion of authority to the question of the state.

> "Had the autonomists," he wrote, "contented themselves with saying that the social organization of the future would allow authority only within the bounds which the conditions of production make inevitable, one could have come to terms with them. But they are blind to all facts that make authority necessary and they passionately fight the word.
>
> "Why do the anti-authoritarians not confine themselves to crying out against political authority, the state? All socialists are agreed that the state, and with it, political authority, will disappear as a result of the coming social revolution, that is, that public functions will lose their political character and become mere administrative functions of watching over social interests. But the anti-authoritarians demand that the political state be abolished at one stroke, even before the social relations that gave both to it have been destroyed. They demand that the first act of the social revolution shall be the abolition of authority.
>
> "Have these gentlemen ever seen a revolution? A revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing there is; it is an act whereby one part of the population imposes its will upon the other part by means of rifles, bayonets and cannon, all of which are highly authoritarian means. And the victorious party must maintain its rule by means of the terror which its arms inspire in the reactionaries. Would the Paris Commune have lasted more than a day if it had not used the authority of the armed people against the bourgeoisie? Cannot we, on the contrary, blame it for having made too little use of that authority? Therefore, one of two things: either that anti-authoritarians don't know what they are talking about, in which case they are creating nothing but confusion. Or they do know, and in that case, they are betraying the cause of the proletariat. In either case they serve only reaction."[6]

This argument touches upon questions which should be examined in connection with the relationship between politics and economics during the withering away of the state (the next chapter is devoted to this). These questions are: the transformation of public functions from political into simple functions of administration, and the "political state". This last term, one particularly liable to misunderstanding, indicates the process of the withering away of the state: at a certain stage of this process, the state which is withering away may be called a non-political state.

[6] *Ibid*., p. 39.

Again, the most remarkable thing in this argument of Engels' is the way he states his case against the anarchists. Social-Democrats, claiming to be disciples of Engels, have argued on this subject against the anarchists millions of times since 1873, but they have not argued as Marxists could and should. The anarchist idea of abolition of the state is muddled and non-revolutionary—that is how Engels put it. It is precisely the revolution in its rise and development, with its specific tasks in relation to violence, authority, power, the state, that the anarchists refuse to see.

The usual criticism of anarchism by present-day Social-Democrats has boiled down to the purest philistine banality: "We recognize the state, whereas the anarchists do not!" Naturally, such banality cannot but repel workers who are at all capable of thinking and revolutionary-minded. What Engels says is different. He stresses that all socialists recognize that the state will disappear as a result of the socialist revolution. He then deals specifically with the question of the revolution—the very question which, as a rule, the Social-Democrats evade out of opportunism, leaving it, so to speak, exclusively for the anarchists "to work out". And when dealing with this question, Engels takes the bull by the horns; he asks: should not the Commune have made more use of the revolutionary power of the state, that is, of the proletariat armed and organized as the ruling class?

Prevailing official Social-Democracy usually dismissed the question of the concrete tasks of the proletariat in the revolution either with a philistine sneer, or, at best, with the sophistic evasion: "The future will show". And the anarchists were justified in saying about such Social-Democrats that they were failing in their task of giving the workers a revolutionary education. Engels draws upon the experience of the last proletarian revolution precisely for the purpose of making a most concrete study of what should be done by the proletariat, and in what manner, in relation to both the banks and the state.

3. Letter to Bebel

One of the most, if not the most, remarkable observation on the state in the works of Marx and Engels is contained in the following passage in Engels' letter to Bebel dated March 18-28, 1875. This letter, we may observe in parenthesis, was, as far as we know, first published by Bebel in the second volume of his memoirs (*Aus meinem Leben*), which appeared in 1911, i.e., 36 years after the letter had been written and sent.

Engels wrote to Bebel criticizing the same draft of the Gotha Program which Marx criticized in his famous letter to Bracke. Referring specifically to the question of the state, Engels said:

> "The free people's state has been transferred into the free state. Taken in its grammatical sense, a free state is one where the state is free in relation to its citizens, hence a state with a despotic government. The whole talk about the state should be dropped, especially since the Commune, which was no longer a state in the proper sense of the word. The 'people's state' has been thrown in our faces by the anarchists to the point of disgust, although already Marx's book against Proudhon and later the *Communist Manifesto* say plainly that with the introduction of the socialist order of society the state dissolves of itself [*sich auflost*] and disappears. As the state is only a transitional institution which is used in the struggle, in the revolution, to hold down one's adversaries by force, it is sheer nonsense to talk of a 'free people's state'; so long as the proletariat still needs the state, it does not need it in the interests of freedom but in order to hold down its adversaries, and as soon as it becomes possible to speak of freedom the state as such ceases to exist. We would therefore propose replacing the state everywhere by *Gemeinwesen*, a good old German word which can very well take the place of the French word commune."[7]

It should be borne in mind that this letter refers to the party program which Marx criticized in a letter dated only a few weeks later than the above (Marx's letter is dated May 5, 1875), and that at the time Engels was living

[7] Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1965, pp. 293-94.

with Marx in London. Consequently, when he says "we" in the last sentence, Engels undoubtedly, in his own as well as in Marx's name, suggests to the leader of the German workers' party that the word "state" be struck out of the program and replaced by the word "community".

What a howl about "anarchism" would be raised by the leading lights of present-day "Marxism", which has been falsified for the convenience of the opportunists, if such an amendment of the program were suggested to them!

Let them howl. This will earn them the praises of the bourgeoisie.

And we shall go on with our work. In revising the program of our Party, we must by all means take the advice of Engels and Marx into consideration in order to come nearer the truth, to restore Marxism by ridding it of distortions, to guide the struggle of the working class for its emancipation more correctly. Certainly no one opposed to the advice of Engels and Marx will be found among the Bolsheviks. The only difficulty that may perhaps arise will be in regard to the term. In German there are two words meaning "community", of which Engels used the one which does not denote a single community, but their totality, a system of communities. In Russian there is no such word, and we may have to choose the French word "commune", although this also has its drawbacks.

"The Commune was no longer a state in the proper sense of the word"—this is the most theoretically important statement Engels makes. After what has been said above, this statement is perfectly clear. The Commune was ceasing to be a state since it had to suppress, not the majority of the population, but a minority (the exploiters). It had smashed the bourgeois state machine. In place of a special coercive force the population itself came on the scene. All this was a departure from the state in the proper sense of the word. And had the Commune become firmly established, all traces of the state in it would have "withered away" by themselves; it would not have had to "abolish" the institutions of the state—they would have ceased to function as they ceased to have anything to do.

"The 'people's state' has been thrown in our faces by the anarchists". In saying this, Engels above all has in mind Bakunin and his attacks on the German Social-Democrats. Engels admits that these attacks were justified insofar as the "people's state" was as much an absurdity and as much a departure from socialism as the "free people's state". Engels tried to put the struggle of the German Social-Democrats against the anarchists on the right lines, to make this struggle correct in principle, to rid it of opportunist prejudices concerning the "state". Unfortunately, Engels' letter was pigeon-holed for 36 years. We shall see farther on that, even after this letter was published, Kautsky persisted in virtually the same mistakes against which Engels had warned.

Bebel replied to Engels in a letter dated September 21, 1875, in which he wrote, among other things, that he "fully agreed" with Engels' opinion of the draft program, and that he had reproached Liebknecht with readiness to make concessions. But if we take Bebel's pamphlet, *Our Aims*, we find there, views on the state that are absolutely wrong.

> "The state must... be transformed from one based on class rule into a people's state."[8]

This was printed in the ninth (ninth!) edition of Bebel's pamphlet! It is not surprising that opportunist views on the state, so persistently repeated, were absorbed by the German Social-Democrats, especially as Engels'

[8] *Unsere Ziele*, 1886, p. 14.

revolutionary interpretations had been safely pigeon-holed, and all the conditions of life were such as to "wean" them from revolution for a long time.

4. Criticism of the Draft of the Erfurt Program

In analyzing Marxist teachings on the state, the criticism of the draft of the Erfurt Program,[9] sent by Engels to Kautsky on June 29, 1891, and published only 10 years later in *Neue Zeit*, cannot be ignored; for it is with the opportunist views of the Social-Democrats on questions of state organization that this criticism is mainly concerned.

We shall note in passing that Engels also makes an exceedingly valuable observation on economic questions, which shows how attentively and thoughtfully he watched the various changes occurring in modern capitalism, and how for this reason he was able to foresee to a certain extent the tasks of our present, the imperialist, epoch. Here is that observation: referring to the word "planlessness" (*Planlosigkeit*), used in the draft program, as characteristic of capitalism, Engels wrote:

> "When we pass from joint-stock companies to trusts which assume control over, and monopolize, whole industries, it is not only private production that ceases, but also planlessness."[10]

Here was what is most essential in the theoretical appraisal of the latest phase of capitalism, i.e., imperialism, namely, that capitalism becomes monopoly capitalism. The latter must be emphasized because the erroneous bourgeois reformist assertion that monopoly capitalism or state-monopoly capitalism is no longer capitalism, but can now be called "state socialism" and so on, is very common. The trusts, of course, never provided, do not now provide, and cannot provide complete planning. But however, much they do plan, however much the capitalist magnates calculate in advance the volume of production on a national and even on an international scale, and however much they systematically regulate it, we still remain under capitalism—at its new stage, it is true, but still capitalism, without a doubt. The "proximity" of such capitalism to socialism should serve genuine representatives of the proletariat as an argument proving the proximity, facility, feasibility, and urgency of the socialist revolution, and not at all as an argument for tolerating the repudiation of such a revolution and the efforts to make capitalism look more attractive, something which all reformists are trying to do.

But to return to the question of the state. In his letter Engels makes three particularly valuable suggestions: first, in regard to the republic; second, in regard to the connection between the national question and state organization; and, third, in regard to local self-government.

In regard to the republic, Engels made this the focal point of this criticism of the draft of the Erfurt Program. And when we recall the importance which the Erfurt Program acquired for all the Social-Democrats of the world,

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[9] *Erfurt Program* – the program adopted by the German Social-Democratic Party at its Erfurt Congress in October 1891. A step forward compared with the Gotha Program (1875), it was based on Marx's doctrine of the inevitable downfall of the capitalist mode of production and its replacement by the socialist mode. It stressed the necessity for the working class to wage a political struggle, pointed out the party's role as the leader of that struggle, and so on. But it also made serious concessions to opportunism. Engels criticized the original draft of the program in detail in his work *A Critique of the Draft Social-Democratic Program of 1891* It was virtually a critique of the opportunism of the Second International as a whole. But the German Social-Democratic leaders concealed Engels's critique from the rank and file, and disregarded his highly important comments in drawing up the final text of the program. Lenin considered the fact that the Erfurt Program said nothing about the dictatorship of the proletariat to be its chief defect and a cowardly concession to opportunism.

[10] *Neue Zeit*, Vol. XX-1, 1901-02, p. 8.

and that it became the model for the whole Second International, we may say without exaggeration that Engels thereby criticizes the opportunism of the whole Second International.

> "The political demands of the draft," Engels wrote, "have one great fault. *It lacks* [Engels' italics] precisely what should have been said."

And, later on, he makes it clear that the German Constitution is, strictly speaking, a copy of the extremely reactionary Constitution of 1850, that the Reichstag is only, as Wilhelm Liebknecht put it, "the fig leaf of absolutism" and that to wish "to transform all the instruments of labor into common property" on the basis of a constitution which legalizes the existence of petty states and the federation of petty German states is an "obvious absurdity".

"To touch on that is dangerous, however," Engels added, knowing only too well that it was impossible legally to include in the program the demand for a republic in Germany. But he refused to merely accept this obvious consideration which satisfied "everybody".

He continued:

> "Nevertheless, somehow or other, the thing has to be attacked. How necessary this is shown precisely at the present time by opportunism, which is gaining ground [*einreissende*] in a large section of the Social-Democrat press. Fearing a renewal of the Anti-Socialist Law,[11] or recalling all manner of overhasty pronouncements made during the reign of that law, they now want the Party to find the present legal order in Germany adequate for putting through all Party demands by peaceful means...."

Engels particularly stressed the fundamental fact that the German Social-Democrats were prompted by fear of a renewal of the Anti-Socialist Law, and explicitly described it as opportunism; he declared that precisely because there was no republic and no freedom in Germany, the dreams of a "peaceful" path were perfectly absurd. Engels was careful not to tie his hands. He admitted that in republican or very free countries "one can conceive" (only "conceive"!) of a peaceful development towards socialism, but in Germany, he repeated,

> "...in Germany, where the government is almost omnipotent and the Reichstag and all other representative bodies have no real power, to advocate such a thing in Germany, where, moreover, there is no need to do so, means removing the fig leaf from absolutism and becoming oneself a screen for its nakedness."

The great majority of the official leaders of the German Social-Democratic Party, which pigeon-holed this advice, have really proved to be a screen for absolutism.

> "...In the long run such a policy can only lead one's own party astray. They push general, abstract political questions into the foreground, thereby concealing the immediate concrete questions, which at the moment of the first great events, the first political crisis, automatically pose themselves. What can result from this except that at the decisive moment the party suddenly proves helpless and that uncertainty and discord on the most decisive issues reign in it because these issues have never been discussed? …

[11] The Anti-Socialist Law (Exceptional Law Against the Socialists) was enacted in Germany by the Bismarck government in 1878 to combat the working-class and socialist movement. Under this law, all Social-Democratic Party organizations, all mass organizations of the workers, and the working-class press were banned, socialist literature was confiscated and the Social-Democrats were persecuted, to the point of banishment. These repressive measures did not, however, break the Social-Democratic Party, which readjusted itself to illegal conditions. Der Sozial-Demokrat, the party's Central Organ, was published abroad and party congresses were held at regular intervals (1880, 1883 and 1887). In Germany herself, the Social-Democratic organizations and groups were coming back to life underground, an illegal Central Committee leading their activities. Besides, the Party widely used legal opportunities to establish closer links with the working people, and its influence was growing steadily. At the Reichstag elections in 1890, it polled three times as many votes as in 1878. Marx and Engels did much to help the Social-Democrats. In 1890 popular pressure and the growing working-class movement led to the annulment of the Anti-Socialist Law.

> "This forgetting of the great, the principal considerations for the momentary interests of the day, this struggling and striving for the success of the moment regardless of later consequences, this sacrifice of the future of the movement for its present may be 'honestly' meant, but it is and remains opportunism, and 'honest' opportunism is perhaps the most dangerous of all....
>
> "If one thing is certain it is that our party and the working class can only come to power in the form of the democratic republic. This is even the specific form for the dictatorship of the proletariat, as the Great French Revolution has already shown...."

Engels realized here in a particularly striking form the fundamental idea which runs through all of Marx's works, namely, that the democratic republic is the nearest approach to the dictatorship of the proletariat. For such a republic, without in the least abolishing the rule of capital, and, therefore, the oppression of the masses and the class struggle, inevitably leads to such an extension, development, unfolding, and intensification of this struggle that, as soon as it becomes possible to meet the fundamental interests of the oppressed masses, this possibility is realized inevitably and solely through the dictatorship of the proletariat, through the leadership of those masses by the proletariat. These, too, are "forgotten words" of Marxism for the whole of the Second International, and the fact that they have been forgotten was demonstrated with particular vividness by the history of the Menshevik Party during the first six months of the Russian revolution of 1917.

On the subject of a federal republic, in connection with the national composition of the population, Engels wrote:

> "What should take the place of the present-day Germany [with its reactionary monarchical Constitution and its equally reactionary division into petty states, a division which perpetuates all the specific features of "Prussianism" instead of dissolving them in Germany as a whole]? In my view, the proletariat can only use the form of the one and indivisible republic. In the gigantic territory of the United States, a federal republic is still, on the whole, a necessity, although in the Eastern states it is already becoming a hindrance. It would be a step forward in Britain where the two islands are peopled by four nations and in spite of a single Parliament three different systems of legislation already exist side by side. In little Switzerland, it has long been a hindrance, tolerable only because Switzerland is content to be a purely passive member of the European state system. For Germany, federalization on the Swiss model would be an enormous step backward. Two points distinguish a union state from a completely unified state: first, that each member state, each canton, has its own civil and criminal legislative and judicial system, and, second, that alongside a popular chamber there is also a federal chamber in which each canton, whether large or small, votes as such." In Germany, the union state is the transition to the completely unified state, and the "revolution from above" of 1866 and 1870 must not be reversed but supplemented by a "movement from below".

Far from being indifferent to the forms of state, Engels, on the contrary, tried to analyze the transitional forms with the utmost thoroughness in order to establish, in accordance with the concrete historical peculiarities of each particular case, from what and to what the given transitional form is passing.

Approaching the matter from the standpoint of the proletariat and the proletarian revolution, Engels, like Marx, upheld democratic centralism, the republic—one and indivisible. He regarded the federal republic either as an exception and a hindrance to development, or as a transition from a monarchy to a centralized republic, as a "step forward" under certain special conditions. And among these special conditions, he puts the national question to the fore.

Although mercilessly criticizing the reactionary nature of small states, and the screening of this by the national question in certain concrete cases, Engels, like Marx, never betrayed the slightest desire to brush aside the national question—a desire of which the Dutch and Polish Marxists, who proceed from their perfectly justified opposition to the narrow philistine nationalism of "their" little states, are often guilty.

Even in regard to Britain, where geographical conditions, a common language and the history of many centuries would seem to have "put an end" to the national question in the various small divisions of the country—even in regard to that country, Engels reckoned with the plain fact that the national question was not yet a thing of the past, and recognized in consequence that the establishment of a federal republic would be a "step forward". Of course, there is not the slightest hint here of Engels abandoning the criticism of the shortcomings of a federal republic or renouncing the most determined advocacy of, and struggle for, a unified and centralized democratic republic.

But Engels did not at all mean democratic centralism in the bureaucratic sense in which the term is used by bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideologists, the anarchists among the latter. His idea of centralism did not in the least preclude such broad local self-government as would combine the voluntary defense of the unity of the state by the "communes" and districts, and the complete elimination of all bureaucratic practices and all "ordering" from above. Carrying forward the program views of Marxism on the state, Engels wrote:

> "So, then, a unified republic—but not in the sense of the present French Republic, which is nothing but the Empire established in 1798 without the Emperor. From 1792 to 1798 each French department, each commune [*Gemeinde*], enjoyed complete self-government on the American model, and this is what we too must have. How self-government is to be organized and how we can manage, without a bureaucracy has been shown to us by America and the first French Republic, and is being shown even today by Australia, Canada and the other English colonies. And a provincial [regional] and communal self-government of this type is far freer than, for instance, Swiss federalism, under which, it is true, the canton is very independent in relation to the Bund [i.e., the federated state as a whole], but is also independent in relation to the district [*Bezirk*] and the commune. The cantonal governments appoint the district governors [*Bezirksstatthalter*] and prefects—which is unknown in English-speaking countries and which we want to abolish here as resolutely in the future as the Prussian Landrate and Regierungsrate" (commissioners, district police chiefs, governors, and in general all officials appointed from above).

Accordingly, Engels proposes the following words for the self-government clause in the program:

> "Complete self-government for the provinces [*gubernias* or regions], districts and communes through officials elected by universal suffrage. The abolition of all local and provincial authorities appointed by the state."

I have already had occasion to point out—in *Pravda* (No.68, May 28, 1917), which was suppressed by the government of Kerensky and other "socialist" Ministers—how on this point (of course, not on this point alone by any means) our pseudo-socialist representatives of pseudo-revolutionary pseudo-democracy have made glaring departures from democracy. Naturally, people who have bound themselves by a "coalition" to the imperialist bourgeoisie have remained deaf to this criticism.

It is extremely important to note that Engels, armed with facts, disproved by a most precise example the prejudice which is very widespread, particularly among petty-bourgeois democrats, that a federal republic necessarily means a greater amount of freedom than a centralized republic. This is wrong. It is disproved by the facts cited by Engels regarding the centralized French Republic of 1792-98 and the federal Swiss Republic. The really democratic centralized republic gave more freedom than the federal republic. In other words, the greatest amount of local, regional, and other freedom known in history was accorded by a centralized and not a federal republic.

Insufficient attention has been and is being paid in our Party propaganda and agitation to this fact, as, indeed, to the whole question of the federal and the centralized republic and local self-government.

5. The 1891 Preface to Marx's "The Civil War in France"

In his preface to the third edition of *The Civil War in France* (this preface is dated March 18, 1891, and was originally published in *Neue Zeit*), Engels, in addition to some interesting incidental remarks on questions concerning the attitude towards the state, gave a remarkably vivid summary of the lessons of the Commune.[12] This summary, made more profound by the entire experience of the 20 years that separated the author from the Commune, and directed expressly against the "superstitious belief in the state" so widespread in Germany, may justly be called the last word of Marxism on the question under consideration.

In France, Engels observed, the workers emerged with arms from every revolution: "therefore the disarming of the workers was the first commandment for the bourgeois, who were at the helm of the state. Hence, after every revolution won by the workers, a new struggle, ending with the defeat of the workers."

This summary of the experience of bourgeois revolutions is as concise as it is expressive. The essence of the matter—among other things, on the question of the state (has the oppressed class arms?)—is here remarkably well-grasped. It is precisely this essence that is most often evaded by both professors influenced by bourgeois ideology, and by petty-bourgeois democrats. In the Russian revolution of 1917, the honor (Cavaignac honor) of blabbing this secret of bourgeois revolutions fell to the Menshevik, would-be Marxist, Tsereteli. In his "historic" speech of June 11, Tsereteli blurted out that the bourgeoisie were determined to disarm the Petrograd workers—presenting, of course, this decision as his own, and as a necessity for the "state" in general!

Tsereteli's historical speech of June 11 will, of course, serve every historian of the revolution of 1917 as a graphic illustration of how the Social-Revolutionary and Menshevik bloc, led by Mr. Tsereteli, deserted to the bourgeoisie against the revolutionary proletariat.

Another incidental remark of Engels', also connected with the question of the state, deals with religion. It is well-known that the German Social-Democrats, as they degenerated and became increasingly opportunist, slipped more and more frequently into the philistine misinterpretation of the celebrated formula: "Religion is to be declared a private matter." That is, the formula was twisted to mean that religion was a private matter even for the party of the revolutionary proletariat!! It was against this complete betrayal of the revolutionary program of the proletariat that Engels vigorously protested. In 1891 he saw only the very feeble beginnings of opportunism in his party, and, therefore, he expressed himself with extreme caution:

> "As almost only workers, or recognized representatives of the workers, sat in the Commune, its decisions bore a decidedly proletarian character. Either they decreed reforms which the republican bourgeoisie had failed to pass solely out of cowardice, but which provided a necessary basis for the free activity of the working class—such as the realization of the principle that *in relation to the state* religion is a purely private matter—or the Commune promulgated decrees which were in the direct interest of the working class and in part cut deeply into the old order of society."

Engels deliberately emphasized the words "in relation to the state" as a straight thrust at German opportunism, which had declared religion to be a private matter in relation to the party, thus degrading the party of the revolutionary proletariat to the level of the most vulgar "free-thinking" philistinism, which is prepared to allow a non-denominational status, but which renounces the party struggle against the opium of religion which stupefies the people.

The future historian of the German Social-Democrats, in tracing the roots of their shameful bankruptcy in 1914, will find a fair amount of interesting material on this question, beginning with the evasive declarations in

[12] Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1973, pp. 178-89.

the articles of the party's ideological leader, Kautsky, which throw the door wide open to opportunism, and ending with the attitude of the party towards the "Los-von-Kirche-Bewegung"[13] (the "Leave-the-Church" movement) in 1913.

But let us see how, 20 years after the Commune, Engels summed up its lessons for the fighting proletariat. Here are the lessons to which Engels attached prime importance:

> "...It was precisely the oppressing power of the former centralized government, army, political parties, bureaucracy, which Napoleon had created in 1798 and which every new government had since then taken over as a welcome instrument and used against its opponents—it was this power which was to fall everywhere, just as it had fallen in Paris.
>
> "From the very outset the Commune had to recognize that the working class, once in power, could not go on managing with the old state machine; that in order not to lose again its only just-gained supremacy, this working class must, on the one hand, do away with all the old machinery of oppression previously used against it itself, and, on the other, safeguard itself against its own deputies and officials, by declaring them all, without exception, subject to recall at any time...."

Engels emphasized once again that not only under a monarchy, but also under a democratic republic the state remains a state, i.e., it retains its fundamental distinguishing feature of transforming the officials, the "servants of society", its organs, into the masters of society.

> "Against this transformation of the state and the organs of the state from servants of society into masters of society—an inevitable transformation in all previous states—the Commune used two infallible means. In the first place, it filled all posts—administrative, judicial, and educational—by election on the basis of universal suffrage of all concerned, subject to recall at any time by the electors. And, in the second place, it paid all officials, high or low, only the wages received by other workers. The highest salary paid by the Commune to anyone was 6,000 francs. In this way a dependable barrier to place-hunting and careerism was set up, even apart from the binding mandates to delegates to representative bodies, which were added besides...."

Engels here approached the interesting boundary line at which consistent democracy, on the one hand, is transformed into socialism and, on the other, demands socialism. For, in order to abolish the state, it is necessary to convert the functions of the civil service into the simple operations of control and accounting that are within the scope and ability of the vast majority of the population, and, subsequently, of every single individual. And if careerism is to be abolished completely, it must be made impossible for "honorable" though profitless posts in the Civil Service to be used as a springboard to highly lucrative posts in banks or joint-stock companies, as constantly happens in all the freest capitalist countries.

Engels, however, did not make the mistake some Marxists make in dealing, for example, with the question of the right of nations to self-determination, when they argue that it is impossible under capitalism and will be superfluous under socialism. This seemingly clever but actually incorrect statement might be made in regard to any democratic institution, including moderate salaries for officials, because fully consistent democracy is impossible under capitalism, and under socialism all democracy will wither away.

This is a sophism like the old joke about a man becoming bald by losing one more hair.

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[13] The Los-von-Kirche-Bewegung (the "Leave-the-Church" movement), or Kirchenaustrittsbewegung (Movement to Secede from the Church) assumed a vast scale in Germany before the First World War. In January 1914, *Neue Zeit* began with the revisionist Paul Göhre's article "Kirchenaustrittsbewegung und Sozialdemokratie" ("The Movement to Secede from the Church and Social-Democracy"), to discuss the attitude of the German Social-Democratic Party to the movement. During that discussion prominent German Social-Democratic leaders failed to rebuff Göhre, who affirmed that the party should remain neutral towards the Movement to Secede from the Church and forbid its members to engage in propaganda against religion and the Church on behalf of the party.

Lenin took notice of the discussion while working on material for *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*.

To develop democracy to the utmost, to find the forms for this development, to test them by practice, and so forth—all this is one of the component tasks of the struggle for the social revolution. Taken separately, no kind of democracy will bring socialism. But in actual life democracy will never be "taken separately"; it will be "taken together" with other things, it will exert its influence on economic life as well, will stimulate its transformation; and in its turn it will be influenced by economic development, and so on. This is the dialectics of living history.

Engels continued:

> "...This shattering [*Sprengung*] of the former state power and its replacement by a new and truly democratic one is described in detail in the third section of *The Civil War*. But it was necessary to touch briefly here once more on some of its features, because in Germany particularly the superstitious belief in the state has passed from philosophy into the general consciousness of the bourgeoisie and even of many workers. According to the philosophical conception, the state is the 'realization of the idea', or the Kingdom of God on earth, translated into philosophical terms, the sphere in which eternal truth and justice are, or should be, realized. And from this follows a superstitious reverence for the state and everything connected with it, which takes root the more readily since people are accustomed from childhood to imagine that the affairs and interests common to the whole of society could not be looked after other than as they have been looked after in the past, that is, through the state and its lucratively positioned officials. And people think they have taken quite an extraordinarily bold step forward when they have rid themselves of belief in hereditary monarchy and swear by the democratic republic. In reality, however, the state is nothing but a machine for the oppression of one class by another, and indeed in the democratic republic no less than in the monarchy. And at best it is an evil inherited by the proletariat after its victorious struggle for class supremacy, whose worst sides the victorious proletariat will have to lop off as speedily as possible, just as the Commune had to, until a generation reared in new, free social conditions is able to discard the entire lumber of the state."

Engels warned the Germans not to forget the principles of socialism with regard to the state in general in connection with the substitution of a republic for the monarchy. His warnings now read like a veritable lesson to the Tseretelis and Chernovs, who in their "coalition" practice have revealed a superstitious belief in, and a superstitious reverence for, the state!

Two more remarks.

1. Engels' statement that in a democratic republic, "no less" than in a monarchy, the state remains a "machine for the oppression of one class by another" by no means signifies that the form of oppression makes no difference to the proletariat, as some anarchists "teach". A wider, freer and more open form of the class struggle and of class oppression vastly assists the proletariat in its struggle for the abolition of classes in general.
2. Why will only a new generation be able to discard the entire lumber of the state? This question is bound up with that of overcoming democracy, with which we shall deal now.

6. Engels on the Overcoming of Democracy

Engels came to express his views on this subject when establishing that the term "Social-Democrat" was scientifically wrong.

In a preface to an edition of his articles of the seventies on various subjects, mostly on "international" questions (*Internationales aus dem Volkstaat*), dated January 3, 1894, i.e., written a year and a half before his death, Engels wrote that in all his articles he used the word "Communist", and not "Social-Democrat", because at that time the Proudhonists in France and the Lassalleans[14] in Germany called themselves Social-Democrats.

[14] Lassalleans – supporters of the German petty-bourgeois socialist Ferdinand Lassalle, members of the General Association of German Workers founded at the Congress of Workers' Organizations, held in Leipzig in 1863, to counterbalance the bourgeois progressists who were trying to gain influence over the working class. The first President of the Association was Lassalle, who

> "... For Marx and myself," continued Engels, "it was therefore absolutely impossible to use such a loose term to characterize our special point of view. Today things are different, and the word ["Social-Democrat"] may perhaps pass muster [*mag passieren*], inexact [*unpassend*, unsuitable] though it still is for a party whose economic program is not merely socialist in general, but downright communist, and whose ultimate political aim is to overcome the whole state and, consequently, democracy as well. The names of real political parties, however, are never wholly appropriate; the party develops while the name stays."[15]

The dialectician Engels remained true to dialectics to the end of his days. Marx and I, he said, had a splendid, scientifically exact name for the party, but there was no real party, i.e., no mass proletarian party. Now (at the end of the 19th century) there was a real party, but its name was scientifically wrong. Never mind, it would "pass muster", so long as the party developed, so long as the scientific—in accuracy of the name, was not hidden from it and did not hinder its development in the right direction!

Perhaps some wit would console us Bolsheviks in the manner of Engels: we have a real party, it is developing splendidly; even such a meaningless and ugly term as "Bolshevik" will "pass muster", although it expresses nothing whatever but the purely accidental fact that at the Brussels-London Congress of 1903 we were in the majority. Perhaps now that the persecution of our Party by republicans and "revolutionary" petty-bourgeois democrats in July and August has earned the name "Bolshevik" such universal respect, now that, in addition, this persecution marks the tremendous historical progress our Party has made in its real development—perhaps now even I might hesitate to insist on the suggestion I made in April to change the name of our Party. Perhaps I would propose a "compromise" to my comrades, namely, to call ourselves the Communist Party, but to retain the word "Bolshevik" in brackets.

But the question of the name of the Party is incomparably less important than the question of the attitude of the revolutionary proletariat to the state.

In the usual argument about the state, the mistake is constantly made against which Engels warned and which we have in passing indicated above, namely, it is constantly forgotten that the abolition of the state means also the abolition of democracy; that the withering away of the state means the withering away of democracy.

At first sight, this seems strange and incomprehensible; someone may even suspect us of expecting the advent of a system of society in which the principle of subordination of the minority to the majority will not be observed—for democracy means the recognition of this very principle.

No, democracy is not identical with the subordination of the minority to the majority. Democracy is a state which recognizes the subordination of the minority to the majority, i.e., an organization for the systematic use of force by one class against another, by one section of the population against another.

We set ourselves the ultimate aim of abolishing the state, i.e., all organized and systematic violence, all use of violence against people in general. We do not expect the advent of a system of society in which the principle of subordination of the minority to the majority will not be observed. In striving for socialism, we are convinced that it will develop into communism and, the need for violence against people in general, for the subordination of

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formulated its program and the fundamentals of its tactics. The Association's political program was declared to be the struggle for universal suffrage, and its economic program, the struggle for workers' production associations, to be subsidized by the state. In their practical activities, Lassalle and his followers adapted themselves to the hegemony of Prussia and supported the Great Power policy of Bismarck. "Objectively," wrote Engels to Marx on January 27, 1865, "this was a base action and a betrayal of the whole working-class movement to the Prussians." Marx and Engels frequently and sharply criticized the theory, tactics, and organizational principles of the Lassalleans as an opportunist trend in the German working-class movement.

[15] Engels, *Vorwort zur Broschüre Internationales aus dem 'Volksstaat' (1871-1875)*, Marx-Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 22, Berlin, 1963, S. 417-18.

one man to another, and of one section of the population to another, will vanish altogether since people will become accustomed to observing the elementary conditions of social life without violence and subordination.

In order to emphasize this element of habit, Engels speaks of a new generation, "reared in new, free social conditions", which will "be able to discard the entire lumber of the state"—of any state, including the democratic-republican state.

In order to explain this, it is necessary to analyze the economic basis of the withering away of the state.

Chapter 5: The Economic Basis of the Withering Away of the State

Marx explains this question most thoroughly in his *Critique of the Gotha Program* (letter to Bracke, May 5, 1875, which was not published until 1891 when it was printed in *Neue Zeit*, Vol. IX-1, and which has appeared in Russian in a special edition). The polemical part of this remarkable work, which contains a criticism of Lassalleanism, has, so to speak, overshadowed its positive part, namely, the analysis of the connection between the development of communism and the withering away of the state.

1. Presentation of the Question by Marx

From a superficial comparison of Marx's letter to Bracke of May 5, 1875, with Engels' letter to Bebel of March 28, 1875, which we examined above, it might appear that Marx was much more of a "champion of the state" than Engels, and that the difference of opinion between the two writers on the question of the state was very considerable.

Engels suggested to Bebel that all chatter about the state be dropped altogether, that the word "state" be eliminated from the program altogether and the word "community" substituted for it. Engels even declared that the Commune was long a state in the proper sense of the word. Yet Marx even spoke of the "future state in communist society", i.e., he would seem to recognize the need for the state even under communism.

But such a view would be fundamentally wrong. A closer examination shows that Marx's and Engels' views on the state and its withering away were completely identical, and that Marx's expression quoted above refers to the state in the process of withering away.

Clearly, there can be no question of specifying the moment of the future "withering away", the more so since it will obviously be a lengthy process. The apparent difference between Marx and Engels is due to the fact that they dealt with different subjects and pursued different aims. Engels set out to show Bebel graphically, sharply, and in broad outline the utter absurdity of the current prejudices concerning the state (shared to no small degree by Lassalle). Marx only touched upon this question in passing, being interested in another subject, namely, the development of communist society.

The whole theory of Marx is the application of the theory of development—in its most consistent, complete, considered and pithy form—to modern capitalism. Naturally, Marx was faced with the problem of applying this theory both to the forthcoming collapse of capitalism and to the future development of future communism.

On the basis of what facts, then, can the question of the future development of future communism be dealt with?

On the basis of the fact that it has its origin in capitalism, that it develops historically from capitalism, that it is the result of the action of a social force to which capitalism gave birth. There is no trace of an attempt on Marx's part to make up a utopia, to indulge in idle guess-work about what cannot be known. Marx treated the question

of communism in the same way as a naturalist would treat the question of the development of, say, a new biological variety, once he knew that it had originated in such and such a way and was changing in such and such a definite direction.

To begin with, Marx brushed aside the confusion the Gotha Program brought into the question of the relationship between state and society.

He wrote:

> "'Present-day society' is capitalist society, which exists in all civilized countries, being 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 what it is in Switzerland, and different in England from what it is in the United States. 'The present-day state' is, therefore, a fiction.
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> "Nevertheless, the different states of the different civilized countries, in spite of their motley diversity of form, all have this in common, that they are based on modern bourgeois society, only one more or less capitalistically developed. They have, therefore, also certain essential 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."[1]

After thus ridiculing all talk about a "people's state", Marx formulated the question and gave warning, as it were, that those seeking a scientific answer to it should use only firmly-established scientific data.

The first fact that has been established most accurately by the whole theory of development, by science as a whole—a fact that was ignored by the utopians, and is ignored by the present-day opportunists, who are afraid of the socialist revolution—is that, historically, there must undoubtedly be a special stage, or a special phase, of transition from capitalism to communism.

2. The Transition from Capitalism to Communism

Marx continued:

> "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."

Marx bases this conclusion on an analysis of the role played by the proletariat in modern capitalist society, on the data concerning the development of this society, and on the irreconcilability of the antagonistic interests of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

Previously the question was put as follows: to achieve its emancipation, the proletariat must overthrow the bourgeoisie, win political power and establish its revolutionary dictatorship.

Now the question is put somewhat differently: the transition from capitalist society—which is developing towards communism—to communist society is impossible without a "political transition period", and the state in this period can only be the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

What, then, is the relation of this dictatorship to democracy?

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[1] Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Program", Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. III, Moscow, 1973, p. 26.

We have seen that the *Communist Manifesto* simply places side by side the two concepts: "to raise the proletariat to the position of the ruling class" and "to win the battle of democracy". On the basis of all that has been said above, it is possible to determine more precisely how democracy changes in the transition from capitalism to communism.

In capitalist society, providing it develops under the most favorable conditions, we have a more or less complete democracy in the democratic republic. But this democracy is always hemmed in by the narrow limits set by capitalist exploitation, and consequently always remains, in effect, a democracy for the minority, only for the propertied classes, only for the rich. Freedom in capitalist society always remains about the same as it was in the ancient Greek republics: freedom for the slave owners. Owing to the conditions of capitalist exploitation, the modern wage slaves are so crushed by want and poverty that "they cannot be bothered with democracy", "cannot be bothered with politics"; in the ordinary, peaceful course of events, the majority of the population is debarred from participation in public and political life.

The correctness of this statement is perhaps most clearly confirmed by Germany, because constitutional legality steadily endured there for a remarkably long time—nearly half a century (1871-1914)—and during this period the Social-Democrats were able to achieve far more than in other countries in the way of "utilizing legality", and organized a larger proportion of the workers into a political party than anywhere else in the world.

What is this largest proportion of politically conscious and active wage slaves that has so far been recorded in capitalist society? 1,000,000 members of the Social-Democratic Party—out of 15,000,000 wage-workers! 3,000,000 organized in trade unions—out of 15,000,000!

Democracy for an insignificant minority, democracy for the rich—that is the democracy of capitalist society. If we look more closely into the machinery of capitalist democracy, we see everywhere, in the "petty"—supposedly petty—details of the suffrage (residential qualifications, exclusion of women, etc.), in the technique of the representative institutions, in the actual obstacles to the right of assembly (public buildings are not for "paupers"!), in the purely capitalist organization of the daily press, etc., etc.,—we see restriction after restriction upon democracy. These restrictions, exceptions, exclusions, obstacles for the poor seem slight, especially in the eyes of one who has never known want himself and has never been in close contact with the oppressed classes in their mass life (and nine out of 10, if not 99 out of 100, bourgeois publicists and politicians come under this category); but in their sum total these restrictions exclude and squeeze out the poor from politics, from active participation in democracy.

Marx grasped this essence of capitalist democracy splendidly when, in analyzing the experience of the Commune, he said that the oppressed are allowed once every few years to decide which particular representatives of the oppressing class shall represent and repress them in parliament!

But from this capitalist democracy—that is inevitably narrow and stealthily pushes aside the poor, and is therefore hypocritical and false through and through—forward development does not proceed simply, directly and smoothly, towards "greater and greater democracy", as the liberal professors and petty-bourgeois opportunists would have us believe. No, forward development, i.e., development towards communism, proceeds through the dictatorship of the proletariat, and cannot do otherwise, for the resistance of the capitalist exploiters cannot be broken by anyone else or in any other way.

And the dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e., the organization of the vanguard of the oppressed as the ruling class for the purpose of suppressing the oppressors, cannot result merely in an expansion of democracy.

Simultaneously with an immense expansion of democracy, which for the first time becomes democracy for the poor, democracy for the people, and not democracy for the money-bags, the dictatorship of the proletariat imposes a series of restrictions on the freedom of the oppressors, the exploiters, the capitalists. We must suppress them in order to free humanity from wage slavery, their resistance must be crushed by force; it is clear that there is no freedom and no democracy where there is suppression and where there is violence.

Engels expressed this splendidly in his letter to Bebel when he said, as the reader will remember, that "the proletariat needs the state, not in the interests of freedom but in order to hold down its adversaries, and as soon as it becomes possible to speak of freedom the state as such ceases to exist".

Democracy for the vast majority of the people, and suppression by force, i.e., exclusion from democracy, of the exploiters and oppressors of the people—this is the change democracy undergoes during the transition from capitalism to communism.

Only in communist society, when the resistance of the capitalists have disappeared, when there are no classes (i.e., when there is no distinction between the members of society as regards their relation to the social means of production), only then "the state... ceases to exist", and "it becomes possible to speak of freedom". Only then will a truly complete democracy become possible and be realized, a democracy without any exceptions whatsoever. And only then will democracy begin to wither away, owing to the simple fact that, freed from capitalist slavery, from the untold horrors, savagery, absurdities, and infamies of capitalist exploitation, people will gradually become accustomed to observing the elementary rules of social intercourse that have been known for centuries and repeated for thousands of years in all copy-book maxims. They will become accustomed to observing them without force, without coercion, without subordination, without the special apparatus for coercion called the state.

The expression "the state withers away" is very well-chosen, for it indicates both the gradual and the spontaneous nature of the process. Only habit can, and undoubtedly will, have such an effect; for we see around us on millions of occasions how readily people become accustomed to observing the necessary rules of social intercourse when there is no exploitation, when there is nothing that arouses indignation, evokes protest and revolt, and creates the need for suppression.

And so, in capitalist society we have a democracy that is curtailed, wretched, false, a democracy only for the rich, for the minority. The dictatorship of the proletariat, the period of transition to communism, will for the first time create democracy for the people, for the majority, along with the necessary suppression of the exploiters of the minority. Communism alone is capable of providing really complete democracy, and the more complete it is, the sooner it will become unnecessary and wither away of its own accord.

In other words, under capitalism we have the state in the proper sense of the word, that is, a special machine for the suppression of one class by another, and, what is more, of the majority by the minority. Naturally, to be successful, such an undertaking as the systematic suppression of the exploited majority by the exploiting minority calls for the utmost ferocity and savagery in the matter of suppressing, it calls for seas of blood, through which mankind is actually wading its way in slavery, serfdom and wage labor.

Furthermore, during the transition from capitalism to communism, suppression is still necessary, but it is now the suppression of the exploiting minority by the exploited majority. A special apparatus, a special machine for suppression, the "state", is still necessary, but this is now a transitional state. It is no longer a state in the proper sense of the word; for the suppression of the minority of exploiters by the majority of the wage slaves of yesterday is comparatively so easy, simple and natural a task that it will entail far less bloodshed than the suppression of

the risings of slaves, serfs or wage-laborers, and it will cost mankind far less. And it is compatible with the extension of democracy to such an overwhelming majority of the population that the need for a special machine of suppression will begin to disappear. Naturally, the exploiters are unable to suppress the people without a highly complex machine for performing this task, but the people can suppress the exploiters even with a very simple "machine", almost without a "machine", without a special apparatus, by the simple organization of the armed people (such as the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, we would remark, running ahead).

Lastly, only communism makes the state absolutely unnecessary, for there is nobody to be suppressed—"nobody" in the sense of a class, of a systematic struggle against a definite section of the population. We are not utopians, and do not in the least deny the possibility and inevitability of excesses on the part of *individual persons*, or the need to stop such excesses. In the first place, however, no special machine, no special apparatus of suppression, is needed for this: this will be done by the armed people themselves, as simply and as readily as any crowd of civilized people, even in modern society, interferes to put a stop to a scuffle or to prevent a woman from being assaulted. And, secondly, we know that the fundamental social cause of excesses, which consist in the violation of the rules of social intercourse, is the exploitation of the people, their wants and their poverty. With the removal of this chief cause, excesses will inevitably begin to "wither away". We do not know how quickly and in what succession, but we do know they will wither away. With their withering away the state will also wither away.

Without building utopias, Marx defined more fully what can be defined now regarding this future, namely, the differences between the lower and higher phases (levels, stages) of communist society.

3. The First Phase of Communist Society

In the *Critique of the Gotha Program*, Marx goes into detail to disprove Lassalle's idea that under socialism the worker will receive the "undiminished" or "full product of his labor". Marx shows that from the whole of the social labor of society there must be deducted a reserve fund, a fund for the expansion of production, a fund for the replacement of the "wear-and-tear" of machinery, and so on. Then, from the means of consumption, must be a fund deducted for administrative expenses, for schools, hospitals, old people's homes, and so on.

Instead of Lassalle's hazy, obscure, general phrase ("the full product of his labor to the worker"), Marx makes a sober estimate of exactly how socialist society will have to manage its affairs. Marx proceeds to make a concrete analysis of the conditions of life of a society in which there will be no capitalism, and says:

> "What we have to deal with here [in analyzing the program of the workers' party] is a communist society, not as it has developed on its own foundations, but, on the contrary, just as it emerges from capitalist society; which is thus in every respect, economically, morally, and intellectually, still stamped with the birthmarks of the old society from whose womb it comes."

It is this communist society, which has just emerged into the light of day out of the womb of capitalism and which is in every respect stamped with the birthmarks of the old society, that Marx terms the "first", or lower, phase of communist society.

The means of production are no longer the private property of individuals. The means of production belong to the whole of society. Every member of society, performing a certain part of the socially-necessary work, receives a certificate from society to the effect that he has done a certain amount of work. And with this certificate he receives from the public store of consumer goods a corresponding quantity of products. After a deduction is made of the amount of labor which goes to the public fund, every worker, therefore, receives from society as much as he has given to it.

"Equality" apparently reigns supreme.

But when Lassalle, having in view such a social order (usually called socialism, but termed by Marx the first phase of communism), says that this is "equitable distribution", that this is "the equal right of all to an equal product of labor", Lassalle is mistaken and Marx exposes the mistake.

"Hence, the equal right," says Marx, in this case still certainly conforms to "bourgeois law", which, like all law, implies inequality. All law is an application of an equal measure to different people who in fact are not alike, are not equal to one another. That is why the "equal right" is a violation of equality and an injustice. In fact, everyone, having performed as much social labor as another, receives an equal share of the social product (after the above-mentioned deductions).

But people are not alike: one is strong, another is weak; one is married, another is not; one has more children, another has less, and so on. And the conclusion Marx draws is:

> "...With an equal performance of labor, and hence an equal share in the social consumption fund, one will in fact receive more than another, one will be richer than another, and so on. To avoid all these defects, the right instead of being equal would have to be unequal."

The first phase of communism, therefore, cannot yet provide justice and equality; differences, and unjust differences, in wealth will still persist, but the exploitation of man by man will have become impossible because it will be impossible to seize the means of production—the factories, machines, land, etc.—and make them private property. In smashing Lassalle's petty-bourgeois, vague phrases about "equality" and "justice" in general, Marx shows the course of development of communist society, which is compelled to abolish at first only the "injustice" of the means of production seized by individuals, and which is unable at once to eliminate the other injustice, which consists in the distribution of consumer goods "according to the amount of labor performed" (and not according to needs).

The vulgar economists, including the bourgeois professors and "our" Tugan, constantly reproach the socialists with forgetting the inequality of people and with "dreaming" of eliminating this inequality. Such a reproach, as we see, only proves the extreme ignorance of the bourgeois ideologists.

Marx not only most scrupulously takes account of the inevitable inequality of men, but he also takes into account the fact that the mere conversion of the means of production into the common property of the whole society (commonly called "socialism") does not remove the defects of distribution and the inequality of "bourgeois laws" which continues to prevail so long as products are divided "according to the amount of labor performed". Continuing, Marx says:

> "But these defects are inevitable in the first phase of communist society as it is when it has just emerged, after prolonged birth pangs, from capitalist society. Law can never be higher than the economic structure of society and its cultural development conditioned thereby."

And so, in the first phase of communist society (usually called socialism) "bourgeois law" is not abolished in its entirety, but only in part, only in proportion to the economic revolution so far attained, i.e., only in respect of the means of production. "Bourgeois law" recognizes them as the private property of individuals. Socialism converts them into common property. To that extent—and to that extent alone—"bourgeois law" disappears.

However, it persists as far as its other part is concerned; it persists in the capacity of regulator (determining factor) in the distribution of products and the allotment of labor among the members of society. The socialist principle, "*He who does not work shall not eat*", is already realized; the other socialist principle, "*An equal amount*

of products for an equal amount of labor", is also already realized. But this is not yet communism, and it does not yet abolish "bourgeois law", which gives unequal individuals, in return for unequal (really unequal) amounts of labor, equal amounts of products.

This is a "defect", says Marx, but it is unavoidable in the first phase of communism; for if we are not to indulge in utopianism, we must not think that having overthrown capitalism people will at once learn to work for society without any rules of law. Besides, the abolition of capitalism does not immediately create the economic prerequisites for such a change.

Now, there are no other rules than those of "bourgeois law". To this extent, therefore, there still remains the need for a state, which, while safeguarding the common ownership of the means of production, would safeguard equality in labor and in the distribution of products.

The state withers away insofar as there are no longer any capitalists, any classes, and, consequently, no class can be suppressed.

But the state has not yet completely withered away, since there still remains the safeguarding of "bourgeois law", which sanctifies actual inequality. For the state to wither away completely, complete communism is necessary.

4. The Higher Phase of Communist Society

Marx continues:

> "In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labor, and with it also the antithesis between mental and physical labor, has vanished, after labor has become not only a livelihood but life's prime want, after the productive forces have increased with the all-round development of the individual, and all the springs of cooperative wealth flow more abundantly—only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois law be left behind in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!"

Only now can we fully appreciate the correctness of Engels' remarks mercilessly ridiculing the absurdity of combining the words "freedom" and "state". So long as the state exists there is no freedom. When there is freedom, there will be no state.

The economic basis for the complete withering away of the state is such a high state of development of communism at which the antithesis between mental and physical labor disappears, at which there consequently disappears one of the principal sources of modern social inequality—a source, moreover, which cannot on any account be removed immediately by the mere conversion of the means of production into public property, by the mere expropriation of the capitalists.

This expropriation will make it possible for the productive forces to develop to a tremendous extent. And when we see how incredibly capitalism is already retarding this development, when we see how much progress could be achieved on the basis of the level of technique already attained, we are entitled to say with the fullest confidence that the expropriation of the capitalists will inevitably result in an enormous development of the productive forces of human society. But how rapidly this development will proceed, how soon it will reach the point of breaking away from the division of labor, of doing away with the antithesis between mental and physical labor, of transforming labor into "life's prime want"—we do not and cannot know.

That is why we are entitled to speak only of the inevitable withering away of the state, emphasizing the protracted nature of this process and its dependence upon the rapidity of development of the higher phase of

communism, and leaving the question of the time required for, or the concrete forms of, the withering away quite open, because there is no material for answering these questions.

The state will be able to wither away completely when society adopts the rule: "*From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs*", i.e., when people have become so accustomed to observing the fundamental rules of social intercourse and when their labor has become so productive that they will voluntarily work according to their ability. "The narrow horizon of bourgeois law", which compels one to calculate with the heartlessness of a Shylock whether one has not worked half an hour more than anybody else—this narrow horizon will then be left behind. There will then be no need for society, in distributing the products, to regulate the quantity to be received by each; each will take freely "according to his needs".

From the bourgeois point of view, it is easy to declare that such a social order is "sheer utopia" and to sneer at the socialists for promising everyone the right to receive from society, without any control over the labor of the individual citizen, any quantity of truffles, cars, pianos, etc. Even to this day, most bourgeois "savants" confine themselves to sneering in this way, thereby betraying both their ignorance and their selfish defense of capitalism.

Ignorance—for it has never entered the head of any socialist to "promise" that the higher phase of the development of communism will arrive; as for the greatest socialists' forecast that it will arrive, it presupposes not the present ordinary run of people, who, like the seminary students in Pomyalovsky's stories,[2] are capable of damaging the stocks of public wealth "just for fun", and of demanding the impossible.

Until the "higher" phase of communism arrives, the socialists demand the strictest control by society and by the state over the measure of labor and the measure of consumption; but this control must start with the expropriation of the capitalists, with the establishment of workers' control over the capitalists, and must be exercised not by a state of bureaucrats, but by a state of armed workers.

The selfish defense of capitalism by the bourgeois ideologists (and their hangers-on, like the Tseretelis, Chernovs, and Co.) consists in that they substitute arguing and talk about the distant future for the vital and burning question of present-day politics, namely, the expropriation of the capitalists, the conversion of all citizens into workers and other employees of one huge "syndicate"—the whole state—and the complete subordination of the entire work of this syndicate to a genuinely democratic state, the state of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

In fact, when a learned professor, followed by the philistine, followed in turn by the Tseretelis and Chernovs, talks of wild utopias, of the demagogic promises of the Bolsheviks, of the impossibility of "introducing" socialism, it is the higher stage, or phase, of communism he has in mind, which no one has ever promised or even thought to "introduce", because, generally speaking, it cannot be "introduced".

And this brings us to the question of the scientific distinction between socialism and communism which Engels touched on in his above-quoted argument about the incorrectness of the name "Social-Democrat". Politically, the distinction between the first, or lower, and the higher phase of communism will in time, probably, be tremendous. But it would be ridiculous to recognize this distinction now, under capitalism, and only individual anarchists, perhaps, could invest it with primary importance (if there still are people among the anarchists who have learned nothing from the "Plekhanov" conversion of the Kropotkins, of Grave, Corneliseen, and other "stars"

[2] Reference is to the pupils of a seminary who won notoriety by their extreme ignorance and barbarous customs. They were portrayed by N. G. Pomyalovsky, a Russian author.

of anarchism into social-chauvinists or "anarcho-trenchists", as Ghe, one of the few anarchists who have still preserved a sense of humor and a conscience, has put it).

But the scientific distinction between socialism and communism is clear. What is usually called socialism was termed by Marx the "first", or lower, phase of communist society. Insofar as the means of production becomes common property, the word "communism" is also applicable here, providing we do not forget that this is not complete communism. The great significance of Marx's explanations is that here, too, he consistently applies materialist dialectics, the theory of development, and regards communism as something which develops out of capitalism. Instead of scholastically invented, "concocted" definitions and fruitless disputes over words (What is socialism? What is communism?), Marx gives an analysis of what might be called the stages of the economic maturity of communism.

In its first phase, or first stage, communism cannot as yet be fully mature economically and entirely free from traditions or vestiges of capitalism. Hence the interesting phenomenon that communism in its first phase retains "the narrow horizon of bourgeois law". Of course, bourgeois law in regard to the distribution of consumer goods inevitably presupposes the existence of the bourgeois state, for law is nothing without an apparatus capable of enforcing the observance of the rules of law.

It follows that under communism there remains for a time not only bourgeois law, but even the bourgeois state, without the bourgeoisie!

This may sound like a paradox or simply a dialectical conundrum of which Marxism is often accused by people who have not taken the slightest trouble to study its extraordinarily profound content.

But in fact, remnants of the old, surviving in the new, confront us in life at every step, both in nature and in society. And Marx did not arbitrarily insert a scrap of "bourgeois" law into communism, but indicated what is economically and politically inevitable in a society emerging out of the womb of capitalism.

Democracy means equality. The great significance of the proletariat's struggle for equality and of equality as a slogan will be clear if we correctly interpret it as meaning the abolition of classes. But democracy means only formal equality. And as soon as equality is achieved for all members of society in relation to ownership of the means of production, that is, equality of labor and wages, humanity will inevitably be confronted with the question of advancing further from formal equality to actual equality, i.e., to the operation of the rule "*from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs*". By what stages, by means of what practical measures humanity will proceed to this supreme aim we do not and cannot know. But it is important to realize how infinitely mendacious is the ordinary bourgeois conception of socialism as something lifeless, rigid, fixed once and for all, whereas in reality only socialism will be the beginning of a rapid, genuine, truly mass forward movement, embracing first the majority and then the whole of the population, in all spheres of public and private life.

Democracy is of enormous importance to the working class in its struggle against the capitalists for its emancipation. But democracy is by no means a boundary not to be overstepped; it is only one of the stages on the road from feudalism to capitalism, and from capitalism to communism.

Democracy is a form of the state, it represents, on the one hand, the organized, systematic use of force against persons; but, on the other hand, it signifies the formal recognition of equality of citizens, the equal right of all to determine the structure of, and to administer, the state. This, in turn, results in the fact that, at a certain stage in the development of democracy, it first welds together the class that wages a revolutionary struggle against capitalism—the proletariat, and enables it to crush, smash to atoms, wipe off the face of the earth the bourgeois,

even the republican-bourgeois, state machine, the standing army, the police and the bureaucracy and to substitute for them a more democratic state machine, but a state machine nevertheless, in the shape of armed workers who proceed to form a militia involving the entire population.

Here "quantity turns into quality": such a degree of democracy implies overstepping the boundaries of bourgeois society and beginning its socialist reorganization. If really all take part in the administration of the state, capitalism cannot retain its hold. The development of capitalism, in turn, creates the preconditions that enable really "all" to take part in the administration of the state. Some of these preconditions are: universal literacy, which has already been achieved in a number of the most advanced capitalist countries, then the "training and disciplining" of millions of workers by the huge, complex, socialized apparatus of the postal service, railways, big factories, large-scale commerce, banking, etc., etc.

Given these economic preconditions, it is quite possible, after the overthrow of the capitalists and the bureaucrats, to proceed immediately, overnight, to replace them in the control over production and distribution, in the work of keeping account of labor and products, by the armed workers, by the whole of the armed population. (The question of control and accounting should not be confused with the question of the scientifically trained staff of engineers, agronomists, and so on. These gentlemen are working today in obedience to the wishes of the capitalists and will work even better tomorrow in obedience to the wishes of the armed workers.)

Accounting and control—that is *mainly* what is needed for the "smooth working", for the proper functioning, of the *first phase* of communist society. *All* citizens are transformed into hired employees of the state, which consists of the armed workers. *All* citizens become employees and workers of a *single* countrywide state "syndicate". All that is required is that they should work equally, do their proper share of work, and get equal pay; the accounting and control necessary for this have been *simplified* by capitalism to the utmost and reduced to the extraordinarily simple operations—which any literate person can perform—of supervising and recording, knowledge of the four rules of arithmetic, and issuing appropriate receipts.[3]

When the *majority* of the people begin independently and everywhere to keep such accounts and exercise such control over the capitalists (now converted into employees) and over the intellectual gentry who preserve their capitalist habits, this control will really become universal, general, and popular; and there will be no getting away from it, there will be "nowhere to go".

The whole of society will have become a single office and a single factory, with equality of labor and pay.

But this "factory" discipline, which the proletariat, after defeating the capitalists, after overthrowing the exploiters, will extend to the whole of society, is by no means our ideal, or our ultimate goal. It is only a necessary *step* for thoroughly cleansing society of all the infamies and abominations of capitalist exploitation, *and for further* progress.

From the moment all members of society, or at least the vast majority, have learned to administer the state *themselves*, have taken this work into their own hands, have organized control over the insignificant capitalist minority, over the gentry who wish to preserve their capitalist habits and over the workers who have been thoroughly corrupted by capitalism—from this moment the need for government of any kind begins to disappear altogether. The more complete the democracy, the nearer the moment when it becomes unnecessary. The more

[3] When the more important functions of the state are reduced to such accounting and control by the workers themselves, it will cease to be a "political state" and "public functions will lose their political character and become mere administrative functions" (cf. above, Chapter 4, 2, Engels' controversy with the anarchists).

democratic the "state" which consists of the armed workers, and which is "no longer a state in the proper sense of the word", the more rapidly *every form* of state begins to wither away.

For when *all* have learned to administer and actually to independently administer social production, independently keep accounts and exercise control over the parasites, the sons of the wealthy, the swindlers and other "guardians of capitalist traditions", the escape from this popular accounting and control will inevitably become so incredibly difficult, such a rare exception, and will probably be accompanied by such swift and severe punishment (for the armed workers are practical men and not sentimental intellectuals, and they scarcely allow anyone to trifle with them), that the *necessity* of observing the simple, fundamental rules of the community will very soon become a *habit*.

Then the door will be thrown wide open for the transition from the first phase of communist society to its higher phase, and with it to the complete withering away of the state.

Chapter 6: The Vulgarism of Marxism by the Opportunists

The question of the relation of the state to the social revolution, and of the social revolution to the state, like the question of revolution generally, was given very little attention by the leading theoreticians and publicists of the Second International (1889-1914). But the most characteristic thing about the process of the gradual growth of opportunism that led to the collapse of the Second International in 1914 is the fact that even when these people were squarely faced with this question, they tried to evade it or ignored it.

In general, it may be said that evasiveness over the question of the relation of the proletarian revolution to the state—an evasiveness which benefited and fostered opportunism—resulted in the distortion of Marxism and in its complete vulgarization.

To characterize this lamentable process, if only briefly, we shall take the most prominent theoreticians of Marxism: Plekhanov and Kautsky.

1. Plekhanov's Controversy with the Anarchists

Plekhanov wrote a special pamphlet on the relation of anarchism to socialism, entitled *Anarchism and Socialism*, which was published in German in 1894.

In treating this subject, Plekhanov contrived completely to evade the most urgent, burning, and most politically essential issue in the struggle against anarchism, namely, the relation of the revolution to the state, and the question of the state in general! His pamphlet falls into two distinct parts: one of them is historical and literary, and contains valuable material on the history of the ideas of Stirner, Proudhon, and others; the other is philistine, and contains a clumsy dissertation on the theme that an anarchist cannot be distinguished from a bandit.

It is a most amusing combination of subjects and most characteristic of Plekhanov's whole activity on the eve of the revolution and during the revolutionary period in Russia. In fact, in the years 1905 to 1917, Plekhanov revealed himself as a semi-doctrinaire and semi-philistine who, in politics, trailed in the wake of the bourgeoisie.

We have now seen how, in their controversy with the anarchists, Marx and Engels with the utmost thoroughness explained their views on the relation of revolution to the state. In 1891, in his foreword to Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Program*, Engels wrote that "we"—that is, Engels and Marx—"were at that time, hardly

two years after the Hague Congress of the [First] International,[1] engaged in the most violent struggle against Bakunin and his anarchists."

The anarchists had tried to claim the Paris Commune as their "own", so to say, as a collaboration of their doctrine; and they completely misunderstood its lessons and Marx's analysis of these lessons. Anarchism has given nothing even approximating true answers to the concrete political questions: Must the old state machine be smashed? And what should be put in its place?

But to speak of "anarchism and socialism" while completely evading the question of the state, and disregarding the whole development of Marxism before and after the Commune, meant inevitably slipping into opportunism. For what opportunism needs most of all is that the two questions just mentioned should not be raised at all. That in itself is a victory for opportunism.

2. Kautsky's Controversy with the Opportunists

Undoubtedly, an immeasurably large number of Kautsky's works have been translated into Russian than into any other language. It is not without reason that some German Social-Democrats say in jest that Kautsky is read more in Russia than in Germany (let us say, in parenthesis, that this jest has a far deeper historical meaning than those who first made it suspect. The Russian workers, by making in 1905 an unusually great and unprecedented demand for the best works of the best Social-Democratic literature and editions of these works in quantities unheard of in other countries, rapidly transplanted, so to speak, the enormous experience of a neighboring, more advanced country to the young soil of our proletarian movement).

Besides his popularization of Marxism, Kautsky is particularly known in our country for his controversy with the opportunists, with Bernstein at their head. One fact, however, is almost unknown, one which cannot be ignored if we set out to investigate how Kautsky drifted into the morass of unbelievably disgraceful confusion and defense of social-chauvinism during the supreme crisis of 1914-15. This fact is as follows: shortly before he came out against the most prominent representatives of opportunism in France (Millerand and Jaures) and in Germany (Bernstein), Kautsky betrayed very considerable vacillation. The Marxist *Zarya*,[2] which was published in Stuttgart in 1901-02, and advocated revolutionary proletarian views, was forced to enter into controversy with Kautsky and describe as "elastic" the half-hearted, evasive resolution, conciliatory towards the opportunists, that he proposed at the International Socialist Congress in Paris in 1900.[3] Kautsky's letters published in Germany reveal no less hesitancy on his part before he took the field against Bernstein.

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[1] The Hague Congress of the First international sat from September 2-7, 1872. It was attended by 65 delegates, among whom were Marx and Engels. The powers of the General Council and the political activity of the proletariat were among the items on the agenda. The Congress deliberations were marked throughout by a sharp struggle against the Bakuninists. The Congress passed a resolution extending the General Council's powers. Its resolution *On the Political Activity of the Proletariat* stated that the proletariat should organize a political party of its own to ensure the triumph of the social revolution and that the winning of political power was becoming its great task. The Congress expelled Bakunin and Guillaume from the International as disorganized and founders of a new, anti-proletarian party.

[2] *Zarya* (Dawn) – a Marxist scientific and political journal published in Stuttgart in 1901-02 by the editors of *Iskra*. Four issues appeared in three installments.

[3] Reference is to the Fifth World Congress of the Second international, which met in Paris from September 23 to 27, 1900. On the fundamental issue, "The Winning of Political Power, and Alliances with Bourgeois Parties", whose discussion was prompted by A. Millerand becoming a member of the Valdeck-Rousseau counter-revolutionary government, the Congress carried a motion tabled by Kautsky. The resolution said that "the entry of a single Socialist into a bourgeois Ministry cannot be considered as the normal beginning for winning political power: it can never be anything but a temporary and exceptional makeshift in an emergency situation". Afterwards opportunists frequently referred to this point to justify their collaboration with the bourgeoisie. *Zarya* published (No. 1, April 1901) an

Of immeasurably greater significance, however, is the fact that, in his very controversy with the opportunists, in his formulation of the question and his manner of treating it, we can now see, as we study the history of Kautsky's latest betrayal of Marxism, his systematic deviation towards opportunism precisely on the question of the state.

Let us take Kautsky's first important work against opportunism, *Bernstein and the Social-Democratic Program*. Kautsky refutes Bernstein in detail, but here is a characteristic thing:

Bernstein, in his *Premises of Socialism*, of Herostratean fame, accuses Marxism of "Blanquism" (an accusation repeated thousands of times by the opportunists and liberal bourgeoisie in Russia against the revolutionary Marxists, the Bolsheviks). In this connection Bernstein dwells particularly on Marx's *The Civil War in France*, and tries, quite unsuccessfully, as we have seen, to identify Marx's views on the lessons of the Commune with those of Proudhon. Bernstein pays particular attention to the conclusion which Marx emphasized in his 1872 preface to the *Communist Manifesto*, namely, that "the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes".

This statement "pleased" Bernstein so much that he used it no less than three times in his book, interpreting it in the most distorted, opportunist way.

As we have seen, Marx meant that the working class must smash, break, shatter (*sprengung*, explosion—the expression used by Engels) the whole state machine. But according to Bernstein it would appear as though Marx in these words warned the working class against excessive revolutionary zeal when seizing power.

A cruder more hideous distortion of Marx's idea cannot be imagined.

How, then, did Kautsky proceed in his most detailed refutation of Bernsteinism?

He refrained from analyzing the utter distortion of Marxism by opportunism on this point. He cited the above-quoted passage from Engels' preface to Marx's *Civil War* and said that according to Marx the working class cannot simply take over the ready-made state machinery, but that, generally speaking, it can take it over—and that was all. Kautsky did not say a word about the fact that Bernstein attributed to Marx the very opposite of Marx's real idea, that since 1852 Marx had formulated the task of the proletarian revolution as being to "smash" the state machine.

The result was that the most essential distinction between Marxism and opportunism on the subject of the tasks of the proletarian revolution was slurred over by Kautsky!

"We can quite safely leave the solution of the problems of the proletarian dictatorship of the future," said Kautsky, writing "against" Bernstein.[4]

This is not a polemic against Bernstein, but, in essence, a concession to him, a surrender to opportunism; for at present the opportunists ask nothing better than to "quite safely leave to the future" all fundamental questions of the tasks of the proletarian revolution.

From 1852 to 1891, or for 40 years, Marx and Engels taught the proletariat that it must smash the state machine. Yet, in 1899, Kautsky, confronted with the complete betrayal of Marxism by the opportunists on this point, fraudulently substituted for the question whether it is necessary to smash this machine the question for the

article by Plekhanov entitled "A Few Words About the Latest World Socialist Congress in Paris. An Open Letter to the Comrades Who Have Empowered Me", which sharply criticized Kautsky's resolution.

[4] Kautsky, *Bernstein und das Sozialdemokratische Programm*, p. 213.

concrete forms in which it is to be smashed, and then sought refuge behind the "indisputable" (and barren) philistine truth that concrete forms cannot be known in advance!!

A gulf separates Marx and Kautsky over their attitude towards the proletarian party's task of training the working class for revolution.

Let us take the next, more mature, work by Kautsky, which was also largely devoted to a refutation of opportunist errors. It is his pamphlet, *The Social Revolution*. In this pamphlet, the author chose as his special theme the question of "the proletarian revolution" and "the proletarian regime". He gave much that was exceedingly valuable, but he avoided the question of the state. Throughout the pamphlet the author speaks of the winning of state power—and no more; that is, he has chosen a formula which makes a concession to the opportunists, in as much as it admits the possibility of seizing power without destroying the state machine. The very thing which Marx in 1872 declared to be "obsolete" in the program of the *Communist Manifesto*, is revived by Kautsky in 1902.

A special section in the pamphlet is devoted to the "forms and weapons of the social revolution". Here Kautsky speaks of the mass political strike, of civil war, and of the "instruments of the might of the modern large state, its bureaucracy and the army"; but he does not say a word about what the Commune has already taught the workers. Evidently, it was not without reason that Engels issued a warning, particularly to the German socialists, against "superstitious reverence" for the state.

Kautsky treats the matter as follows: the victorious proletariat "will carry out the democratic program", and he goes on to formulate its clauses. But he does not say a word about the new material provided in 1871 on the subject of the replacement of bourgeois democracy by proletarian democracy. Kautsky disposes of the question by using such "impressive-sounding" banalities as:

> "Still, it goes without saying that we shall not achieve supremacy under the present conditions. Revolution itself presupposes long and deep-going struggles, which, in themselves, will change our present political and social structure."

Undoubtedly, this "goes without saying," just as the fact that horses eat oats of the Volga flows into the Caspian. Only it is a pity that an empty and bombastic phrase about "deep-going" struggles is used to avoid a question of vital importance to the revolutionary proletariat, namely, what makes its revolution "deep-going" in relation to the state, to democracy, as distinct from previous, non-proletarian revolutions.

By avoiding this question, Kautsky in practice makes a concession to opportunism on this most essential point, although in words he declares stern war against it and stresses the importance of the "idea of revolution" (how much is this "idea" worth when one is afraid to teach the workers the concrete lessons of revolution?), or says, "revolutionary idealism before everything else", or announces that the English workers are now "hardly more than petty bourgeois".

> "The most varied form of enterprises—bureaucratic [??], trade unionist, cooperative, private... can exist side by side in socialist society," Kautsky writes. "... There are, for example, enterprises which cannot do without a bureaucratic [??] organization, such as the railways. Here the democratic organization may take the following shape: the workers elect delegates who form a sort of parliament, which establishes the working regulations and supervises the management of the bureaucratic apparatus. The management of other countries may be transferred to the trade unions, and still others may become cooperative enterprises."

This argument is erroneous; it is a step backward compared with the explanations Marx and Engels gave in the seventies, using the lessons of the Commune as an example.

As far as the supposedly necessary "bureaucratic" organization is concerned, there is no difference whatsoever between a railway and any other enterprise in large-scale machine industry, any factory, large shop, or large-scale capitalist agricultural enterprise. The technique of all these enterprises makes absolutely imperative the strictest discipline, the utmost precision on the part of everyone in carrying out his allotted task, for otherwise the whole enterprise may come to a stop, or machinery or the finished product may be damaged. In all these enterprises the workers will, of course, "elect delegates who will form a sort of parliament".

The whole point, however, is that this "sort of parliament" will not be a parliament in the sense of a bourgeois parliamentary institution. The whole point is that this "sort of parliament" will not merely "establish the working regulations and supervise the management of the bureaucratic apparatus," as Kautsky, whose thinking does not go beyond the bounds of bourgeois parliamentarianism, imagines. In socialist society, the "sort of parliament" consisting of workers' deputies will, of course, "establish the working regulations and supervise the management" of the "apparatus," but this apparatus will not be "bureaucratic." The workers, after winning political power, will smash the old bureaucratic apparatus, shatter it to its very foundations, and raze it to the ground; they will replace it by a new one, consisting of the very same workers and other employees, *against* whose transformation into bureaucratic will at once be taken which were specified in detail by Marx and Engels: (1) not only election, but also recall at any time; (2) pay not to exceed that of a workman; (3) immediate introduction of control by *all*, so that *all* may become "bureaucrats" for a time and that, therefore, *nobody* may be able to become a "bureaucrat".

Kautsky has not reflected at all on Marx's words: "The Commune was a working, not parliamentary, body, executive and legislative at the same time."

Kautsky has not understood at all the difference between bourgeois parliamentarism, which combines democracy (not for the people) with bureaucracy (against the people), and proletarian democracy, which will take immediate steps to cut bureaucracy down to the roots, and which will be able to carry these measures through to the end, to the complete abolition of bureaucracy, to the introduction of complete democracy for the people.

Kautsky here displays the same old "superstitious reverence" for the state, and "superstitious belief" in bureaucracy.

Let us now pass to the last and best of Kautsky's works against the opportunists, his pamphlet *The Road to Power* (which, I believe, has not been published in Russian, for it appeared in 1909, when reaction was at its height in our country). This pamphlet is a big step forward, since it does not deal with the revolutionary program in general, as the pamphlet of 1899 against Bernstein, or with the tasks of the social revolution irrespective of the time of its occurrence, as the 1902 pamphlet, *The Social Revolution*; it deals with the concrete conditions which compels us to recognize that the "era of revolutions" is setting in.

The author explicitly points to the aggravation of class antagonisms in general and to imperialism, which plays a particularly important part in this respect. After the "revolutionary period of 1789-1871" in Western Europe, he says, a similar period began in the East in 1905. A world war is approaching with menacing rapidity. "It [the proletariat] can no longer talk of premature revolution." "We have entered a revolutionary period." The "revolutionary era is beginning".

These statements are perfectly clear. This pamphlet of Kautsky's should serve as a measure of comparison of what the German Social-Democrats promised to be before the imperialist war and the depth of degradation to which they, including Kautsky himself, sank when the war broke out. "The present situation," Kautsky wrote in the pamphlet under survey, "is fraught with the danger that we [i.e., the German Social-Democrats] may easily

appear to be more 'moderate' than we really are." It turned out that in reality the German Social-Democratic Party was much more moderate and opportunist than it appeared to be!

It is all the more characteristic, therefore, that although Kautsky so explicitly declared that the era of revolution had already begun, in the pamphlet which he himself said was devoted to an analysis of the "political revolution", he again completely avoided the question of the state.

These evasions of the question, these omissions and equivocations, inevitably added up to that complete swing-over to opportunism with which we shall now have to deal.

Kautsky, the German Social-Democrats' spokesman, seems to have declared: I abide by revolutionary views (1899), I recognize, above all, the inevitability of the social revolution of the proletariat (1902), I recognize the advent of a new era of revolutions (1909). Still, I am going back on what Marx said as early as 1852, since the question of the tasks of the proletarian revolution in relation to the state is being raised (1912).

It was in this point-blank form that the question was put in Kautsky's controversy with Pannekoek.

3. Kautsky's Controversy with Pannekoek

In opposing Kautsky, Pannekoek came out as one of the representatives of the "Left radical" trend which included Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Radek, and others. Advocating revolutionary tactics, they were united in the conviction that Kautsky was going over to the "Center", which wavered in an unprincipled manner between Marxism and opportunism. This view was proved perfectly correct by the war, when this "Centrist" (wrongly called Marxist) trend, or Kautskyism, revealed itself in all its repulsive wretchedness.

In an article touching on the question of the state, entitled "Mass Action and Revolution",[5] Pannekoek described Kautsky's attitude as one of "passive radicalism", as "a theory of inactive expectancy". "Kautsky refuses to see the process of revolution," wrote Pannekoek. In presenting the matter in this way, Pannekoek approached the subject which interests us, namely, the tasks of the proletarian revolution in relation to the state.

> "The struggle of the proletariat," he wrote, "is not merely a struggle against the bourgeoisie for state power, but a struggle against state power.... The content of this [the proletarian] revolution is the destruction and dissolution [*Auflosung*] of the instruments of power of the state with the aid of the instruments of power of the proletariat… The struggle will cease only when, as the result of it, the state organization is completely destroyed. The organization of the majority will then have demonstrated its superiority by destroying the organization of the ruling minority."

The formulation in which Pannekoek presented his ideas suffers from serious defects. But its meaning is clear nonetheless, and it is interesting to note how Kautsky combated it.

> "Up to now," he wrote, "the antithesis between the Social-Democrats and the anarchists has been that the former wished to win the state power while the latter wished to destroy it. Pannekoek wants to do both."

Although Pannekoek's exposition lacks precision and concreteness—not to speak of other shortcomings of his article which have no bearing on the present subject—Kautsky seized precisely on the point of principle raised by Pannekoek; and on this fundamental point of principle Kautsky completely abandoned the Marxist position and went over wholly to opportunism. His definition of the distinction between the Social-Democrats and the anarchists is absolutely wrong; he completely vulgarizes and distorts Marxism.

The distinction between Marxists and the anarchists is this:

[5] *Neue Zeit*, 1912, Vol. XXX-2

1. The former, while aiming at the complete abolition of the state, recognize that this aim can only be achieved after classes have been abolished by the socialist revolution, as the result of the establishment of socialism, which leads to the withering away of the state. The latter want to abolish the state completely overnight, not understanding the conditions under which the state can be abolished.
2. The former recognize that after the proletariat has won political power it must completely destroy the old state machine and replace it by a new one consisting of an organization of the armed workers, after the type of the Commune. The latter, while insisting on the destruction of the state machine, have a very vague idea of what the proletariat will put in its place and how it will use its revolutionary power. The anarchists even deny that the revolutionary proletariat should use the state power, they reject its revolutionary dictatorship.
3. The former demand that the proletariat be trained for revolution by utilizing the present state. The anarchists reject this.

In this controversy, it is not Kautsky but Pannekoek who represents Marxism, for it was Marx who taught that the proletariat cannot simply win state power in the sense that the old state apparatus passes into new hands, but must smash this apparatus, must break it and replace it by a new one.

Kautsky abandons Marxism for the opportunist camp, for this destruction of the state machine, which is utterly unacceptable to the opportunists, completely disappears from his argument, and he leaves a loophole for them in that "conquest" may be interpreted as the simple acquisition of a majority.

To cover up his distortion of Marxism, Kautsky behaves like a doctrinaire: he puts forward a "quotation" from Marx himself. In 1850, Marx wrote that a "resolute centralization of power in the hands of the state authority" was necessary, and Kautsky triumphantly asks: does Pannekoek want to destroy "Centralism"?

This is simply a trick, like Bernstein's identification of the views of Marxism and Proudhonism on the subject of federalism as against centralism.

Kautsky's "quotation" is neither here nor there. Centralism is possible with both the old and the new state machine. If the workers voluntarily unite their armed forces, this will be centralism, but it will be based on the "complete destruction" of the centralized state apparatus—the standing army, the police, and the bureaucracy. Kautsky acts like an outright swindler by evading the perfectly well-known arguments of Marx and Engels on the Commune and plucking out a quotation which has nothing to do with the point at issue.

> "Perhaps he [Pannekoek]," Kautsky continues, "wants to abolish the state functions of the officials? But we cannot do without officials even in the party and trade unions, let alone in the state administration. And our program does not demand the abolition of state officials, but that they be elected by the people.... We are discussing here not the form the administrative apparatus of the 'future state' will assume, but whether our political struggle abolishes [literally dissolves - *auflost*] the state power *before we have captured it*. [Kautsky's italics] Which ministry with its officials could be abolished?" Then follows an enumeration of the ministeries of education, justice, finance, and war. "No, not one of the present ministries will be removed by our political struggle against the government.... I repeat, in order to prevent misunderstanding: we are not discussing here the form the 'future state' will be given by the victorious Social-Democrats, but how the present state is changed by our opposition."

This is an obvious trick. Pannekoek raised the question of revolution. Both the title of his article and the passages quoted above clearly indicate this. By skipping to the question of "opposition", Kautsky substitutes the opportunist for the revolutionary point of view. What he says means: at present we are an opposition; what we shall be after we have captured power, that we shall see. Revolution has vanished! And that is exactly what the opportunists wanted.

The point at issue is neither opposition nor political struggle in general, but revolution. Revolution consists in the proletariat destroying the "administrative apparatus" and the whole state machine, replacing it by a new one, made up of the armed workers. Kautsky displays a "superstitious reverence" for "ministries"; but why can they not be replaced, say, by committees of specialists working under sovereign, all-powerful Soviets of Workers and Soldiers' Deputies?

The point is not at all whether the "ministries" will remain, or whether "committees of specialists" or some other bodies will be set up; that is quite immaterial. The point is whether the old state machine (bound by thousands of threads to the bourgeoisie and permeated through and through with routine and inertia) shall remain, or be destroyed and replaced by a new one. Revolution consists not in the new class commanding, governing with the aid of the old state machine, but in this class smashing this machine and commanding, governing with the aid of a new machine. Kautsky slurs over this basic idea of Marxism, or he does not understand it at all.

His question about officials clearly shows that he does not understand the lessons of the Commune or the teachings of Marx. "We cannot do without officials even in the party and the trade unions...."

We cannot do without officials under capitalism, under the rule of the bourgeoisie. The proletariat is oppressed, the working people are enslaved by capitalism. Under capitalism, democracy is restricted, cramped, curtailed, mutilated by all the conditions of wage slavery, and the poverty and misery of the people. This and this alone is the reason why the functionaries of our political organizations and trade unions are corrupted—or rather tend to be corrupted—by the conditions of capitalism and betray a tendency to become bureaucrats, i.e., privileged persons divorced from the people and standing above the people.

That is the essence of bureaucracy; and until the capitalists have been expropriated and the bourgeoisie overthrown, even proletarian functionaries will inevitably be "bureaucratized" to a certain extent.

According to Kautsky, since elected functionaries will remain under socialism, so will officials, so will the bureaucracy! This is exactly where he is wrong. Marx, referring to the example of the Commune, showed that under socialism functionaries will cease to be "bureaucrats", to be "officials", they will cease to be so in proportion as—in addition to the principle of election of officials—the principle of recall at any time is also introduced, as salaries are reduced to the level of the wages of the average workman, and as parliamentary institutions are replaced by "working bodies, executive and legislative at the same time".

As a matter of fact, the whole of Kautsky's argument against Pannekoek, and particularly the former's wonderful point that we cannot do without officials even in our party and trade union organizations, is merely a repetition of Bernstein's old "arguments" against Marxism in general. In his renegade book, *The Premises of Socialism*, Bernstein combats the ideas of "primitive" democracy, combats what he calls "doctrinaire democracy": binding mandates, unpaid officials, impotent central representative bodies, etc. To prove that this "primitive" democracy is unsound, Bernstein refers to the experience of the British trade unions, as interpreted by the Webbs.[6] Seventy years of development "in absolute freedom", he says, convinced the trade unions that primitive democracy was useless, and they replaced it by ordinary democracy, i.e., parliamentarism combined with bureaucracy.

In reality, the trade unions did not develop "in absolute freedom" but in absolute capitalist slavery, under which, it goes without saying, a number of concessions to the prevailing evil, violence, falsehood, exclusion of the poor from the affairs of "higher" administration, "cannot be done without". Under socialism much of

[6] This refers to Sydney and Beatrice Webb, Industrial Democracy.

"primitive" democracy will inevitably be revived, since, for the first time in the history of civilized society the mass of the population will rise to taking an independent part, not only in voting and elections, but also in the everyday administration of the state. Under socialism all will govern in turn and will soon become accustomed to no one governing.

Marx's critical-analytical genius saw in the practical measures of the Commune the turning-point which the opportunists fear and do not want to recognize because of their cowardice, because they do not want to break irrevocably with the bourgeoisie, and which the anarchists do not want to see, either because they are in a hurry or because they do not understand at all the conditions of great social changes. "We must not even think of destroying the old state machine; how can we do without ministries and officials" argues the opportunist, who is completely saturated with philistinism and who, at bottom, not only does not believe in revolution, in the creative power of revolution, but lives in mortal dread of it (like our Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries).

"We must think only of destroying the old state machine; it is no use probing into the concrete lessons of earlier proletarian revolutions and analyzing what to put in the place of what has been destroyed, and how," argues the anarchist (the best of the anarchist, of course, and not those who, following the Kropotkins and Co., trail behind the bourgeoisie). Consequently, the tactics of the anarchist become the tactics of despair instead of a ruthlessly bold revolutionary effort to solve concrete problems while taking into account the practical conditions of the mass movement.

Marx teaches us to avoid both errors; he teaches us to act with supreme boldness in destroying the entire old state machine, and at the same time he teaches us to put the question concretely: the Commune was able in the space of a few weeks to start building a new, proletarian state machine by introducing such-and-such measures to provide wider democracy and to uproot bureaucracy. Let us learn revolutionary boldness from the Communards; let us see in their practical measures the outline of really urgent and immediately possible measures, and then, following this road, we shall achieve the complete destruction of bureaucracy.

The possibility of this destruction is guaranteed by the fact that socialism will shorten the working day, will raise the people to a new life, will create such conditions for the majority of the population as will enable everybody, without exception, to perform "state functions", and this will lead to the complete withering away of every form of state in general.

> "Its object [the object of the mass strike]," Kautsky continues, "cannot be to destroy the state power; its only object can be to make the government compliant on some specific question, or to replace a government hostile to the proletariat by one willing to meet it halfway [*entgegenkommende*]... But never, under no circumstances can it [that is, the proletarian victory over a hostile government] lead to the destruction of the state power; it can lead only to a certain shifting [*verschiebung*] of the balance of forces within the state power.... The aim of our political struggle remains, as in the past, the conquest of state power by winning a majority in parliament and by raising parliament to the ranks of master of the government."

This is nothing but the purest and most vulgar opportunism: repudiating revolution in deeds, while accepting it in words. Kautsky's thoughts go no further than a "government... willing to meet the proletariat halfway"—a step backward to philistinism compared with 1847, when the *Communist Manifesto* proclaimed "the organization of the proletariat as the ruling class".

Kautsky will have to achieve his beloved "unity" with the Scheidmanns, Plekhanovs, and Vanderveldes, all of whom agree to fight for a government "willing to meet the proletariat halfway".

We, however, shall break with these traitors to socialism, and we shall fight for the complete destruction of the old state machine, in order that the armed proletariat itself *may become the government*. These are two vastly different things.

Kautsky will have to enjoy the pleasant company of the Legiens and Davids, Plekhanovs, Potresovs, Tseretelis, and Chernovs, who are quite willing to work for the "shifting of the balance of forces within the state power", for "winning a majority in parliament", and "raising parliament to the ranks of master of the government". A most worthy object, which is wholly acceptable to the opportunists and which keeps everything within the bounds of the bourgeois parliamentary republic.

We, however, shall break with the opportunists; and the entire class-conscious proletariat will be with us in the fight—not to "shift the balance of forces", but to overthrow the bourgeoisie, to destroy bourgeois parliamentarism, for a democratic republic after the type of the Commune, or a republic of Soviets of Workers and Soldiers' Deputies, for the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

To the right of Kautsky in international socialism there are trends such as *Socialist Monthly*[7] in Germany (Legien, David, Kolb, and many others, including the Scandinavian Stauning and Branting), Jaures' followers and Vandervelde in France and Belgium; Turait, Treves, and other Right-wingers of the Italian Party; the Fabians and "Independents" (the Independent Labor Party, which, in fact, has always been dependent on the Liberals) in Britain; and the like. All these gentry, who play a tremendous, very often a predominant role in the parliamentary work and the press of their parties, repudiate outright the dictatorship of the proletariat and pursue a policy of undisguised opportunism. In the eyes of these gentry, the "dictatorship" of the proletariat "contradicts" democracy!! There is really no essential distinction between them and the petty-bourgeois democrats.

Taking this circumstance into consideration, we are justified in drawing the conclusion that the Second International, that is, the overwhelming majority of its official representatives, has completely sunk into opportunism. The experience of the Commune has been not only ignored but distorted. Far from inculcating in the workers' minds the idea that the time is nearing when they must act to smash the old state machine, replace it by a new one, and in this way make their political rule the foundation for the socialist reorganization of society, they have actually preached to the masses the very opposite and have depicted the "conquest of power" in a way that has left thousands of loopholes for opportunism.

The distortion and hushing up of the question of the relation of the proletarian revolution to the state could not but play an immense role at a time when states, which possess a military apparatus expanded as a consequence of imperialist rivalry, have become military monsters which are exterminating millions of people in order to settle the issue as to whether Britain or Germany—this or that finance capital—is to rule the world.

Chapter 7: The Experience of the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917

The subject indicated in the title of this chapter is so vast that volumes could be written about it. In the present pamphlet we shall have to confine ourselves, naturally, to the most important lessons provided by experience,

[7] *Socialist Monthly* (Sozialistische Monatshefte) – the principal journal of the opportunists among the German Social-Democrats, a periodical of international opportunism. It was published in Berlin from 1897 to 1933. During the world imperialist war of 1914-18 it took a social-chauvinist stand.

those bearing directly upon the tasks of the proletariat in the revolution with regard to state power. [Here the manuscript breaks off—*Ed*.]

Postscript to the First Edition

This pamphlet was written in August and September 1917. I had already drawn up the plan for the next, the seventh chapter, "The Experience of the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917". Apart from the title, however, I had no time to write a single line of the chapter; I was "interrupted" by a political crisis—the eve of the October revolution of 1917. Such an "interruption" can only be welcomed; but the writing of the second part of this pamphlet ("The Experience of the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917") will probably have to be put off for a long time. It is more pleasant and useful to go through the "experience of revolution" than to write about it.

The Author
November 30, 1917

WAGE-LABOR AND CAPITAL

Karl Marx

Introduction

This pamphlet first appeared in the form of a series of leading articles in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, beginning on April 4th, 1849. The text is made up from lectures delivered by Marx before the German Workingmen's Club of Brussels in 1847. The series was never completed. The promise "to be continued," at the end of the editorial in Number 269 of the newspaper, remained unfulfilled in consequence of the precipitous events of that time: the invasion of Hungary by the Russians [Tsarist troops invaded Hungary in 1849 to keep the Austrian Hapsburg dynasty in power], and the uprisings in Dresden, Iserlohn, Elberfeld, the Palatinate, and in Baden [Spontaneous uprisings in Germany in May-July 1849, supporting the Imperial Constitution which were crushed in mid-July], which led to the suppression of the paper on May 19th, 1849. And among the papers left by Marx no manuscript of any continuation of these articles has been found.

"Wage-labor and Capital" has appeared as an independent publication in several editions, the last of which was issued by the Swiss Cooperative Printing Association, in Hottingen-Zurich, in 1884. Hitherto, the several editions have contained the exact wording of the original articles. But since at least 10,000 copies of the present edition are to be circulated as a propaganda tract, the question necessarily forced itself upon me, would Marx himself, under these circumstances, have approved of an unaltered literal reproduction of the original?

Marx, in the '40s, had not yet completed his criticism of political economy. This was not done until toward the end of the fifties. Consequently, such of his writings as were published before the first installment of his *Critique of Political Economy* was finished, deviate in some points from those written after 1859, and contain expressions and whole sentences which, viewed from the standpoint of his later writings, appear inexact, and even incorrect. Now, it goes without saying that in ordinary editions, intended for the public in general, this earlier standpoint, as a part of the intellectual development of the author, has its place; that the author as well as the public, has an indisputable right to an unaltered reprint of these older writings. In such a case, I would not have dreamed of changing a single word in it. But it is otherwise when the edition is destined almost exclusively for the purpose of propaganda. In such a case, Marx himself would unquestionably have brought the old work, dating from 1849, into harmony with his new point of view, and I feel sure that I am acting in his spirit when I insert in this edition the few changes and additions which are necessary in order to attain this object in all essential point.

Therefore, I say to the reader at once: this pamphlet is not as Marx wrote it in 1849, but approximately as Marx would have written it in 1891. Moreover, so many copies of the original text are in circulation, that these will suffice until I can publish it again unaltered in a complete edition of Marx's works, to appear at some future time.

My alterations center about one point. According to the original reading, the worker sells his *labor* for wages, which he receives from the capitalist; according to the present text, he sells his *labor-power*. And for this change, I must render an explanation: to the workers, in order that they may understand that we are not quibbling or word-juggling, but are dealing here with one of the most important points in the whole range of political economy; to the bourgeois, in order that they may convince themselves how greatly the uneducated workers, who can be easily

made to grasp the most difficult economic analyses, excel our supercilious "cultured" folk, for whom such ticklish problems remain insoluble their whole life long.

Classical political economy[1] borrowed from the industrial practice the current notion of the manufacturer, that he buys and pays for the labor of his employees. This conception had been quite serviceable for the business purposes of the manufacturer, his bookkeeping and price calculation. But naively carried over into political economy, it there produced truly wonderful errors and confusions.

Political economy finds it an established fact that the prices of all commodities, among them the price of the commodity which it calls "labor," continually change; that they rise and fall in consequence of the most diverse circumstances, which often have no connection whatsoever with the production of the commodities themselves, so that prices appear to be determined, as a rule, by pure chance. As soon, therefore, as political economy stepped forth as a science, it was one of its first tasks to search for the law that hid itself behind this chance, which apparently determined the prices of commodities, and which in reality controlled this very chance. Among the prices of commodities, fluctuating and oscillating, now upward, now downward, the fixed central point was searched for around which these fluctuations and oscillations were taking place. In short, starting from the price of commodities, political economy sought for the value of commodities as the regulating law, by means of which all price fluctuations could be explained, and to which they could all be reduced in the last resort.

And so, classical political economy found that the value of a commodity was determined by the labor incorporated in it and requisite to its production. With this explanation, it was satisfied. And we, too, may, for the present, stop at this point. But, to avoid misconceptions, I will remind the reader that today this explanation has become wholly inadequate. Marx was the first to investigate thoroughly into the value-forming quality of labor and to discover that not all labor which is apparently, or even really, necessary to the production of a commodity, imparts under all circumstances to this commodity a magnitude of value corresponding to the quantity of labor used up. If, therefore, we say today in short, with economists like Ricardo, that the value of a commodity is determined by the labor necessary to its production, we always imply the reservations and restrictions made by Marx. Thus, much for our present purpose; further information can be found in Marx's *Critique of Political Economy*, which appeared in 1859, and in the first volume of *Capital*.

But, as soon as the economists applied this determination of value by labor to the commodity "labor", they fell from one contradiction into another. How is the value of "labor" determined? By the necessary labor embodied in it. But how much labor is embodied in the labor of a laborer of a day a week, a month, a year. If labor is the measure of all values, we can express the "value of labor" only in labor. But we know absolutely nothing about the value of an hour's labor, if all that we know about it is that it is equal to one hour's labor. So, thereby, we have not advanced one hair's breadth nearer our goal; we are constantly turning about in a circle.

Classical economics, therefore, essayed another turn. It said: the value of a commodity is equal to its cost of production. But what is the cost of production of "labor"? In order to answer this question, the economists are forced to strain logic just a little. Instead of investigating the cost of production of labor itself, which, unfortunately, cannot be ascertained, they now investigate the cost of production of *the laborer*. And this latter

[1] By classical political economy, I understand that economy which, since the time of W. Petty, has investigated the real relations of production in bourgeois society, in contradistinction to vulgar economy, which deals with appearances only, ruminates without ceasing on the materials long since provided by scientific economy, and there seeks plausible explanations of the most obtrusive phenomena for bourgeois daily use, but for the rest confines itself to systematizing in a pedantic way, and proclaiming for everlasting truths, trite ideas held by the self-complacent bourgeoisie with regard to their own world, to them the best of all possible worlds.—*F. Engels*

can be ascertained. It changes according to time and circumstances, but for a given condition of society, in a given locality, and in a given branch of production, it, too, is given, at least within quite narrow limits. We live today under the regime of capitalist production, under which a large and steadily growing class of the population can live only on the condition that it works for the owners of the means of production—tools, machines, raw materials, and means of subsistence—in return for wages. On the basis of this mode of production, the laborer's cost of production consists of the sum of the means of subsistence (or their price in money) which on the average are requisite to enable him to work, to maintain in him this capacity for work, and to replace him at his departure, by reason of age, sickness, or death, with another laborer—that is to say, to propagate the working class in required numbers.

Let us assume that the money price of these means of subsistence averages 3 shillings a day. Our laborer gets, therefore, a daily wage of 3 shillings from his employer. For this, the capitalist lets him work, say, 12 hours a day. Our capitalist, moreover, calculates somewhat in the following fashion: Let us assume that our laborer (a machinist) has to make a part of a machine which he finishes in one day. The raw material (iron and brass in the necessary prepared form) costs 20 shillings. The consumption of coal by the steam-engine, the wear-and-tear of this engine itself, of the turning-lathe, and of the other tools with which our laborer works, represent, for one day and one laborer, a value of 1 shilling. The wages for one day are, according to our assumption, 3 shillings. This makes a total of 24 shillings for our piece of a machine.

But the capitalist calculates that, on an average, he will receive for it a price of 27 shillings from his customers, or 3 shillings over and above his outlay.

Where do the 3 shillings pocketed by the capitalist come from? According to the assertion of classical political economy, commodities are in the long run sold at their values, that is, they are sold at prices which correspond to the necessary quantities of labor contained in them. The average price of our part of a machine—27 shillings—would therefore equal its value, i.e., equal the amount of labor embodied in it. But, of these 27 shillings, 21 shillings were values were values already existing before the machinist began to work; 20 shillings were contained in the raw material, 1 shilling in the fuel consumed during the work and in the machines and tools used in the process and reduced in their efficiency to the value of this amount. There remains 6 shillings, which have been added to the value of the raw material. But, according to the supposition of our economists, themselves, these 6 shillings can arise only from the labor added to the raw material by the laborer. His 12 hours' labor has created, according to this, a new value of 6 shillings. Therefore, the value of his 12 hours' labor would be equivalent to 6 shillings. So, we have at last discovered what the "value of labor" is.

"Hold on there!" cries our machinist. "Six shillings? But I have received only 3 shillings! My capitalist swears high and day that the value of my 12 hours' labor is no more than 3 shillings, and if I were to demand 6, he'd laugh at me. What kind of a story is that?"

If before this we got with our value of labor into a vicious circle, we now surely have driven straight into an insoluble contradiction. We searched for the value of labor, and we found more than we can use. For the laborer, the value of the 12 hours' labor is 3 shillings; for the capitalist, it is 6 shillings, of which he pays the workingman 3 shillings as wages, and pockets the remaining 3 shilling himself. According to this, labor has not one but two values, and, moreover, two very different values!

As soon as we reduce the values, now expressed in money, to labor-time, the contradiction becomes even more absurd. By the 12 hours' labor, a new value of 6 shillings is created. Therefore, in 6 hours, the new value

created equals 3 shillings—the amount which the laborer receives for 12 hours' labor. For 12 hours' labor, the workingman receives, as an equivalent, the product of 6 hours' labor. We are, thus, forced to one of two conclusions: either labor has two values, one of which is twice as large as the other, or 12 equals 6! In both cases, we get pure absurdities. Turn and twist as we may, we will not get out of this contradiction as long as we speak of the buying and selling of "labor" and of the "value of labor." And just so it happened to the political economists. The last offshoot of classical political economy—the Ricardian school—was largely wrecked on the insolubility of this contradiction. Classical political economy had run itself into a blind alley. The man who discovered the way out of this blind alley was Karl Marx.

What the economists had considered as the cost of production of "labor" was really the cost of production, not of "labor," but of the living laborer himself. And what this laborer sold to the capitalist was not his labor.

"So soon as his labor really begins," says Marx, "it ceases to belong to him, and therefore can no longer be sold by him."

At the most, he could sell his *future* labor—i.e., assume the obligation of executing a certain piece of work in a certain time. But, in this way, he does not sell labor (which would first have to be performed), but not for a stipulated payment he places his labor-power at the disposal of the capitalist for a certain time (in case of time-wages), or for the performance of a certain task (in case of piece-wages). He hires out or sells his *labor-power*. But this labor-power has grown up with his person and is inseparable from it. Its cost of production, therefore, coincides with his own cost of production; what the economist called the cost of production of labor is really the cost of production of the laborer, and therewith of his labor-power. And, thus, we can also go back from the cost of production of labor-power to the value of labor-power, and determine the quantity of social labor that is required for the production of a labor-power of a given quantity, as Marx has done in the chapter on "The Buying and Selling of labor Power."[2]

Now what takes place after the worker has sold his labor-power, i.e., after he has placed his labor-power at the disposal of the capitalist for stipulated-wages—whether time-wages or piece-wages? The capitalist takes the laborer into his workshop or factory, where all the articles required for the work can be found—raw materials, auxiliary materials (coal, dyestuffs, etc.), tools, and machines. Here, the worker begins to work. His daily wages are, as above, 3 shillings, and it makes no difference whether he earns them as day-wages or piece-wages. We again assume that in 12 hours the worker adds by his labor a new value of 6 shillings to the value of the raw materials consumed, which new value the capitalist realizes by the sale of the finished piece of work. Out of this new value, he pays the worker his 3 shillings, and the remaining 3 shillings he keeps for himself. If, now, the laborer creates in 12 hours a value of 6 shillings, in 6 hours he creates a value of 3 shillings. Consequently, after working 6 hours for the capitalist, the laborer has returned to him the equivalent of the 3 shillings received as wages. After 6 hours' work, both are quits, neither one owing a penny to the other.

"Hold on there!" now cries out the capitalist. "I have hired the laborer for a whole day, for 12 hours. But 6 hours are only half-a-day. So, work along lively there until the other 6 hours are at an end—only then will we be even." And, in fact, the laborer has to submit to the conditions of the contract upon which he entered of "his own free will", and according to which he bound himself to work 12 whole hours for a product of labor which cost only 6 hours' labor.

[2] Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Part II, Chapter 6.

Similarly with piece-wages. Let us suppose that in 12 hours our worker makes 12 commodities. Each of these costs a shilling in raw materials and wear-and-tear, and is sold for 2.5 shillings. On our former assumption, the capitalist gives the laborer .25 of a shilling for each piece, which makes a total of 3 shillings for 12 pieces. To earn this, the worker requires 12 hours. The capitalist receives 30 shillings for the 12 pieces; deducting 24 shillings for raw materials and wear-and-tear, there remains 6 shillings, of which he pays 3 shillings in wages and pockets the remaining 3. Just as before! Here, also, the worker labors 6 hours for himself—i.e., to replace his wages (half-an-hour in each of the 12 hours), and 6 hours for the capitalist.

The rock upon which the best economists were stranded, as long as they started out from the value of labor, vanishes as soon as we make our starting-point the value of *labor-power*. Labor-power is, in our present-day capitalist society, a commodity like every other commodity, but yet a very peculiar commodity. It has, namely, the peculiarity of being a value-creating force, the source of value, and, moreover, when properly treated, the source of more value than it possesses itself. In the present state of production, human labor-power not only produces in a day greater value than it itself possesses and costs; but with each new scientific discovery, each new technical invention, there also rises the surplus of its daily production over its daily cost, while as a consequence the part of the working-day diminishes in which the laborer produces the equivalent of his day's wages, on the other hand, it also lengthens that part of the working-day in which he must present labor gratis to the capitalist.

And this is the economic constitution of our entire modern society: the working class alone produces all values. For value is only another expression for labor, that expression, namely, by which is designated, in our capitalist society of today, the amount of socially necessary labor embodied in a particular commodity. But these values produced by the workers do not belong to the workers. They belong to the owners of the raw materials, machines, tools, and money, which enable them to buy the labor-power of the working class. Hence, the working class gets back only a part of the entire mass of products produced by it. And, as we have just seen, the other portion, which the capitalist class retains, and which it has to share, at most, only with the landlord class, is increasing with every new discovery and invention, while the share which falls to the working class (per capita) rises but little and very slowly, or not at all, and under certain conditions it may even fall.

But these discoveries and inventions which supplant one another with ever-increasing speed, this productiveness of human labor which increases from day to day to unheard-of proportions, at last gives rise to a conflict, in which present capitalistic economy must go to ruin. On the one hand, immeasurable wealth and a superfluidity of products with which the buyers cannot cope. On the other hand, the great mass of society proletarianized, transformed into wage-laborers, and thereby disabled from appropriating to themselves that superfluidity of products. The splitting up of society into a small class, immoderately rich, and a large class of wage-laborers devoid of all property, brings it about that this society smothers in its own superfluidity, while the great majority of its members are scarcely, or not at all, protected from extreme want.

This condition becomes every day more absurd and more unnecessary. It *must* be gotten rid of; it can be gotten rid of. A new social order is possible, in which the class differences of today will have disappeared, and in which—perhaps after a short transition period, which, though somewhat deficient in other respects, will in any case be very useful morally—there will be the means of life, of the enjoyment of life, and of the development and activity of all bodily and mental faculties, through the systematic use and further development of the enormous productive powers of society, which exists with us even now, with equal obligation upon all to work. And that the workers

are growing ever more determined to achieve this new social order will be proven on both sides of the ocean on this dawning May Day, and on Sunday, May 3rd. [Engels is referring to the May Day celebrations of 1891]

Friedrich Engels
London, April 30, 1891.

Chapter 1: Preliminary

From various quarters we have been reproached for neglecting to portray the economic conditions which form the material basis of the present struggles between classes and nations. With set purpose we have hitherto touched upon these conditions only when they forced themselves upon the surface of the political conflicts.

It was necessary, beyond everything else, to follow the development of the class struggle in the history of our own day, and to prove empirically, by the actual and daily newly created historical material, that with the subjugation of the working class, accomplished in the days of February and March, 1848, the opponents of that class—the bourgeois republicans in France, and the bourgeois and peasant classes who were fighting feudal absolutism throughout the whole continent of Europe—were simultaneously conquered; that the victory of the "moderate republic" in France sounded at the same time the fall of the nations which had responded to the February revolution with heroic wars of independence; and finally that, by the victory over the revolutionary workingmen, Europe fell back into its old double slavery, into the English-Russian slavery. The June conflict in Paris, the fall of Vienna, the tragi-comedy in Berlin in November 1848, the desperate efforts of Poland, Italy, and Hungary, the starvation of Ireland into submission—these were the chief events in which the European class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the working class was summed up, and from which we proved that every revolutionary uprising, however remote from the class struggle its object might appear, must of necessity fail until the revolutionary working class shall have conquered—that every social reform must remain a Utopia until the proletarian revolution and the feudalistic counter-revolution have been pitted against each other in a worldwide war. In our presentation, as in reality, Belgium and Switzerland were tragi-comic caricaturish genre pictures in the great historic tableau; the one the model State of the bourgeois monarchy, the other the model State of the bourgeois republic; both of them, States that flatter themselves to be just as free from the class struggle as from the European revolution.

But now, after our readers have seen the class struggle of the year 1848 develop into colossal political proportions, it is time to examine more closely the economic conditions themselves upon which is founded the existence of the capitalist class and its class rule, as well as the slavery of the workers.

We shall present the subject in three great divisions:

The Relation of Wage-labor to Capital, the Slavery of the Worker, the Rule of the Capitalist.

The Inevitable Ruin of the Middle Classes [petty-bourgeois] and the so-called Commons [peasants] under the present system.

The Commercial Subjugation and Exploitation of the Bourgeois classes of the various European nations by the Despot of the World Market—England.

We shall seek to portray this as simply and popularly as possible, and shall not presuppose a knowledge of even the most elementary notions of political economy. We wish to be understood by the workers. And, moreover, there prevails in Germany the most remarkable ignorance and confusion of ideas in regard to the simplest

economic relations, from the patented defenders of existing conditions, down to the socialist wonder-workers and the unrecognized political geniuses, in which divided Germany is even richer than in duodecimo princelings. We therefore proceed to the consideration of the first problem.

Chapter 2: What are Wages?

If several workmen were to be asked: "How much wages do you get?", one would reply, "I get two shillings a day", and so on. According to the different branches of industry in which they are employed, they would mention different sums of money that they receive from their respective employers for the completion of a certain task; for example, for weaving a yard of linen, or for setting a page of type. Despite the variety of their statements, they would all agree upon one point: that wages are the amount of money which the capitalist pays for a certain period of work or for a certain amount of work.

Consequently, it appears that the capitalist buys their labor with money, and that for money they sell him their labor. But this is merely an illusion. What they actually sell to the capitalist for money is their labor-power. This labor-power the capitalist buys for a day, a week, a month, etc. And after he has bought it, he uses it up by letting the worker labor during the stipulated time. With the same amount of money with which the capitalist has bought their labor-power (for example, with two shillings) he could have bought a certain amount of sugar or of any other commodity. The two shillings with which he bought 20 pounds of sugar is the price of the 20 pounds of sugar. The two shillings with which he bought 12 hours' use of labor-power, is the price of 12 hours' labor. Labor-power, then, is a commodity, no more, no less so than is the sugar. The first is measured by the clock, the other by the scales.

Their commodity, labor-power, the workers exchange for the commodity of the capitalist, for money, and, moreover, this exchange takes place at a certain ratio. So much money for so long a use of labor-power. For 12 hours' weaving, two shillings. And these two shillings, do they not represent all the other commodities which I can buy for two shillings? Therefore, actually, the worker has exchanged his commodity, labor-power, for commodities of all kinds, and, moreover, at a certain ratio. By giving him two shillings, the capitalist has given him so much meat, so much clothing, so much wood, light, etc., in exchange for his day's work. The two shillings therefore express the relation in which labor-power is exchanged for other commodities, the exchange-value of labor-power.

The exchange value of a commodity estimated in money is called its price. Wages therefore are only a special name for the price of labor-power, and are usually called the price of labor; it is the special name for the price of this peculiar commodity, which has no other repository than human flesh and blood.

Let us take any worker; for example, a weaver. The capitalist supplies him with the loom and yarn. The weaver applies himself to work, and the yarn is turned into cloth. The capitalist takes possession of the cloth and sells it for 20 shillings, for example. Now are the wages of the weaver a share of the cloth, of the 20 shillings, of the product of the work? By no means. Long before the cloth is sold, perhaps long before it is fully woven, the weaver has received his wages. The capitalist, then, does not pay his wages out of the money which he will obtain from the cloth, but out of money already on hand. Just as little as loom and yarn are the product of the weaver to whom they are supplied by the employer, just so little are the commodities which he receives in exchange for his commodity—labor-power—his product. It is possible that the employer found no purchasers at all for the cloth. It is possible that he did not get even the amount of the wages by its sale. It is possible that he sells it very

profitably in proportion to the weaver's wages. But all that does not concern the weaver. With a part of his existing wealth, of his capital, the capitalist buys the labor-power of the weaver in exactly the same manner as, with another part of his wealth, he has bought the raw material—the yarn—and the instrument of labor—the loom. After he has made these purchases, and among them belongs the labor-power necessary to the production of the cloth he produces only with raw materials and instruments of labor belonging to him. For our good weaver, too, is one of the instruments of labor, and being in this respect on a par with the loom, he has no more share in the product (the cloth), or in the price of the product, than the loom itself has.

Wages, therefore, are not a share of the worker in the commodities produced by himself. Wages are that part of already existing commodities with which the capitalist buys a certain amount of productive labor-power.

Consequently, labor-power is a commodity which its possessor, the wage-worker, sells to the capitalist. Why does he sell it? It is in order to live.

But the putting of labor-power into action—i.e., the work—is the active expression of the laborer's own life. And this life activity he sells to another person in order to secure the necessary means of life. His life-activity, therefore, is but a means of securing his own existence. He works that he may keep alive. He does not count the labor itself as a part of his life; it is rather a sacrifice of his life. It is a commodity that he has auctioned off to another. The product of his activity, therefore, is not the aim of his activity. What he produces for himself is not the silk that he weaves, not the gold that he draws up the mining shaft, not the palace that he builds. What he produces for himself is wages; and the silk, the gold, and the palace are resolved for him into a certain quantity of necessaries of life, perhaps into a cotton jacket, into copper coins, and into a basement dwelling. And the laborer who for 12 hours long, weaves, spins, bores, turns, builds, shovels, breaks stone, carries hods, and so on—is this 12 hours' weaving, spinning, boring, turning, building, shoveling, stone-breaking, regarded by him as a manifestation of life, as life? Quite the contrary. Life for him begins where this activity ceases, at the table, at the tavern, in bed. The 12 hours' work, on the other hand, has no meaning for him as weaving, spinning, boring, and so on, but only as earnings, which enable him to sit down at a table, to take his seat in the tavern, and to lie down in a bed. If the silk-worm's object in spinning were to prolong its existence as a caterpillar, it would be a perfect example of a wage-worker.

Labor-power was not always a commodity (merchandise). Labor was not always wage-labor, i.e., free labor. The slave did not sell his labor-power to the slave owner, any more than the ox sells his labor to the farmer. The slave, together with his labor-power, was sold to his owner once for all. He is a commodity that can pass from the hand of one owner to that of another. He himself is a commodity, but his labor-power is not his commodity. The serf sells only a portion of his labor-power. It is not he who receives wages from the owner of the land; it is rather the owner of the land who receives a tribute from him. The serf belongs to the soil, and to the lord of the soil he brings its fruit. The free laborer, on the other hand, sells his very self, and that by fractions. He auctions off eight, 10, 12, 15 hours of his life, one day like the next, to the highest bidder, to the owner of raw materials, tools, and the means of life—i.e., to the capitalist. The laborer belongs neither to an owner nor to the soil, but eight, 10, 12, 15 hours of his daily life belong to whomever buys them. The worker leaves the capitalist, to whom he has sold himself, as often as he chooses, and the capitalist discharges him as often as he sees fit, as soon as he no longer gets any use, or not the required use, out of him. But the worker, whose only source of income is the sale of his labor-power, cannot leave the whole class of buyers, i.e., the capitalist class, unless he gives up his own existence.

He does not belong to this or that capitalist, but to the capitalist class; and it is for him to find his man—i.e., to find a buyer in this capitalist class.

Before entering more closely upon the relation of capital to wage-labor, we shall briefly present the most general conditions which come into consideration in the determination of wages.

Wages, as we have seen, are the price of a certain commodity, labor-power. Wages, therefore, are determined by the same laws that determine the price of every other commodity. The question then is, how is the price of a commodity determined?

Chapter 3: By What is the Price of a Commodity Determined?

By the competition between buyers and sellers, by the relation of the demand to the supply, of the call to the offer. The competition by which the price of a commodity is determined is threefold.

The same commodity is offered for sale by various sellers. Whoever sells commodities of the same quality most cheaply, is sure to drive the other sellers from the field and to secure the greatest market for himself. The sellers therefore fight among themselves for the sales, for the market. Each one of them wishes to sell, and to sell as much as possible, and if possible, to sell alone, to the exclusion of all other sellers. Each one sells cheaper than the other. Thus, there takes place a competition among the sellers which forces down the price of the commodities offered by them.

But there is also a competition among the buyers; this upon its side causes the price of the proffered commodities to rise.

Finally, there is competition between the buyers and the sellers: these wish to purchase as cheaply as possible, those to sell as dearly as possible. The result of this competition between buyers and sellers will depend upon the relations between the two above-mentioned camps of competitors—i.e., upon whether the competition in the army of sellers is stronger. Industry leads two great armies into the field against each other, and each of these again is engaged in a battle among its own troops in its own ranks. The army among whose troops there is less fighting, carries off the victory over the opposing host.

Let us suppose that there are 100 bales of cotton in the market and at the same time purchasers for 1,000 bales of cotton. In this case, the demand is 10 times greater than the supply. Competition among the buyers, then, will be very strong; each of them tries to get hold of one bale, if possible, of the whole 100 bales. This example is no arbitrary supposition. In the history of commerce, we have experienced periods of scarcity of cotton, when some capitalists united together and sought to buy up not 100 bales, but the whole cotton supply of the world. In the given case, then, one buyer seeks to drive the others from the field by offering a relatively higher price for the bales of cotton. The cotton sellers, who perceive the troops of the enemy in the most violent contention among themselves, and who therefore are fully assured of the sale of their whole 100 bales, will beware of pulling one another's hair in order to force down the price of cotton at the very moment in which their opponents race with one another to screw it up high. So, all of a sudden, peace reigns in the army of sellers. They stand opposed to the buyers like one man, fold their arms in philosophic contentment and their claims would find no limit if the offers of even the most wealthy of buyers have a definite limit.

If, then, the supply of a commodity is less than the demand for it, competition among the sellers is very slight, or there may be none at all among them. In the same proportion in which this competition decreases, the competition among the buyers increases. Result: a more or less considerable rise in the prices of commodities.

It is well known that the opposite case, with the opposite result, happens more frequently. Great excess of supply over demand; desperate competition among the sellers, and a lack of buyers; forced sales of commodities at ridiculously low prices.

But what is a rise, and what a fall of prices? What is a high and what a low price? A grain of sand is high when examined through a microscope, and a tower is low when compared with a mountain. And if the price is determined by the relation of supply and demand, by what is the relation of supply and demand determined?

Let us turn to the first worthy citizen we meet. He will not hesitate one moment, but, like Alexander the Great, will cut this metaphysical knot with his multiplication table. He will say to us: "If the production of the commodities which I sell has cost me 100 pounds, and out of the sale of these goods I make 110 pounds—within the year, you understand—that's an honest, sound, reasonable profit. But if in the exchange I receive 120 or 130 pounds, that's a higher profit; and if I should get as much as 200 pounds, that would be an extraordinary, and enormous profit." What is it, then, that serves this citizen as the standard of his profit? The cost of the production of his commodities. If in exchange for these goods he receives a quantity of other goods whose production has cost less, he has lost. If he receives in exchange for his goods a quantity of other goods whose production has cost more, he has gained. And he reckons the falling or rising of the profit according to the degree at which the exchange value of his goods stands, whether above or below his zero—the cost of production.

We have seen how the changing relation of supply and demand now causes a rise, now a fall of prices; now high, now low prices. If the price of a commodity rises considerably owing to a failing supply or a disproportionately growing demand, then the price of some other commodity must have fallen in proportion; for of course the price of a commodity only expresses in money the proportion in which other commodities will be given in exchange for it. If, for example, the price of a yard of silk rises from two to three shillings, the price of silver has fallen in relation to the silk, and in the same way the prices of all other commodities whose prices have remained stationary have fallen in relation to the price of silk. A large quantity of them must be given in exchange in order to obtain the same amount of silk. Now, what will be the consequence of a rise in the price of a particular commodity? A mass of capital will be thrown into the prosperous branch of industry, and this immigration of capital into the provinces of the favored industry will continue until it yields no more than the customary profits, or, rather until the price of its products, owning to overproduction, sinks below the cost of production.

Conversely: if the price of a commodity falls below its cost of production, then capital will be withdrawn from the production of this commodity. Except in the case of a branch of industry which has become obsolete and is therefore doomed to disappear, the production of such a commodity (that is, its supply), will, owning to this flight of capital, continue to decrease until it corresponds to the demand, and the price of the commodity rises again to the level of its cost of production; or, rather, until the supply has fallen below the demand and its price has risen above its cost of production, for the current price of a commodity is always either above or below its cost of production.

We see how capital continually emigrates out of the province of one industry and immigrates into that of another. The high price produces an excessive immigration, and the low price an excessive emigration.

We could show, from another point of view, how not only the supply, but also the demand, is determined by the cost of production. But this would lead us too far away from our subject.

We have just seen how the fluctuation of supply and demand always bring the price of a commodity back to its cost of production. The actual price of a commodity, indeed, stands always above or below the cost of

production; but the rise and fall reciprocally balance each other, so that, within a certain period of time, if the ebbs and flows of the industry are reckoned up together, the commodities will be exchanged for one another in accordance with their cost of production. Their price is thus determined by their cost of production.

The determination of price by the cost of production is not to be understood in the sense of the bourgeois economists. The economists say that the average price of commodities equals the cost of production: that is the law. The anarchic movement, in which the rise is compensated for by a fall and the fall by a rise, they regard as an accident. We might just as well consider the fluctuations as the law, and the determination of the price by cost of production as an accident—as is, in fact, done by certain other economists. But it is precisely these fluctuations which, viewed more closely, carry the most frightful devastation in their train, and, like an earthquake, cause bourgeois society to shake to its very foundations—it is precisely these fluctuations that force the price to conform to the cost of production. In the totality of this disorderly movement is to be found, its order. In the total course of this industrial anarchy, in this circular movement, competition balances, as it were, the one extravagance by the other.

We thus see that the price of a commodity is indeed determined by its cost of production, but in such a manner that the periods in which the price of these commodities rises above the costs of production are balanced by the periods in which it sinks below the cost of production, and vice versa. Of course, this does not hold good for a single given product of an industry, but only for that branch of industry. So also, it does not hold good for an individual manufacturer, but only for the whole class of manufacturers.

The determination of price by cost of production is tantamount to the determination of price by the labor-time requisite to the production of a commodity, for the cost of production consists, first of raw materials and wear-and-tear of tools, etc., i.e., of industrial products whose production has cost a certain number of workdays, which therefore represent a certain amount of labor-time, and, secondly, of direct labor, which is also measured by its duration.

Chapter 4: By What are Wages Determined?

Now, the same general laws which regulate the price of commodities in general, naturally regulate wages, or the price of labor-power. Wages will now rise, and now fall, according to the relation of supply and demand, according to how competition shapes itself between the buyers of labor-power, the capitalists, and the sellers of labor-power, the workers. The fluctuations of wages correspond to the fluctuation in the price of commodities in general. But within the limits of these fluctuations the price of labor-power will be determined by the cost of production, by the labor-time necessary for production of this commodity: labor-power.

What, then, is the cost of production of labor-power?

It is the cost required for the maintenance of the laborer as a laborer, and for his education and training as a laborer.

Therefore, the shorter the time required for training up to a particular sort of work, the smaller is the cost of production of the worker, the lower is the price of his labor-power, his wages. In those branches of industry in which hardly any period of apprenticeship is necessary and the mere bodily existence of the worker is sufficient, the cost of his production is limited almost exclusively to the commodities necessary for keeping him in working condition. The price of his work will therefore be determined by the price of the necessary means of subsistence.

Here, however, there enters another consideration. The manufacturer who calculates his cost of production and, in accordance with it, the price of the product, takes into account the wear-and-tear of the instruments of labor. If a machine costs him, for example, 1,000 shillings, and this machine is used up in 10 years, he adds 100 shillings annually to the price of the commodities, in order to be able after 10 years to replace the worn-out machine with a new one. In the same manner, the cost of production of simple labor-power must include the cost of propagation, by means of which the race of workers is enabled to multiply itself, and to replace worn-out workers with new ones. The wear-and-tear of the worker, therefore, is calculated in the same manner as the wear-and-tear of the machine.

Thus, the cost of production of simple labor-power amounts to the cost of the existence and propagation of the worker. The price of this cost of existence and propagation constitutes wages. The wages thus determined are called the minimum of wages. This minimum wage, like the determination of the price of commodities in general by cost of production, does not hold good for the single individual, but only for the race. Individual workers, indeed, millions of workers, do not receive enough to be able to exist and to propagate themselves; but the wages of the whole working class adjust themselves, within the limits of their fluctuations, to this minimum.

Now that we have come to an understanding in regard to the most general laws which govern wages, as well as the price of every other commodity, we can examine our subject more particularly.

Chapter 5: The Nature and Growth of Capital

Capital consists of raw materials, instruments of labor, and means of subsistence of all kinds, which are employed in producing new raw materials, new instruments, and new means of subsistence. All these components of capital are created by labor, products of labor, accumulated labor. Accumulated labor that serves as a means to new production is capital.

So say the economists.

What is a Negro slave? A man of the black race. The one explanation is worthy of the other.

A Negro is a Negro. Only under certain conditions does he become a slave. A cotton-spinning machine is a machine for spinning cotton. Only under certain conditions does it become capital. Torn away from these conditions, it is as little capital as gold is itself money, or sugar is the price of sugar.

In the process of production, human beings work not only upon nature, but also upon one another. They produce only by working together in a specified manner and reciprocally exchanging their activities. In order to produce, they enter into definite connections and relations to one another, and only within these social connections and relations does their influence upon nature operate—i.e., does production take place.

These social relations between the producers, and the conditions under which they exchange their activities and share in the total act of production, will naturally vary according to the character of the means of production. With the discovery of a new instrument of warfare, the firearm, the whole internal organization of the army was necessarily altered, the relations within which individuals compose an army and can work as an army were transformed, and the relation of different armies to another was likewise changed.

We thus see that the social relations within which individuals produce, the social relations of production, are altered, transformed, with the change and development of the material means of production, of the forces of production. The relations of production in their totality constitute what is called the social relations, society, and, moreover, a society at a definite stage of historical development, a society with peculiar, distinctive

characteristics. Ancient society, feudal society, bourgeois (or capitalist) society, are such totalities of relations of production, each of which denotes a particular stage of development in the history of mankind.

Capital also is a social relation of production. It is a bourgeois relation of production, a relation of production of bourgeois society. The means of subsistence, the instruments of labor, the raw materials, of which capital consists—have they not been produced and accumulated under given social conditions, within definite special relations? Are they not employed for new production, under given special conditions, within definite social relations? And does not just the definite social character stamp the products which serve for new production as capital?

Capital consists not only of means of subsistence, instruments of labor, and raw materials, not only as material products; it consists just as much of exchange values. All products of which it consists are commodities. Capital, consequently, is not only a sum of material products, it is a sum of commodities, of exchange values, of social magnitudes. Capital remains the same whether we put cotton in the place of wool, rice in the place of wheat, steamships in the place of railroads, provided only that the cotton, the rice, the steamships—the body of capital—have the same exchange value, the same price, as the wool, the wheat, the railroads, in which it was previously embodied. The bodily form of capital may transform itself continually, while capital does not suffer the least alteration.

But though every capital is a sum of commodities—i.e., of exchange values—it does not follow that every sum of commodities, of exchange values, is capital.

Every sum of exchange values is an exchange value. Each particular exchange value is a sum of exchange values. For example: a house worth 1,000 pounds is an exchange value of 1,000 pounds: a piece of paper worth one penny is a sum of exchange values of 100 1/100ths of a penny. Products which are exchangeable for others are commodities. The definite proportion in which they are exchangeable forms their exchange value, or, expressed in money, their price. The quantity of these products can have no effect on their character as commodities, as representing an exchange value, as having a certain price. Whether a tree be large or small, it remains a tree. Whether we exchange iron in pennyweights or in hundredweights, for other products, does this alter its character: its being a commodity, or exchange value? According to the quantity, it is a commodity of greater or of lesser value, of higher or of lower price.

How then does a sum of commodities, of exchange values, become capital?

Thereby, as an independent social power—i.e., as the power of a part of society—it preserves itself and multiplies by exchange with direct, living labor-power.

The existence of a class which possesses nothing but the ability to work is a necessary presupposition of capital.

It is only the dominion of past, accumulated, materialized labor over immediate living labor that stamps the accumulated labor with the character of capital.

Capital does not consist in the fact that accumulated labor serves living labor as a means for new production. It consists in the fact that living labor serves accumulated labor as the means of preserving and multiplying its exchange value.

Chapter 6: Relation of Wage-Labor to Capital

What is it that takes place in the exchange between the capitalist and the wage-laborer?

The laborer receives means of subsistence in exchange for his labor-power; the capitalist receives, in exchange for his means of subsistence, labor, the productive activity of the laborer, the creative force by which the worker not only replaces what he consumes, but also gives to the accumulated labor a greater value than it previously possessed. The laborer gets from the capitalist a portion of the existing means of subsistence. For what purpose do these means of subsistence serve him? For immediate consumption. But as soon as I consume means of subsistence, they are irrevocably lost to me, unless I employ the time during which these means sustain my life in producing new means of subsistence, in creating by my labor new values in place of the values lost in consumption. But it is just this noble reproductive power that the laborer surrenders to the capitalist in exchange for means of subsistence received. Consequently, he has lost it for himself.

Let us take an example. For one shilling a laborer works all day long in the fields of a farmer, to whom he thus secures a return of two shillings. The farmer not only receives the replaced value which he has given to the day laborer, he has doubled it. Therefore, he has consumed the one shilling that he gave to the day laborer in a fruitful, productive manner. For the one shilling he has bought the labor-power of the day-laborer, which creates products of the soil of twice the value, and out of one shilling makes two. The day-laborer, on the contrary, receives in the place of his productive force, whose results he has just surrendered to the farmer, one shilling, which he exchanges for means of subsistence, which he consumes more or less quickly. The one shilling has therefore been consumed in a double manner—reproductively for the capitalist, for it has been exchanged for labor-power, which brought forth two shillings; unproductively for the worker, for it has been exchanged for means of subsistence which are lost forever, and whose value he can obtain again only by repeating the same exchange with the farmer. Capital therefore presupposes wage-labor; wage-labor presupposes capital. They condition each other; each brings the other into existence.

Does a worker in a cotton factory produce only cotton? No. He produces capital. He produces values which serve anew to command his work and to create by means of it new values.

Capital can multiply itself only by exchanging itself for labor-power, by calling wage-labor into life. The labor-power of the wage-laborer can exchange itself for capital only by increasing capital, by strengthening that very power whose slave it is. Increase of capital is, therefore, increase of the proletariat, i.e., of the working class.

And so, the bourgeoisie and its economists maintain that the interest of the capitalist and of the laborer is the same. And in fact, so they are! The worker perishes if capital does not keep him busy. Capital perishes if it does not exploit labor-power, which, in order to exploit, it must buy. The more quickly the capital destined for production—the productive capital—increases, the more prosperous industry is, the more the bourgeoisie enriches itself, the better business gets, so many more workers does the capitalist need, so much the dearer the worker sells himself. The fastest possible growth of productive capital is, therefore, the indispensable condition for a tolerable life to the laborer.

But what is growth of productive capital? Growth of the power of accumulated labor over living labor; growth of the rule of the bourgeoisie over the working class. When wage-labor produces the alien wealth dominating it, the power hostile to it, capital, there flows back to it its means of employment—i.e., its means of subsistence, under the condition that it again become a part of capital, that is become again the lever whereby capital is to be forced into an accelerated expansive movement.

To say that the interests of capital and the interests of the workers are identical, signifies only this: that capital and wage-labor are two sides of one and the same relation. The one conditions the other in the same way that the usurer and the borrower condition each other.

As long as the wage-laborer remains a wage-laborer, his lot is dependent upon capital. That is what the boasted community of interests between worker and capitalist amounts to.

If capital grows, the mass of wage-labor grows, the number of wage-workers increases; in a word, the sway of capital extends over a greater mass of individuals.

Let us suppose the most favorable case: if productive capital grows, the demand for labor grows. It therefore increases the price of labor-power, wages.

A house may be large or small; as long as the neighboring houses are likewise small, it satisfies all social requirements for a residence. But let there arise next to the little house a palace, and the little house shrinks to a hut. The little house now makes it clear that its inmate has no social position at all to maintain, or but a very insignificant one; and however high it may shoot up in the course of civilization, if the neighboring palace rises in equal or even in greater measure, the occupant of the relatively little house will always find himself more uncomfortable, more dissatisfied, more cramped within his four walls.

An appreciable rise in wages presupposes a rapid growth of productive capital. Rapid growth of productive capital calls forth just as rapid a growth of wealth, of luxury, of social needs and social pleasures. Therefore, although the pleasures of the laborer have increased, the social gratification which they afford has fallen in comparison with the increased pleasures of the capitalist, which are inaccessible to the worker, in comparison with the stage of development of society in general. Our wants and pleasures have their origin in society; we therefore measure them in relation to society; we do not measure them in relation to the objects which serve for their gratification. Since they are of a social nature, they are of a relative nature.

But wages are not at all determined merely by the sum of commodities for which they may be exchanged. Other factors enter into the problem. What the workers directly receive for their labor-power is a certain sum of money. Are wages determined merely by this money price?

In the 16th century, the gold and silver circulation in Europe increased in consequence of the discovery of richer and more easily worked mines in America. The value of gold and silver, therefore, fell in relation to other commodities. The workers received the same amount of coined silver for their labor-power as before. The money price of their work remained the same, and yet their wages had fallen, for in exchange for the same amount of silver they obtained a smaller amount of other commodities. This was one of the circumstances which furthered the growth of capital, the rise of the bourgeoisie, in the 18th century.

Let us take another case. In the winter of 1847, in consequence of bad harvest, the most indispensable means of subsistence—grains, meat, butter, cheese, etc.—rose greatly in price. Let us suppose that the workers still received the same sum of money for their labor-power as before. Did their wages not fall? To be sure. For the same money they received in exchange less bread, meat, etc. Their wages fell, not because the value of silver was less, but because the value of the means of subsistence had increased.

Finally, let us suppose that the money price of labor-power remained the same, while all agricultural and manufactured commodities had fallen in price because of the employment of new machines, of favorable seasons, etc. For the same money the workers could now buy more commodities of all kinds. Their wages have therefore risen, just because their money value has not changed.

The money price of labor-power, the nominal wages, do not therefore coincide with the actual or real wages—i.e., with the amount of commodities which are actually given in exchange for the wages. If we then speak of a rise or fall of wages, we have to keep in mind not only the money price of labor-power, the nominal wages, but also the real wages.

But neither the nominal wages—i.e., the amount of money for which the laborer sells himself to the capitalist—nor the real wages—i.e., the amount of commodities which he can buy for this money—exhausts the relations which are comprehended in the term wages.

Wages are determined above all by their relations to the gain, the profit, of the capitalist. In other words, wages are a proportionate, relative quantity.

Real wages express the price of labor-power in relation to the price of commodities; relative wages, on the other hand, express the share of immediate labor in the value newly created by it, in relation to the share of it which falls to accumulated labor, to capital.

Chapter 7: The General Law that Determines the Rise and Fall of Wages and Profits

We have said: "Wages are not a share of the worker in the commodities produced by him. Wages are that part of already existing commodities with which the capitalist buys a certain amount of productive labor-power." But the capitalist must replace these wages out of the price for which he sells the product made by the worker; he must so replace it that, as a rule, there remains to him a surplus above the cost of production expended by him, that is, he must get a profit.

The selling price of the commodities produced by the worker is divided, from the point of view of the capitalist, into three parts:

First, the replacement of the price of the raw materials advanced by him, in addition to the replacement of the wear-and-tear of the tools, machines, and other instruments of labor likewise advanced by him;

Second, the replacement of the wages advanced; and

Third, the surplus leftover—i.e., the profit of the capitalist.

While the first part merely replaces previously existing values, it is evident that the replacement of the wages and the surplus (the profit of capital) are as a whole taken out of the new value, which is produced by the labor of the worker and added to the raw materials. And in this sense, we can view wages as well as profit, for the purpose of comparing them with each other, as shares in the product of the worker.

Real wages may remain the same, they may even rise, nevertheless the relative wages may fall. Let us suppose, for instance, that all means of subsistence have fallen 2/3rds in price, while the day's wages have fallen but 1/3rd—for example, from three to two shillings. Although the worker can now get a greater amount of commodities with these two shillings than he formerly did with three shillings, yet his wages have decreased in proportion to the gain of the capitalist. The profit of the capitalist—the manufacturer's for instance—has increased one shilling, which means that for a smaller amount of exchange values, which he pays to the worker, the latter must produce a greater amount of exchange values than before. The share of capital in proportion to the share of labor has risen. The distribution of social wealth between capital and labor has become even more unequal. The capitalist commands a greater amount of labor with the same capital. The power of the capitalist class over the working class has grown, the social position of the worker has become worse, has been forced down still another degree below that of the capitalist.

What, then, is the general law that determines the rise and fall of wages and profit in their reciprocal relation?

They stand in inverse proportion to each other. The share of (profit) increases in the same proportion in which the share of labor (wages) falls, and vice versa. Profit rises in the same degree in which wages fall; it falls in the same degree in which wages rise.

It might perhaps be argued that the capitalist class can gain by an advantageous exchange of his products with other capitalists, by a rise in the demand for his commodities, whether in consequence of the opening up of new markets, or in consequence of temporarily increased demands in the old market, and so on; that the profit of the capitalist, therefore, may be multiplied by taking advantage of other capitalists, independently of the rise and fall of wages, of the exchange value of labor-power; or that the profit of the capitalist may also rise through improvements in the instruments of labor, new applications of the forces of nature, and so on.

But in the first place it must be admitted that the result remains the same, although brought about in an opposite manner. Profit, indeed, has not risen because wages have fallen, but wages have fallen because profit has risen. With the same amount of another man's labor the capitalist has bought a larger amount of exchange values without having paid more for the labor on that account—i.e., the work is paid for less in proportion to the net gain which it yields to the capitalist.

In the second place, it must be borne in mind that, despite the fluctuations in the prices of commodities, the average price of every commodity, the proportion in which it exchanges for other commodities, is determined by its cost of production. The acts of overreaching and taking advantage of one another within the capitalist ranks necessarily equalize themselves. The improvements of machinery, the new applications of the forces of nature in the service of production, make it possible to produce in a given period of time, with the same amount of labor and capital, a larger amount of products, but in no way a larger amount of exchange values. If by the use of the spinning-machine I can furnish twice as much yarn in an hour as before its invention—for instance, 100 pounds instead of 50 pounds—in the long run I receive back, in exchange for this 100 pounds no more commodities than I did before for 50; because the cost of production has fallen by 1/2, or because I can furnish double the product at the same cost.

Finally, in whatever proportion the capitalist class, whether of one country or of the entire world-market, distribute the net revenue of production among themselves, the total amount of this net revenue always consists exclusively of the amount by which accumulated labor has been increased from the proceeds of direct labor. This whole amount, therefore, grows in the same proportion in which labor augments capital—i.e., in the same proportion in which profit rises as compared with wages.

Chapter 8: The Interests of Capital and Wage-Labor are Diametrically Opposed

We thus see that, even if we keep ourselves within the relation of capital and wage-labor, the interests of capital and the interests of wage-labor are diametrically opposed to each other.

A rapid growth of capital is synonymous with a rapid growth of profits. Profits can grow rapidly only when the price of labor—the relative wages—decrease just as rapidly. Relative wages may fall, although real wages rise simultaneously with nominal wages, with the money value of labor, provided only that the real wage does not rise in the same proportion as the profit. If, for instance, in good business years wages rise 5 percent, while profits rise 30 percent, the proportional relative wage has not increased, but decreased.

If, therefore, the income of the worker increases with the rapid growth of capital, there is at the same time a widening of the social chasm that divides the worker from the capitalist, and an increase in the power of capital over labor, a greater dependence of labor upon capital.

To say that "the worker has an interest in the rapid growth of capital", means only this: that the more speedily the worker augments the wealth of the capitalist, the larger will be the crumbs which fall to him, the greater will be the number of workers than can be called into existence, the more can the mass of slaves dependent upon capital be increased.

We have thus seen that even the most favorable situation for the working class, namely, the most rapid growth of capital, however much it may improve the material life of the worker, does not abolish the antagonism between his interests and the interests of the capitalist. Profit and wages remain as before, in inverse proportion.

If capital grows rapidly, wages may rise, but the profit of capital rises disproportionately faster. The material position of the worker has improved, but at the cost of his social position. The social chasm that separates him from the capitalist has widened.

Finally, to say that "the most favorable condition for wage-labor is the fastest possible growth of productive capital", is the same as to say: the quicker the working class multiplies and augments the power inimical to it—the wealth of another which lords over that class—the more favorable will be the conditions under which it will be permitted to toil anew at the multiplication of bourgeois wealth, at the enlargement of the power of capital, content thus to forge for itself the golden chains by which the bourgeoisie drags it in its train.

Growth of productive capital and rise of wages, are they really so indissolubly united as the bourgeois economists maintain? We must not believe their mere words. We dare not believe them even when they claim that the fatter capital is the more will its slave be pampered. The bourgeoisie is too much enlightened, it keeps its accounts much too carefully, to share the prejudices of the feudal lord, who makes an ostentatious display of the magnificence of his retinue. The conditions of existence of the bourgeoisie compel it to attend carefully to its bookkeeping. We must therefore examine more closely into the following question:

In what manner does the growth of productive capital affect wages?

If as a whole, the productive capital of bourgeois society grows, there takes place a more many-sided accumulation of labor. The individual capitals increase in number and in magnitude. The multiplications of individual capitals increases the competition among capitalists. The increasing magnitude of increasing capitals provides the means of leading more powerful armies of workers with more gigantic instruments of war upon the industrial battlefield.

The one capitalist can drive the other from the field and carry off his capital only by selling more cheaply. In order to sell more cheaply without ruining himself, he must produce more cheaply—i.e., increase the productive forces of labor as much as possible.

But the productive forces of labor are increased above all by a greater division of labor and by a more general introduction and constant improvement of machinery. The larger the army of workers among whom the labor is subdivided, the more gigantic the scale upon which machinery is introduced, the more in proportion does the cost of production decrease, the more fruitful is the labor. And so there arises among the capitalists a universal rivalry for the increase of the division of labor and of machinery and for their exploitation upon the greatest possible scale.

If, now, by a greater division of labor, by the application and improvement of new machines, by a more advantageous exploitation of the forces of nature on a larger scale, a capitalist has found the means of producing with the same amount of labor (whether it be direct or accumulated labor) a larger amount of products of commodities than his competitors—if, for instance, he can produce a whole yard of linen in the same labor-time in which his competitors weave half-a-yard—how will this capitalist act?

He could keep on selling half-a-yard of linen at old market price; but this would not have the effect of driving his opponents from the field and enlarging his own market. But his need for a market has increased in the same measure in which his productive power has extended. The more powerful and costly means of production that he has called into existence enable him, it is true, to sell his wares more cheaply, but they compel him at the same time to sell more wares, to get control of a very much greater market for his commodities; consequently, this capitalist will sell his half-yard of linen more cheaply than his competitors.

But the capitalist will not sell the whole yard so cheaply as his competitors sell the half-yard, although the production of the whole yard costs him no more than does that of the half-yard to the others. Otherwise, he would make no extra profit, and would get back in exchange only the cost of production. He might obtain a greater income from having set in motion a larger capital, but not from having made a greater profit on his capital than the others. Moreover, he attains the object he is aiming at if he prices his goods only a small percentage lower than his competitors. He drives them off the field, he wrests from them at least part of their market, by underselling them.

And finally, let us remember that the current price always stands either above or below the cost of production, whether the sale of a commodity takes place in the favorable or unfavorable period of the industry. According as the market price of the yard of linen stands above or below its former cost of production, will the percentage vary at which the capitalist who has made use of the new and more faithful means of production sell above his real cost of production.

But the privilege of our capitalist is not of long duration. Other competing capitalists introduce the same machines, the same division of labor, and introduce them upon the same or even upon a greater scale. And finally, this introduction becomes so universal that the price of the linen is lowered not only below its old, but even below its new cost of production.

The capitalists therefore find themselves, in their mutual relations, in the same situation in which they were before the introduction of the new means of production; and if they are by these means enabled to offer double the product at the old price, they are now forced to furnish double the product for less than the old price. Having arrived at the new point, the new cost of production, the battle for supremacy in the market has to be fought out anew. Given more division of labor and more machinery, there results a greater scale upon which division of labor and machinery are exploited. And competition again brings the same reaction against this result.

Chapter 9: Effect of Capitalist Competition on the Capitalist Class, Middle Class, and Working Class

We thus see how the method of production and the means of production are constantly enlarged and revolutionized; how division of labor necessarily draws after it greater division of labor, the employment of machinery to a greater employment of machinery, work upon a large-scale work upon a still greater scale. This is the law that continually throws capitalist production out of its old ruts and compels capital to strain ever more the

productive forces of labor for the very reason that it has already strained them—the law that grants it no respite, and constantly shouts in its ear: March! March! This is no other law than that which, within the periodical fluctuations of commerce, necessarily adjusts the price of a commodity to its cost of production.

No matter how powerful the means of production which a capitalist may bring into the field, competition will make their adoption general; and from the moment that they have been generally adopted, the sole result of the greater productiveness of his capital will be that he must furnish at the same price, 10, 20, 100 times as much as before. But since he must find a market for, perhaps, 1,000 times as much, in order to outweigh the lower selling price by the greater quantity of the sale; since now a more extensive sale is necessary not only to gain a greater profit, but also in order to replace the cost of production (the instrument of production itself grows always more costly, as we have seen), and since this more extensive sale has become a question of life and death not only for him, but also for his rivals, the old struggle must begin again, and it is all the more violent the more powerful the means of production already invented are. The division of labor and the application of machinery will therefore take a fresh start, and upon an even greater scale.

Whatever be the power of the means of production which are employed, competition seeks to rob capital of the golden fruits of this power by reducing the price of commodities to the cost of production; in the same measure in which production is cheapened—i.e., in the same measure in which more can be produced with the same amount of labor—it compels by a law which is irresistible a still greater cheapening of production, the sale of ever greater masses of product for smaller prices. Thus, the capitalist will have gained nothing more by his efforts than the obligation to furnish a greater product in the same labor-time; in a word, more difficult conditions for the profitable employment of his capital. While competition, therefore, constantly pursues him with its law of the cost of production and turns against himself every weapon that he forges against his rivals, the capitalist continually seeks to get the best of competition by restlessly introducing further subdivision of labor and new machines, which, though more expensive, enable him to produce more cheaply, instead of waiting until the new machines shall have been rendered obsolete by competition.

If we now conceive this feverish agitation as it operates in the market of the whole world, we shall be in a position to comprehend how the growth, accumulation, and concentration of capital bring in their train an ever more detailed subdivision of labor, an ever-greater improvement of old machines, and a constant application of new machine—a process which goes on uninterruptedly, with feverish haste, and upon an ever more gigantic scale.

But what effect do these conditions, which are inseparable from the growth of productive capital, have upon the determination of wages?

The greater division of labor enables one laborer to accomplish the work of 5, 10, or 20 laborers; it therefore increases competition among the laborers fivefold, tenfold, or twentyfold. The laborers compete not only by selling themselves one cheaper than the other, but also by one doing the work of 5, 10, or 20; and they are forced to compete in this manner by the division of labor, which is introduced and steadily improved by capital.

Furthermore, to the same degree in which the division of labor increases, is the labor simplified. The special skill of the laborer becomes worthless. He becomes transformed into a simple monotonous force of production, with neither physical nor mental elasticity. His work becomes accessible to all; therefore, competitors press upon him from all sides. Moreover, it must be remembered that the more simple, the more easily learned the work is, so much the less is its cost to production, the expense of its acquisition, and so much the lower must the wages

sink—for, like the price of any other commodity, they are determined by the cost of production. Therefore, in the same manner in which labor becomes more unsatisfactory, more repulsive, does competition increase and wages decrease.

The laborer seeks to maintain the total of his wages for a given time by performing more labor, either by working a great number of hours, or by accomplishing more in the same number of hours. Thus, urged on by want, he himself multiplies the disastrous effects of division of labor. The result is: the more he works, the less wages he receives. And for this simple reason: the more he works, the more he competes against his fellow workmen, the more he compels them to compete against him, and to offer themselves on the same wretched conditions as he does; so that, in the last analysis, he competes against himself as a member of the working class.

Machinery produces the same effects, but upon a much larger scale. It supplants skilled laborers by unskilled, men by women, adults by children; where newly introduced, it throws workers upon the streets in great masses; and as it becomes more highly developed and more productive it discards them in additional though smaller numbers.

We have hastily sketched in broad outlines the industrial war of capitalists among themselves. This war has the peculiarity that the battles in it are won less by recruiting than by discharging the army of workers. The generals (the capitalists) vie with one another as to who can discharge the greatest number of industrial soldiers.

The economists tell us, to be sure, that those laborers who have been rendered superfluous by machinery find new venues of employment. They dare not assert directly that the same laborers that have been discharged find situations in new branches of labor. Facts cry out too loudly against this lie. Strictly speaking, they only maintain that new means of employment will be found for other sections of the working class; for example, for that portion of the young generation of laborers who were about to enter upon that branch of industry which had just been abolished. Of course, this is a great satisfaction to the disabled laborers. There will be no lack of fresh exploitable blood and muscle for the Messrs. Capitalists—the dead may bury their dead. This consolation seems to be intended more for the comfort of the capitalists themselves than their laborers. If the whole class of the wage-laborer were to be annihilated by machinery, how terrible that would be for capital, which, without wage-labor, ceases to be capital!

But even if we assume that all who are directly forced out of employment by machinery, as well as all of the rising generation who were waiting for a chance of employment in the same branch of industry, do actually find some new employment—are we to believe that this new employment will pay as high wages as did the one they have lost? If it did, it would be in contradiction to the laws of political economy. We have seen how modern industry always tends to the substitution of the simpler and more subordinate employments for the higher and more complex ones. How, then, could a mass of workers thrown out of one branch of industry by machinery find refuge in another branch, unless they were to be paid more poorly?

An exception to the law has been adduced, namely, the workers who are employed in the manufacture of machinery itself. As soon as there is in industry a greater demand for and a greater consumption of machinery, it is said that the number of machines must necessarily increase; consequently, also, the manufacture of machines; consequently, also, the employment of workers in machine manufacture; and the workers employed in this branch of industry are skilled, even educated, workers.

Since the year 1840 this assertion, which even before that date was only half-true, has lost all semblance of truth; for the most diverse machines are now applied to the manufacture of the machines themselves on quite as

extensive a scale as in the manufacture of cotton yarn, and the laborers employed in machine factories can but play the role of very stupid machines alongside of the highly ingenious machines.

But in place of the man who has been dismissed by the machine, the factory may employ, perhaps, three children and one woman! And must not the wages of the man have previously sufficed for the three children and one woman? Must not the minimum wages have sufficed for the preservation and propagation of the race? What, then, do these beloved bourgeois phrases prove? Nothing more than that now four times as many workers' lives are used up as there were previously, in order to obtain the livelihood of one working family.

To sum up: the more productive capital grows, the more it extends the division of labor and the application of machinery; the more the division of labor and the application of machinery extend, the more competition extends among the workers, the more their wages shrink together.

In addition, the working class is also recruited from the higher strata of society; a mass of small businessmen and of people living upon the interest of their capital are precipitated into the ranks of the working class, and they will have nothing else to do than to stretch out their arms alongside of the arms of the workers. Thus, the forest of outstretched arms, begging for work, grows ever thicker, while the arms themselves grow ever leaner.

It is evident that the small manufacturer cannot survive in a struggle in which the first condition of success is production upon an ever-greater scale. It is evident that the small manufacturers cannot at the same time be a big manufacturer.

That the interest on capital decreases in the same ratio in which the mass and number of capitals increase, that it diminishes with the growth of capital, that therefore the small capitalist can no longer live on his interest, but must consequently throw himself upon industry by joining the ranks of the small manufacturers and thereby increasing the number of candidates for the proletariat—all this requires no further elucidation.

Finally, in the same measure in which the capitalists are compelled, by the movement described above, to exploit the already existing gigantic means of production on an ever-increasing scale, and for this purpose to set in motion all the mainsprings of credit, in the same measure do they increase the industrial earthquakes, in the midst of which the commercial world can preserve itself only by sacrificing a portion of its wealth, its products, and even its forces of production, to the gods of the lower world—in short, the crises increase. They become more frequent and more violent, if for no other reason, than for this alone, that in the same measure in which the mass of products grows, and therefore the needs for extensive markets, in the same measure does the world market shrink ever more, and ever fewer markets remain to be exploited, since every previous crisis has subjected to the commerce of the world a hitherto unconquered or but superficially exploited market.

But capital not only lives upon labor. Like a master, at once distinguished and barbarous, it drags with it into its grave the corpses of its slaves, whole hecatombs of workers, who perish in the crises.

We thus see that if capital grows rapidly, competition among the workers grows with even greater rapidity—i.e., the means of employment and subsistence for the working class decrease in proportion even more rapidly; but, this notwithstanding, the rapid growth of capital is the most favorable condition for wage-labor.

VALUE, PRICE, AND PROFIT

Karl Marx

Introduction

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

This work, as Marx himself noted, falls into two parts. In the first part, Marx, while criticizing Weston, is at the same time essentially attacking the so-called "theory of wages fund," which had been presented in the main by Weston in his report, and which had John Stuart Mill as its most formidable supporter.

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

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

Preface

The circumstances under which this paper was read are narrated at the beginning of the work. The paper was never published during the lifetime of Marx. It was found amongst his papers after the death of Engels. Among many other characteristics of Marx, this paper shows two especially. These are his patient willingness to make the meaning of his ideas plain to the humblest student, and the extraordinary clearness of those ideas. In a partial sense the present volume is an epitome of the first volume of Capital. More than one of us have attempted to analyze and simplify that volume, with not too much success perhaps. In fact, a witty friend and commentator has suggested that what is now required is an explanation by Marx of our explanations of him. I am often asked what

is the best succession of books for the student to acquire the fundamental principles of Socialism. The question is a difficult one to answer. But, by way of suggestion, one might say, first, Engels' *Socialism, Scientific And Utopian*, then the present work, the first volume of Capital, and the Student's Marx. My small part in the preparation of this work has been reading the manuscript, making a few suggestions as to English forms of expression, dividing the work up into chapters and naming the chapters, and revising the proofs for press. All the rest, and by far the most important part, of the work has been done by her whose name appears on the title page. The present volume has already been translated into German.

Edward Aveling

Preliminary

Citizens,

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

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

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

Chapter 1: Production and Wages

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

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

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

But even conceding him his assertion, it would cut both ways, while he presses it only in one direction. If the amount of wages is a constant magnitude, then it can be neither increased nor diminished. If then, in enforcing a temporary rise of wages, the working men act foolishly, the capitalists, in enforcing a temporary fall of wages, would act not less foolishly. Our friend Weston does not deny that, under certain circumstances, the working men *can* enforce a rise of wages, but their amount being naturally fixed, there must follow a reaction. On the other hand, he knows also that the capitalists *can* enforce a fall of wages, and, indeed, continuously try to enforce it. According to the principle of the constancy of wages, a reaction ought to follow in this case not less than in the former. The working men, therefore, reacting against the attempt at, or the act of, lowering wages, would act rightly. They would, therefore, act rightly in enforcing *a rise of wages*, because every *reaction* against the lowering of wages is an *action* for raising wages. According to Citizen Weston's own principle of the *constancy of wages*, the working men ought, therefore, under certain circumstances, to combine and struggle for a rise of wages. If he denies this conclusion, he must give up the premise from which it flows. He must not say that the amount of wages is a *constant quantity*, but that, although it cannot and must not *rise*, it can and must *fall*, whenever capital pleases to lower it. If the capitalist pleases to feed you upon potatoes instead of upon meat, and upon oats instead of upon wheat, you must accept his will as a law of political economy, and submit to it. If in one country the rate of wages is higher than in another, in the United States, for example, than in England, you must explain this difference in the rate of wages by a difference between the will of the American capitalist and the will of the English capitalist, a method which would certainly very much simplify, not only the study of economic phenomena, but of all other phenomena.

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

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

Chapter 2: Production, Wages, Profits

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

All his reasoning amounted to this: If the working class forces the capitalist class to pay five shillings instead of four shillings in the shape of money wages, the capitalist will return in the shape of commodities four shillings worth instead of five shillings worth. The working class would have to pay five shillings for what, before the rise of wages, they bought with four shillings. But why is this the case? Why does the capitalist only return four shillings worth for five shillings? Because the amount of wages is fixed. By why is it fixed at four shillings worth

of commodities? Why not at three, or two, or any other sum? If the limit of the amount of wages is settled by an economical law, independent alike of the will of the capitalist and the will of the working man, the first thing Citizen Weston had to do was to state that law and prove it. He ought then, moreover, to have proved that the amount of wages actually paid at every given moment always corresponds exactly to the necessary amount of wages, and never deviates from it. If, on the other hand, the given limit of the amount of wages is founded on the *mere will* of the capitalist, or the limits of his avarice, it is an arbitrary limit. There is nothing necessary in it. It may be changed *by* the will of the capitalist, and may, therefore, be changed *against* his will.

Citizen Weston illustrated his theory by telling you that a bowl contains a certain quantity of soup, to be eaten by a certain number of persons, an increase in the broadness of the spoons would produce no increase in the amount of soup. He must allow me to find this illustration rather spoony. It reminded me somewhat of the simile employed by Menenius Agrippa. When the Roman plebeians struck against the Roman patricians, the patrician Agrippa told them that the patrician belly fed the plebeian members of the body politic. Agrippa failed to show that you feed the members of one man by filling the belly of another. Citizen Weston, on his part, has forgotten that the bowl from which the workmen eat is filled with the whole produce of national labor, and that what prevents them fetching more out of it is neither the narrowness of the bowl nor the scantiness of its contents, but only the smallness of their spoons.

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

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

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

Well, what would be the position of those capitalists who do *not* produce necessaries? For the *fall in the rate of profit*, consequent upon the general rise of wages, they could not compensate themselves by a *rise in the price of their commodities*, because the demand for those commodities would not have increased. Their income would have decreased, and from this decreased income they would have to pay more for the same amount of higher-priced necessaries. But this would not be all. As their income had diminished, they would have less to spend upon

luxuries, and therefore their mutual demand for their respective commodities would diminish. Consequent upon this diminished demand the prices of their commodities would fall. In these branches of industry, therefore, *the rate of profit would fall*, not only in simple proportion to the general rise in the rate of wages, but in the compound ratio of the general rise of wages, the rise in the prices of necessaries, and the fall in the prices of luxuries.

What would be the consequence of *this difference in the rates of profit* for capitals employed in the different branches of industry? Why, the consequence that generally obtains whenever, from whatever reason, the *average rate of profit* comes to differ in different spheres of production. Capital and labor would be transferred from the less remunerative to the more remunerative branches; and this process of transfer would go on until the supply in the one department of industry would have risen proportionately to the increased demand, and would have sunk in the other departments according to the decreased demand. This change effected, the general rate of profit would again be *equalized* in the different branches. As the whole derangement originally arose from a mere change in the proportion of the demand for, and supply of, different commodities, the cause ceasing, the effect would cease, and *prices* would return to their former level and equilibrium. Instead of being limited to some branches of industry, *the fall in the rate of profit* consequent upon the rise of wages would have become general. According to our supposition, there would have taken place no change in the productive powers of labor, nor in the aggregate amount of production, but *that given amount of production would have changed its form*. A greater part of the produce would exist in the shape of necessaries, a lesser part in the shape of luxuries, or what comes to the same, a lesser part would be exchanged for foreign luxuries, and be consumed in its original form, or, what again comes to the same, a greater part of the native produce would be exchanged for foreign necessaries instead of for luxuries. The general rise in the rate of wages would, therefore, after a temporary disturbance of market prices, only result in a general fall of the rate of profit without any permanent change in the prices of commodities. If I am told that in the previous argument I assume the whole surplus wages to be spent upon necessaries, I answer that I have made the supposition most advantageous to the opinion of Citizen Weston. If the surplus wages were spent upon articles formerly not entering into the consumption of the working men, the real increase of their purchasing power would need no proof. Being, however, only derived from an advance of wages, that increase of their purchasing power must exactly correspond to the decrease of the purchasing power of the capitalists. The *aggregate demand* for commodities would, therefore, not *increase*, but the constituent parts of that demand would *change*. The increasing demand on the one side would be counterbalanced by the decreasing demand on the other side. Thus, the aggregate demand remaining stationary, no change whatever could take place in the market prices of commodities. You arrive, therefore, at this dilemma: Either the surplus wages are equally spent upon all articles of consumption — then the expansion of demand on the part of the working class must be compensated by the contraction of demand on the part of the capitalist class — or the surplus wages are only spent upon some articles whose market prices will temporarily rise. The consequent rise in the rate of profit in some, and the consequent fall in the rate of profit in other branches of industry will produce a change in the distribution of capital and labor, going on until the supply is brought up to the increased demand in the one department of industry, and brought down to the diminished demand in the other departments of industry. On the one supposition there will occur no change in the prices of commodities. On the other supposition, after some fluctuations of market prices, the exchangeable values of commodities will subside to the former level. On both suppositions the general rise in the rate of wages will ultimately result in nothing else but a general fall in the rate of profit.

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

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

You are all aware of the Ten Hours Bill, or rather Ten-and-a-half Hours Bill, introduced since 1848. This was one of the greatest economical changes we have witnessed. It was a sudden and compulsory rise of wages, not in some local trades, but in the leading industrial branches by which England sways the markets of the world. It was a rise of wages under circumstances singularly unpropitious. Dr. Ure, Professor Senior, and all the other official economical mouthpieces of the middle class,[1] *proved*, and I must say upon much stronger grounds than those of our friend Weston, that it would sound the death-knell of English industry. They proved that it not only amounted to a simple rise of wages, but to a rise of wages initiated by, and based upon, a diminution of the quantity of labor employed. They asserted that the twelfth hour you wanted to take from the capitalist was exactly the only hour from which he derived his profit. They threatened a decrease of accumulation, rise of prices, loss of markets, stinting of production, consequent reaction upon wages, ultimate ruin. In fact, they declared Maximillian Robespierre's Maximum Laws[2] to be a small affair compared to it; and they were right in a certain sense. Well, what was the result? A rise in the money wages of the factory operatives, despite the curtailing of the working day, a great increase in the number of factory hands employed, a continuous fall in the prices of their products, a marvelous development in the productive powers of their labor, an unheard-of progressive expansion of the markets for their commodities. In Manchester, at the meeting, in 1860, of the Society for the Advancement of Science, I myself heard Mr. Newman confess that he, Dr. Ure, Senior, and all other official propounders of economical science had been wrong, while the instinct of the people had been right. I mention Mr. W. Newman, not Professor Francis Newman, because he occupies an eminent position in economical science, as the contributor to, and editor of, Mr. Thomas Tooke's *History Of Prices*, that magnificent work which traces the history of prices from 1793 to 1856. If our friend Weston's fixed idea of a fixed amount of wages, a fixed amount of production, a fixed degree of the productive power of labor, a fixed and permanent will of the capitalist, and all his other

[1] The aristocracy was the upper class of Great Britain, while the capitalists composed what was known to Marx as the middle class

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

fixedness and finality were correct, Professor Senior's woeful forebodings would been right, and Robert Owen,[3] who already in 1816 proclaimed a general limitation of the working day the first preparatory step to the emancipation of the working class, and actually in the teeth of the general prejudice inaugurated it on his own hook in his cotton factory at New Lanark, would have been wrong.

In the very same period during which the introduction of the Ten Hours Bill, and the rise of wages consequent upon it, occurred, there took place in Great Britain, for reasons which it would be out of place to enumerate here, *a general rise in agricultural wages*. Although it is not required for my immediate purpose, in order not to mislead you, I shall make some preliminary remarks.

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

Moreover, you will understand, that if there were ten men receiving each 2s. per week, five men receiving each 5s., and five men receiving 11s. weekly, the twenty men together would receive 100s., or £5, weekly. If then a rise, say by 20 percent, upon the *aggregate* sum of their weekly wages took place, there would be an advance from £5 to £6. Taking the average, we might say that the *general rate of wages* had risen by 20 percent, although, in fact, the wages of the ten men had remained stationary, the wages of the one lot of five men had risen from 5s. to 6s. only, and the wages of the other five men from 55s. to 70s. One half of the men would not have improved at all their position, one quarter would have improved it in an imperceptible degree, and only one quarter would have bettered it really. Still, reckoning by the *average*, the total amount of the wages of those twenty men would have increased by 25 percent, and as far as the aggregate capital that employs them, and the prices of the commodities they produce, are concerned, it would be exactly the same as if all of them had equally shared in the average rise of wages. In the case of agricultural labor, the standard wages being very different in the different counties of England and Scotland, the rise affected them very unequally.

Lastly, during the period when that rise of wages took place counteracting influences were at work such as the new taxes consequent upon the Russian war, the extensive demolition of the dwelling-houses of the agricultural laborers, and so forth. Having premised so much, I proceed to state that from 1849 to 1859 there took place a *rise of about 40 percent* in the average rate of the agricultural wages of Great Britain. I could give you ample details in proof of my assertion, but for the present purpose think it sufficient to refer you to the conscientious and critical paper read in 1860 by the late Mr. John C. Morton at the London Society of Arts on "The Forces used in Agriculture." Mr. Morton gives the returns, from bills and other authentic documents, which he had collected from about one hundred farmers, residing in twelve Scotch and thirty-five English counties.

According to our friend Weston's opinion, and taken together with the simultaneous rise in the wages of the factory operatives, there ought to have occurred a tremendous rise in the prices of agricultural produce during the period 1849 to 1859. But what is the fact? Despite the Russian war, and the consecutive unfavorable harvests from 1854 to 1856, the average price of wheat, which is the leading agricultural produce of England, fell from about 3 Pounds per quarter for the years 1838 to 1848 to about 2 Pounds 10 Shillings per quarter for the years

[3] Robert Owen (1771-1858) was a British manufacturer who became a utopian socialist. He introduced in his factory the ten-hour day, and also organized sickness insurance, consumers' cooperative societies, etc.—*Ed.*

1849 to 1859. This constitutes a fall in the price of wheat of more than 16 percent simultaneously with an average rise of agricultural wages of 40 percent. During the same period, if we compare its end with its beginning, 1859 with 1849, there was a decrease of official pauperism from 934,419 to 860,470, the difference being 73,949; a very small decrease, I grant, and which in the following years was again lost, but still a decrease.

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

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

Chapter 3: Wages and Currency

On the second day of the debate our friend Weston clothed his old assertions in new forms. He said: Consequent upon a general rise in money wages, more currency will be wanted to pay the same wages. The currency being *fixed*, how can you pay with this fixed currency increased money wages? First the difficulty arose from the fixed amount of commodities accruing to the working man despite his increase of money wages; now it arises from the increased money wages, despite the fixed amount of commodities. Of course, if you reject his original dogma, his secondary grievance will disappear. However, I shall show that this currency question has nothing at all to do with the subject before us.

In your country the mechanism of payments is much more perfected than in any other country of Europe. Thanks to the extent and concentration of the banking system, much less currency is wanted to circulate the same amount of values, and to transact the same or a greater amount of business. For example, as far as wages are concerned, the English factory operative pays his wages weekly to the shopkeeper, who sends them weekly to the banker, who returns them weekly to the manufacturer, who again pays them away to his working men, and so forth. By this contrivance the yearly wages of an operative, say of 52 Pounds, may be paid by one single Sovereign turning round every week in the same circle. Even in England the mechanism is less perfect than in Scotland, and

is not everywhere equally perfect; and therefore we find, for example, that in some agricultural districts, much more currency is wanted to circulate a much smaller amount of values.

If you cross the Channel, you will find that the *money wages* are much lower than in England, but that they are circulated in Germany, Italy, Switzerland, and France by a *much larger amount of currency*. The same Sovereign will not be so quickly intercepted by the banker or returned to the industrial capitalist; and, therefore, instead of one Sovereign circulating 52 Pounds yearly, you want, perhaps, three Sovereigns to circulate yearly wages to the amount of 25 Pounds. Thus, by comparing continental countries with England, you will see at once that low money wages may require a much larger currency for their circulation than high money wages, and that this is, in fact, a merely technical point, quite foreign to our subject.

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

If a general rise in the rate of wages, for example, of 100 percent, as Citizen Weston supposed it to take place in agricultural wages, would produce a great rise in the prices of necessaries, and, according to his views, require an additional amount of currency not to be procured, *a general fall in wages* must produce the same effect, on the same scale, in the opposite direction. Well! All of you know that the years 1858 to 1860 were the most prosperous years for the cotton industry, and that peculiarly the year 1860 stands in that respect unrivalled in the annals of commerce, while at the same time all other branches of industry were most flourishing. The wages of the cotton operatives and of all the other working men connected with their trade stood, in 1860, higher than ever before. The American crisis came, and those aggregate wages were suddenly reduced to about one-fourth of their former amount. This would have been in the opposite direction a rise of 400 percent. If wages rise from 5 to 20, we say that they rise by 400 percent; if they fall from 20 to 5, we say that they fall by 75 percent; but the amount of rise in the one and the amount of fall in the other case would be the same, namely, fifteen shillings. This, then, was a

sudden change in the rate of wages unprecedented, and at the same time extending over a number of operatives which, if we count all the operatives not only directly engaged in but indirectly dependent upon the cotton trade, was larger by one-half than the number of agricultural laborers. Did the price of wheat fall? It *rose* from the annual average of 47 shillings 8d per quarter during the three years of 1858-1860 to the annual average of 55 shillings 10d per quarter during the three years 1861-1863. As to the currency, there were coined in the mint in 1861 8,673,323 Pounds, against 3,378,792 Pounds in 1860. That is to say, there were coined 5,294,440 Pounds more in 1861 than in 1860. It is true the bank-note circulation was in 1861 less by 1,319,000 Pounds than in 1860. Take this off. There remains still a surplus of currency for the year 1861, as compared with the prosperity year, 1860, to the amount of 3,975,440 Pounds, or about 4,000,000 Pounds; but the bullion reserve in the Bank of England had simultaneously decreased, not the same, but in an approximating proportion.

Compare the year 1862 with 1842. Apart from the immense increase in the value and amount of commodities circulated, in 1862 the capital paid in regular transactions for shares, loans, etc. for the railways in England and Wales amounted alone to 320,000,000 Pounds, a sum that would have appeared fabulous in 1842. Still, the aggregate amounts in currency in 1862 and 1842 were pretty nearly equal, and generally you will find a tendency to a progressive diminution of currency in the face of enormously increasing value, not only of commodities, but of monetary transactions generally. From our friend Weston's standpoint this is an unsolvable riddle. Looking somewhat deeper into this matter, he would have found that, quite apart from wages, and supposing them to be fixed, the value and mass of the commodities to be circulated, and generally the amount of monetary transactions to be settled, vary daily; that the amount of bank-notes issued varies daily; that the amount of payments realized without the intervention of any money, by the instrumentality of bills, checks, book-credits, clearing houses, varies daily; that, as far as actual metallic currency is required, the proportion between the coin in circulation and the coin and bullion in reserve or sleeping in the cellars of banks varies daily; that the amount of bullion absorbed by the national circulation and the amount being sent abroad for international circulation vary daily. He would have found that this dogma of a fixed currency is a monstrous error, incompatible with our everyday movement. He would have inquired into the laws which enable a currency to adapt itself to circumstances so continually changing, instead of turning his misconception of the laws of currency into an argument against a rise of wages.

Chapter 4: Supply and Demand

Our friend Weston accepts the Latin proverb that "*repetitio est mater studiorum*," that is to say, that repetition is the mother of study, and consequently he repeated his original dogma again under the new form, that the contraction of currency, resulting from an enhancement of wages, would produce a diminution of capital, and so forth. Having already dealt with his currency crotchet, I consider it quite useless to enter upon the imaginary consequences he fancies to flow from his imaginary currency mishap. I shall proceed to at once reduce his *one and the same dogma*, repeated in so many different shapes, to its simplest theoretical form.

The uncritical way in which he has treated his subject will become evident from one single remark. He pleads against a rise of wages or against high wages as the result of such a rise. Now, I ask him: What are high wages and what are low wages? Why constitute, for example, five shillings weekly low, and twenty shillings weekly high wages? If five is low as compared with twenty, twenty is still lower as compared with two hundred. If a man was to lecture on the thermometer, and commenced by declaiming on high and low degrees, he would impart no knowledge whatever. He must first tell me how the freezing-point is found out, and how the boiling-point, and

how these standard points are settled by natural laws, not by the fancy of the sellers or makers of thermometers. Now, in regard to wages and profits, Citizen Weston has not only failed to deduce such standard points from economical laws, but he has not even felt the necessity to look after them. He satisfied himself with the acceptance of the popular slang terms of low and high as something having a fixed meaning, although it is self-evident that wages can only be said to be high or low as compared with a standard by which to measure their magnitudes.

He will be unable to tell me why a certain amount of money is given for a certain amount of labor. If he should answer me, "This was settled by the law of supply and demand," I should ask him, in the first instance, by what law supply and demand are themselves regulated. And such an answer would at once put him out of court. The relations between the supply and demand of labor undergo perpetual change, and with them the market prices of labor. If the demand overshoots the supply wages rise; if the supply overshoots the demand wages sink, although it might in such circumstances be necessary to *test* the real state of demand and supply by a strike, for example, or any other method. But if you accept supply and demand as the law regulating wages, it would be as childish as useless to declaim against a rise of wages, because, according to the supreme law you appeal to, a periodical rise of wages is quite as necessary and legitimate as a periodical fall of wages. If you do *not* accept supply and demand as the law regulating wages, I again repeat the question, why a certain amount of money is given for a certain amount of labor?

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

Chapter 5: Wages and Prices

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

I might appeal to practical observation to bear witness against this antiquated and exploded fallacy. I might tell you that the English factory operatives, miners, shipbuilders, and so forth, whose labor is relatively high-priced, undersell by the cheapness of their produce all other nations; while the English agricultural laborer, for example, whose labor is relatively low-priced, is undersold by almost every other nation because of the dearness of his produce. By comparing article with article in the same country, and the commodities of different countries, I might show, apart from some exceptions more apparent than real, that on an average the high-priced labor produces the low-priced, and low-priced labor produces the high-priced commodities. This, of course, would not prove that the high price of labor in the one, and its low price in the other instance, are the respective causes of those diametrically opposed effects, but at all events it would prove that the prices of commodities are not ruled by the prices of labor. However, it is quite superfluous for us to employ this empirical method.

It might, perhaps, be denied that Citizen Weston has put forward the dogma: "*The prices of commodities are determined or regulated by wages.*" In point of fact, he has never formulated it. He said, on the contrary, that profit and rent also form constituent parts of the prices of commodities, because it is out of the prices of commodities that not only the working man's wages, but also the capitalist's profits and the landlord's rents must be paid. But how in his idea are prices formed? First by wages. Then an additional percentage is joined to the price on behalf of the capitalist, and another additional percentage on behalf of the landlord. Suppose the wages of the labor employed in the production of a commodity to be ten. If the rate of profit was 100 percent, to the wages advanced the capitalist would add ten, and if the rate of rent was also 100 percent upon the wages, there would be added ten more, and the aggregate price of the commodity would amount to thirty. But such a determination of prices would be simply their determination by wages. If wages in the above case rose to twenty, the price of the commodity would rise to sixty, and so forth. Consequently, all the superannuated writers on political economy who propounded the dogma that wages regulate prices, have tried to prove it by treating profit and rent *as mere additional percentages upon wages*. None of them were, of course, able to reduce the limits of those percentages to any economic law. They seem, on the contrary, to think profits settled by tradition, custom, the will of the capitalist, or by some other equally arbitrary and inexplicable method. If they assert that they are settled by the competition between the capitalists, they say nothing. That competition is sure to equalize the different rates of profit in different trades, or reduce them to one average level, but it can never determine the level itself, or the general rate of profit.

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

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

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

The dogma that "wages determine the price of commodities," expressed in its most abstract terms, comes to this, that "value is determined by value," and this tautology means that, in fact, we know nothing at all about value. Accepting this premise, all reasoning about the general laws of political economy turns into mere twaddle. It was, therefore, the great merit of Ricardo that in his work on *the principles of political economy*, published in 1817, he fundamentally destroyed the old popular, and worn-out fallacy that "wages determine prices," a fallacy

which Adam Smith and his French predecessors had spurned in the really scientific parts of their researches, but which they reproduced in their more exoterical and vulgarizing chapters.

Chapter 6: Value and Labor

Citizens, I have now arrived at a point where I must enter upon the real development of the question. I cannot promise to do this in a very satisfactory way, because to do so I should be obliged to go over the whole field of political economy. I can, as the French would say, but "*effleurer la question*," touch upon the main points. The first question we have to put is: What is the *value* of a commodity? How is it determined?

At first sight it would seem that the value of a commodity is a thing quite *relative*, and not to be settled without considering one commodity in its relations to all other commodities. In fact, in speaking of the value, the value in exchange of a commodity, we mean the proportional quantities in which it exchanges with all other commodities. But then arises the question: How are the proportions in which commodities exchange with each other regulated? We know from experience that these proportions vary infinitely. Taking one single commodity, wheat, for instance, we shall find that a quarter of wheat exchanges in almost countless variations of proportion with different commodities. Yet, *its value remaining always the same*, whether expressed in silk, gold, or any other commodity, it must be something distinct from, and independent of, these *different rates of exchange* with different articles. It must be possible to express, in a very different form, these various equations with various commodities.

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

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

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

As the *exchangeable values* of commodities are only *social functions* of those things, and have nothing at all to do with the *natural* qualities, we must first ask: What is the common *social substance* of all commodities? It is *labor*. To produce a commodity a certain amount of labor must be bestowed upon it, or worked up in it. And I say not only *labor*, but *social labor*. A man who produces an article for his own immediate use, to consume it himself, creates a *product*, but not a *commodity*. As a self-sustaining producer he has nothing to do with society. But to produce a *commodity*, a man must not only produce an article satisfying some *social* want, but his labor itself must form part and parcel of the total sum of labor expended by society. It must be subordinate to the

division of labor within society. It is nothing without the other divisions of labor, and on its part is required to *integrate* them.

If we consider *commodities as values*, we consider them exclusively under the single aspect of *realized, fixed*, or, if you like, *crystallized social labor*. In this respect they can *differ* only by representing greater or smaller quantities of labor, as, for example, a greater amount of labor may be worked up in a silken handkerchief than in a brick. But how does one measure *quantities of labor*? By the *time the labor lasts*, in measuring the labor by the hour, the day, etc. Of course, to apply this measure, all sorts of labor are reduced to average or simple labor as their unit. We arrive, therefore, at this conclusion. A commodity has *a value*, because it is a *crystallization of social labor*. The *greatness* of its value, or its *relative* value, depends upon the greater or less amount of that social substance contained in it; that is to say, on the relative mass of labor necessary for its production. The *relative values of commodities* are, therefore, determined by the *respective quantities or amounts of labor, worked up, realized, fixed in them*. The *correlative* quantities of commodities which can be produced in the *same time of labor* are *equal*. Or the value of one commodity is to the value of another commodity as the quantity of labor fixed in the one is to the quantity of labor fixed in the other.

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

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

In calculating the exchangeable value of a commodity, we must add to the quantity of labor *previously* worked up in the raw material of the commodity, and the labor bestowed on the implements, tools, machinery, and buildings, with which such labor is assisted. For example, the value of a certain amount of cotton yarn is the

crystallization of the quantity of labor added to the cotton during the spinning process, the quantity of labor previously realized in the cotton itself, the quantity of labor realized in the coal, oil, and other auxiliary substances used, the quantity of labor fixed in the steam-engine, the spindles, the factory building, and so forth. Instruments of production properly so-called, such as tools, machinery, buildings, serve again and again for longer or shorter period during repeated processes of production. If they were used up at once, like the raw material, their whole value would at once be transferred to the commodities they assist in producing. But as a spindle, for example, is but gradually used up, an average calculation is made, based upon the average time it lasts, and its average waste or wear-and-tear during a certain period, say a day. In this way we calculate how much of the value of the spindle is transferred to the yarn daily spin, and how much, therefore, of the total amount of labor realized in a pound of yarn, for example, is due to the quantity of labor previously realized in the spindle. For our present purpose it is not necessary to dwell any longer upon this point.

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

If then the quantity of socially necessary labor realized in commodities regulates their exchangeable values, every increase in the quantity of labor wanted for the production of a commodity must augment its value, as every diminution must lower it.

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

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

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

Secondly. Upon the progressive improvement of the *social powers of labor*, such as are derived from production on a grand scale, concentration of capital and combination of labor, subdivision of labor, machinery, improved methods, appliance of chemical and other natural agencies, shortening of time and space by means of communication and transport, and every other contrivance by which science presses natural agencies into the service of labor, and by which the social or cooperative character of labor is developed. The greater the productive powers of labor, the less labor is bestowed upon a given amount of produce; hence the smaller the value of the produce. The smaller the productive powers of labor, the more labor is bestowed upon the same amount of produce; hence the greater its value. As a general law we may, therefore, set it down that:

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

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

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

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

So far, the *market price* of a commodity coincides with its *value*. On the other hand, the oscillations of market prices, rising now over, sinking now under the value or natural price, depend upon the fluctuations of supply and demand. The deviations of market prices from values are continual, but as Adam Smith says:

> "The natural price is the central price to which the prices of commodities are continually gravitating. Different accidents may sometimes keep them suspended a good deal above it, and sometimes force them down even somewhat below it. But whatever may be the obstacles which hinder them from settling in this center of repose and continuance, they are constantly tending towards it."

I cannot now sift this matter. It suffices to say the *if* supply and demand equilibrate each other, the market prices of commodities will correspond with their natural prices, that is to say with their values, as determined by

the respective quantities of labor required for their production. But supply and demand *must* constantly tend to equilibrate each other, although they do so only by compensating one fluctuation by another, a rise by a fall, and *vice versa*. If instead of considering only the daily fluctuations you analyze the movement of market prices for longer periods, as Mr. Tooke, for example, has done in his *History of Prices*, you will find that the fluctuations of market prices, their deviations from values, their ups and downs, paralyze and compensate each other; so that apart from the effect of monopolies and some other modifications I must now pass by, all descriptions of commodities are, on average, sold at their respective *values* or natural prices. The average periods during which the fluctuations of market prices compensate each other are different for different kinds of commodities, because with one kind it is easier to adapt supply to demand than with the other.

If then, speaking broadly, and embracing somewhat longer periods, all descriptions of commodities sell at their respective values, it is nonsense to suppose that profit, not in individual cases; but that the constant and usual profits of different trades spring from the prices of commodities, or selling them at a price over and above their *value*. The absurdity of this notion becomes evident if it is generalized. What a man would constantly win as a seller he would constantly lose as a purchaser. It would not do to say that there are men who are buyers without being sellers, or consumers without being producers. What these people pay to the producers, they must first get from them for nothing. If a man first takes your money and afterwards returns that money in buying your commodities, you will never enrich yourselves by selling your commodities too dear to that same man. This sort of transaction might diminish a loss, but would never help in realizing a profit. To explain, therefore, the *general nature of profits*, you must start from the theorem that, on an average, commodities are *sold at their real values*, and that *profits are derived from selling them at their values*, that is, in proportion to the quantity of labor realized in them. If you cannot explain profit upon this supposition, you cannot explain it at all. This seems paradox and contrary to everyday observation. It is also paradox that the earth moves round the sun, and that water consists of two highly inflammable gases. Scientific truth is always paradox, if judged by everyday experience, which catches only the delusive appearance of things.

Chapter 7: Labor-Power

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

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

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

One of the oldest economists and most original philosophers of England — Thomas Hobbes — has already, in his Leviathan, instinctively hit upon this point overlooked by all his successors. He says: "*the value or worth of a man* is, as in all other things, his *price*: that is so much as would be given for the *use of his power*." Proceeding from this basis, we shall be able to determine the *value of labor* as that of all other commodities.

But before doing so, we might ask, how does this strange phenomenon arise, that we find on the market a set of buyers, possessed of land, machinery, raw material, and the means of subsistence, all of them, save land in its crude state, the *products of labor*, and on the other hand, a set of sellers who have nothing to sell except their laboring power, their working arms and brains? That the one set buys continually in order to make a profit and enrich themselves, while the other set continually sells in order to earn their livelihood? The inquiry into this question would be an inquiry into what the economists call "*previous or original accumulation*," but which ought to be called *original expropriation*. We should find that this so-called *original accumulation* means nothing but a series of historical processes, resulting in a *decomposition* of the *original union* existing between the laboring Man and his Instruments of Labor. Such an inquiry, however, lies beyond the pale of my present subject. The *separation* between the Man of Labor and the Instruments of Labor once established, such a state of things will maintain itself and reproduce itself upon a constantly increasing scale, until a new and fundamental revolution in the mode of production should again overturn it, and restore the original union in a new historical form.

What, then, is the *value of laboring power*?

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

determined by the *value of the necessaries* required to produce, develop, maintain, and perpetuate the laboring power.

Chapter 8: Production of Surplus Value

Now suppose that the average amount of the daily necessaries of a laboring man require *six hours of average labor* for their production. Suppose, moreover, six hours of average labor to be also realized in a quantity of gold equal to 3s. Then 3s. would be the *price*, or the monetary expression of the *daily value* of that man's *laboring power*. If he worked daily six hours, he would daily produce a value sufficient to buy the average amount of his daily necessaries, or to maintain himself as a laboring man.

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

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

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

which will go to pay wages anew, and the other half of which will form *surplus value*, for which the capitalist pays no equivalent. It is this *sort of exchange between capital and labor* upon which capitalistic production, or the wages system, is founded, and which must constantly result in reproducing the working man as a working man, and the capitalist as a capitalist.

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

Chapter 9: Value of Labor

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

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

Secondly. Although one part only of the workman's daily labor is *paid*, while the other part is *unpaid*, and while that unpaid or surplus labor constitutes exactly the fund out of which *surplus value* or *profit* is formed, it seems as if the aggregate labor was paid labor.

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

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

In point of fact, however, whether a man works three days of the week for himself on his own field and three days for nothing on the estate of his lord, or whether he works in the factory or the workshop six hours daily for himself and six for his employer, comes to the same, although in the latter case the paid and unpaid portions of labor are inseparably mixed up with each other, and the nature of the whole transaction is completely masked by

the *intervention of a contract* and the *pay* received at the end of the week. The gratuitous labor appears to be voluntarily given in the one instance, and to be compulsory in the other. That makes all the difference.

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

Chapter 10: Profit is Made by Selling a Commodity at its Value

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

The value of a commodity is determined by the *total quantity of labor* contained in it. But part of that quantity of labor is realized in a value for which and equivalent has been paid in the form of wages; part of it is realized in a value for which NO equivalent has been paid. Part of the labor contained in the commodity is *paid* labor; part is *unpaid* labor. By selling, therefore, the commodity *at its value*, that is, as the crystallization of the *total quantity of labor* bestowed upon it, the capitalist must necessarily sell it at a profit. He sells not only what has cost him an equivalent, but he sells also what has cost him nothing, although it has cost his workman labor. The cost of the commodity to the capitalist and its real cost are different things.

I repeat, therefore, that normal and average profits are made by selling commodities not *above*, but *at their real values*.

Chapter 11: The Different Parts into which Surplus Value is Decomposed

The *surplus value*, or that part of the total value of the commodity in which the *surplus labor* or *unpaid labor* of the working man is realized, I call *profit*. The whole of that profit is not pocketed by the employing capitalist. The monopoly of land enables the landlord to take one part of that *surplus value*, under the name of *rent*, whether the land is used for agricultural buildings or railways, or for any other productive purpose. On the other hand, the very fact that the possession of the *instruments of labor* enables the employing capitalist to produce a *surplus value*, or, what comes to the same, to *appropriate to himself a certain amount of unpaid labor*, enables the owner of the means of labor, which he lends wholly or partly to the employing capitalist — enables, in one word, the money-lending capitalist to claim for himself under the name of *interest* another part of that surplus value, so that there remains to the employing capitalist *as such* only what is called *industrial* or *commercial profit*.

By what laws this division of the total amount of surplus value amongst the three categories of people is regulated is a question quite foreign to our subject. This much, however, results from what has been stated.

Rent, interest, and industrial profit are only different names for different parts of the *surplus value* of the commodity, or the *unpaid labor enclosed in it*, and they are *equally derived from this source and from this source alone*. They are not derived from *land* as such or from *capital* as such, but land and capital enable their owners to get their respective shares out of the surplus value extracted by the employing capitalist from the laborer. For the laborer himself it is a matter of subordinate importance whether that surplus value, the result of his surplus labor, or unpaid labor, is altogether pocketed by the employing capitalist, or whether the latter is obliged to pay portions of it, under the name of rent and interest, away to third parties. Suppose the employing capitalist to use only his own capital and to be his own landlord, then the whole surplus value would go into his pocket.

It is the employing capitalist who immediately extracts from the laborer this surplus value, whatever part of it he may ultimately be able to keep for himself. Upon this relation, therefore between the employing capitalist and the wages laborer the whole wages system and the whole present system of production hinge. Some of the citizens who took part in our debate were, there, wrong in trying to mince matters, and to treat this fundamental relation between the employing capitalist and the working man as a secondary question, although they were right in stating that, under given circumstances, a rise of prices might affect in very unequal degrees the employing capitalist, the landlord, the moneyed capitalist, and, if you please, the tax-gatherer.

Another consequence follows from what has been stated.

That part of the value of the commodity which represents only the value of the raw materials, the machinery, in one word, the value of the means of production used up, forms *no revenue* at all, but replaces *only capital*. But, apart from this, it is false that the other part of the value of the commodity *which forms revenue*, or may be spent in the form of wages, profits, rent, interest, is *constituted* by the value of wages, the value of rent, the value of profits, and so forth. We shall, in the first instance, discard wages, and only treat industrial profits, interest, and rent. We have just seen that the *surplus value* contained in the *commodity*, or that part of its value in which *unpaid labor* is realized, resolves itself into different fractions, bearing three different names.

But it would be quite the reverse of the truth to say that its value is *composed* of, or *formed* by, the *addition* of the *independent values of these three constituents*.

If one hour of labor realizes itself in a value of sixpence, if the working day of the laborer comprises twelve hours, if half of this time is unpaid labor, that surplus labor will add to the commodity a *surplus value* of three shillings, that is of value for which no equivalent has been paid. This surplus value of three shillings constitutes the *whole fund* which the employing capitalist may divide, in whatever proportions, with the landlord and the money-lender. The value of these three shillings constitutes the limit of the value they have to divide amongst them. But it is not the employing capitalist who adds to the value of the commodity an arbitrary value for his profit, to which another value is added for the landlord, and so forth, so that the addition of these arbitrarily fixed values would constitute the total value. You see, therefore, the fallacy of the popular notion, which confounds the *decomposition of a given value* into three parts, with the *formation* of that value by the addition of three *independent* values, thus converting the aggregate value, from which rent, profit, and interest are derived, into an arbitrary magnitude.

If the total profit realized by a capitalist is equal to 100 Pounds, we call this sum, considered as *absolute* magnitude, the *amount of profit*. But if we calculate the ratio which those 100 Pounds bear to the capital advanced,

we call this *relative* magnitude, the *rate of profit*. It is evident that this rate of profit may be expressed in a double way.

Suppose 100 Pounds to be the capital *advanced in wages*. If the surplus value created is also 100 Pounds — and this would show us that half the working day of the laborer consists of *unpaid* labor — and if we measured this profit by the value of the capital advanced in wages, we should say that the *rate of profit* amounted to one hundred percent, because the value advanced would be one hundred and the value realized would be two hundred.

If, on the other hand, we should not only consider the *capital advanced in wages*, but the *total capital* advanced, say, for example, 500 Pounds, of which 400 Pounds represented the value of raw materials, machinery, and so forth, we should say that the *rate of profit* amounted only to twenty percent, because the profit of one hundred would be but the fifth part of the *total* capital advanced.

The first mode of expressing the rate of profit is the only one which shows you the real ratio between paid and unpaid labor, the real degree of the *exploitation* (you must allow me this French word) *of labor*. The other mode of expression is that in common use, and is, indeed, appropriate for certain purposes. At all events, it is very useful for concealing the degree in which the capitalist extracts gratuitous labor from the workman.

In the remarks I have still to make I shall use the word *profit* for the whole amount of the surplus value extracted by the capitalist without any regard to the division of that surplus value between different parties, and in using the words *rate of profit*, I shall always measure profits by the value of the capital advanced in wages.

Chapter 12: General Relation of Profits, Wages, and Prices

Deduct from the value of a commodity the value replacing the value of the raw materials and other means of production used upon it, that is to say, deduct the value representing the *past* labor contained in it, and the remainder of its value will resolve into the quantity of labor added by the working man *last* employed. If that working man works twelve hours daily, if twelve hours of average labor crystallize themselves in an amount of gold equal to six shillings, this additional value of six shillings is the *only* value his labor will have created. This given value, determined by the time of his labor, is the only fund from which both he and the capitalist have to draw their respective shares or dividends, the only value to be divided into wages and profits. It is evident that this value itself will not be altered by the variable proportions in which it may be divided amongst the two parties. There will also be nothing changed if in the place of one working man you put the whole working population, twelve million working days, for example, instead of one.

Since the capitalist and workman have only to divide this limited value, that is, the value measured by the total labor of the working man, the more the one gets the less will the other get, and *vice versa*. Whenever a quantity is given, one part of it will increase inversely as the other decreases. If the wages change, profits will change in an opposite direction. If wages fall, profits will rise; and if wages rise, profits will fall. If the working man, on our former supposition, gets three shillings, equal to one half of the value he has created, or if his whole working day consists half of paid, half of unpaid labor, the *rate of profit* will be 100 percent, because the capitalist would also get three shillings. If the working man receives only two shillings, or works only one third of the whole day for himself, the capitalist will get four shillings, and the rate of profit will be 200 percent. If the working man receives four shillings, the capitalist will only receive two, and the rate of profit would sink to 50 percent, but all these variations will not affect the value of the commodity. A general rise of wages would, therefore, result in a fall of the general rate of profit, but not affect values.

But although the values of commodities, which must ultimately regulate their market prices, are exclusively determined by the total quantities of labor fixed in them, and not by the division of that quantity into paid and unpaid labor, it by no means follows that the values of the single commodities, or lots of commodities, produced during twelve hours, for example, will remain constant. The *number* or mass of commodities produced in a given time of labor, or by a given quantity of labor, depends upon the *productive power* of the labor employed, and not upon its *extent* or length. With one degree of the productive power of spinning labor, for example, a working day of twelve hours may produce twelve pounds of yarn, with a lesser degree of productive power only two pounds. If then twelve hours' average labor were realized in the value of six shillings in the one case, the twelve pounds of yarn would cost six shillings, in the other case the two pounds of yarn would also cost six shillings. One pound of yarn would, therefore, cost sixpence in the one case, and three shillings in the other. The difference of price would result from the difference in the productive powers of labor employed. One hour of labor would be realized in one pound of yarn with the greater productive power, while with the smaller productive power, six hours of labor would be realized in one pound of yarn. The price of a pound of yarn would, in the one instance, be only sixpence, although wages were relatively high and the rate of profit low; it would be three shillings in the other instance, although wages were low and the rate of profit high. This would be so because the price of the pound of yarn is regulated by the *total amount of labor worked up in it*, and not by the *proportional division of that total amount into paid and unpaid labor*. The fact I have mentioned before that high-price labor may produce cheap, and low-priced labor may produce dear commodities, loses, therefore, its paradoxical appearance. It is only the expression of the general law that the value of a commodity is regulated by the quantity of labor worked up in it, and the quantity of labor worked up in it depends altogether upon the productive powers of labor employed, and will therefore, vary with every variation in the productivity of labor.

Chapter 13: Main Cases of Attempts at Raising Wages or Resisting their Fall

Let us now seriously consider the main cases in which a rise of wages is attempted or a reduction of wages resisted.

1. We have seen that the *value of the laboring power*, or in more popular parlance, the *value of labor*, is determined by the value of necessaries, or the quantity of labor required to produce them.

If, then, in a given country the value of the daily average necessaries of the laborer represented six hours of labor expressed in three shillings, the laborer would have to work six hours daily to produce an equivalent for this daily maintenance. If the whole working day was twelve hours, the capitalist would pay him the value of his labor by paying him three shillings. Half the working day would be unpaid labor, and the rate of profit would amount to 100 percent. But now suppose that, consequent upon a decrease of productivity, more labor should be wanted to produce, say, the same amount of agricultural produce, so that the price of the average daily necessaries should rise from three to four shillings. In that case the *value* of labor would rise by one third, or 33.33 percent. Eight hours of the working day would be required to produce an equivalent for the daily maintenance of the laborer, according to his old standard of living. The surplus labor would therefore sink from six hours to four, and the rate of profit from 100 to 50 percent. But in insisting upon a rise of wages, the laborer would only insist upon getting the *increased value of his labor*, like every other seller of a commodity, who, the costs of his commodities having increased, tries to get its increased value paid. If wages did not rise, or not sufficiently rise, to compensate for the

increased values of necessaries, the *price* of labor would sink below the *value of labor*, and the laborer's standard of life would deteriorate.

But a change might also take place in an opposite direction. By virtue of the increased productivity of labor, the same amount of the average daily necessaries might sink from three to two shillings, or only four hours out of the working day, instead of six, be wanted to reproduce an equivalent for the value of the daily necessaries. The working man would now be able to buy with two shillings as many necessaries as he did before with three shillings. Indeed, the *value of labor* would have sunk, but diminished value would command the same amount of commodities as before. Then profits would rise from three to four shillings, and the rate of profit from 100 to 200 percent. Although the laborer's absolute standard of life would have remained the same, his *relative* wages, and therewith his relative social position, as compared with that of the capitalist, would have been lowered. If the working man should resist that reduction of relative wages, he would only try to get some share in the increased productive powers of his own labor, and to maintain his former relative position in the social scale. Thus, after the abolition of the Corn Laws, and in flagrant violation of the most solemn pledges given during the anti-corn law agitation, the English factory lords generally reduced wages ten percent. The resistance of the workmen was at first baffled, but consequent upon circumstances I cannot now enter upon, the ten percent lost were afterwards regained.

2. The *values* of necessaries, and consequently the *value of labor*, might remain the same, but a change might occur in their *money prices*, consequent upon a previous change in the *value of money*. By the discovery of more fertile mines and so forth, two ounces of gold might, for example, cost no more labor to produce than one ounce did before. The *value* of gold would then be depreciated by one half, or fifty percent. As the *values* of all other commodities would then be expressed in twice their former *money prices*, so also the same with the *value of labor*. Twelve hours of labor, formerly expressed in six shillings, would now be expressed in twelve shillings. If the working man's wages should remain three shillings, instead of rising to six shillings, the *money price of his labor* would only be equal to *half the value of his labor*, and his standard of life would fearfully deteriorate. This would also happen in a greater or lesser degree if his wages should rise, but not proportionately to the fall in the value of gold. In such a case nothing would have been changed, either in the productive powers of labor, or in supply and demand, or in values.

Nothing would have changed except the money *names* of those values. To say that in such a case the workman ought not to insist upon a proportionate rise of wages, is to say that he must be content to be paid with names, instead of with things. All past history proves that whenever such a depreciation of money occurs, the capitalists are on the alert to seize this opportunity for defrauding the workman. A very large school of political economists assert that, consequent upon the new discoveries of gold lands, the better working of silver mines, and the cheaper supply of quicksilver, the value of precious metals has again depreciated. This would explain the general and simultaneous attempts on the Continent at a rise of wages.

3. We have till now supposed that the *working day* has given limits. The working day, however, has, by itself, no constant limits. It is the constant tendency of capital to stretch it to its utmost physically possible length, because in the same degree surplus labor, and consequently the profit resulting therefrom, will be increased. The more capital succeeds in prolonging the working day, the greater the amount of other peoples' labor it will appropriate.

During the seventeenth and even the first two thirds of the eighteenth century a ten hours' working day was the normal working day all over England. During the anti-Jacobin war, which was in fact a war waged by the British barons against the British working masses, capital celebrated its bacchanalia, and prolonged the working day from ten to twelve, fourteen, eighteen hours. Malthus, by no means a man whom you would suspect of a maudlin sentimentalism declared in a pamphlet, published about 1815, that if this sort of thing was to go on the life of the nation would be attacked at its very source. A few years before the general introduction of newly-invented machinery, about 1765, a pamphlet appeared in England under the title, *An Essay On Trade*. The anonymous author, an avowed enemy of the working classes, declaims on the necessity of expanding the limits of the working day. Amongst other means to this end, he proposes *working houses*, which, he says, ought to be "Houses of Terror." And what is the length of the working he prescribes for these "Houses of Terror"? *Twelve hours*, the very same time which in 1832 was declared by capitalists, political economists, and ministers to be not only the existing but the necessary time of labor for a child under twelve years.

By selling his laboring power, and he must do so under the present system, the working man makes over to the capitalist the consumption of that power, but within certain rational limits. He sells his laboring power in order to maintain it, apart from its natural wear-and-tear, but not to destroy it. In selling his laboring power at its daily or weekly value, it is understood that in one day or one week that laboring power shall not be submitted to two days' or two weeks' waste or wear-and-tear. Take a machine worth 1000 Pounds. If it is used up in ten years it will add to the value of the commodities in whose production it assists 100 Pounds yearly. If it is used up in five years it will add 200 Pounds yearly, or the value of its annual wear-and-tear is in inverse ratio to the quickness with which it is consumed. But this distinguishes the working man from the machine. Machinery does not wear out exactly in the same ratio in which it is used. Man, on the contrary, decays in a greater ratio than would be visible from the mere numerical addition of work.

In their attempts at reducing the working day to its former rational dimensions, or, where they cannot enforce a legal fixation of a normal working day, at checking overwork by a rise of wages, a rise not only in proportion to the surplus time exacted, but in a greater proportion, working men fulfill only a duty to themselves and their race. They only set limits to the tyrannical usurpations of capital. Time is the room of human development. A man who has no free time to dispose of, whose whole lifetime, apart from the mere physical interruptions by sleep, meals, and so forth, is absorbed by his labor for the capitalist, is less than a beast of burden. He is a mere machine for producing Foreign Wealth, broken in body and brutalized in mind. Yet the whole history of modern industry shows that capital, if not checked, will recklessly and ruthlessly work to cast down the whole working class to this utmost state of degradation.

In prolonging the working day, the capitalist may pay *higher wages* and still lower the *value of labor*, if the rise of wages does not correspond to the greater amount of labor extracted, and the quicker decay of the laboring power thus caused. This may be done in another way. Your middle-class statisticians will tell you, for instance, that the average wages of factory families in Lancashire has risen. They forget that instead of the labor of the man, the head of the family, his wife and perhaps three or four children are now thrown under the Juggernaut wheels of capital, and that the rise of the aggregate wages does not correspond to the aggregate surplus labor extracted from the family.

Even with given limits of the working day, such as they now exist in all branches of industry subjected to the factory laws, a rise of wages may become necessary, if only to keep up the old standard *value of labor*. By

increasing the *intensity* of labor, a man may be made to expend as much vital force in one hour as he formerly did in two. This has, to a certain degree, been effected in the trades, placed under the Factory Acts, by the acceleration of machinery, and the greater number of working machines which a single individual has now to superintend. If the increase in the intensity of labor or the mass of labor spent in an hour keeps some fair proportion to the decrease in the extent of the working day, the working man will still be the winner. If this limit is overshot, he loses in one form what he has gained in another, and ten hours of labor may then become as ruinous as twelve hours were before. In checking this tendency of capital, by struggling for a rise of wages corresponding to the rising intensity of labor, the working man only resists the depreciation of his labor and the deterioration of his race.

4. All of you know that, from reasons I have not now to explain, capitalistic production moves through certain periodical cycles. It moves through a state of quiescence, growing animation, prosperity, overtrade, crisis, and stagnation. The market prices of commodities, and the market rates of profit, follow these phases, now sinking below their averages, now rising above them.

Considering the whole cycle, you will find that one deviation of the market price is being compensated by the other, and that, taking the average of the cycle, the market prices of commodities are regulated by their values. Well! During the phases of sinking market prices and the phases of crisis and stagnation, the working man, if not thrown out of employment altogether, is sure to have his wages lowered. Not to be defrauded, he must, even with such a fall of market prices, debate with the capitalist in what proportional degree a fall of wages has become necessary. If, during the phases of prosperity, when extra profits are made, he did not battle for a rise of wages, he would, taking the average of one industrial cycle, not even receive his *average wages*, or the *value* of his labor. It is the utmost height of folly to demand, that while his wages are necessarily affected by the adverse phases of the cycle, he should exclude himself from compensation during the prosperous phases of the cycle. Generally, the *values* of all commodities are only realized by the compensation of the continuously changing market prices, springing from the continuous fluctuations of demand and supply. On the basis of the present system labor is only a commodity like others. It must, therefore, pass through the same fluctuations to fetch an average price corresponding to its value.

It would be absurd to treat it on the one hand as a commodity, and to want on the other hand to exempt it from the laws which regulate the prices of commodities. The slave receives a permanent and fixed amount of maintenance; the wage-laborer does not. He must try to get a rise of wages in the one instance, if only to compensate for a fall of wages in the other. If he resigned himself to accept the will, the dictates of the capitalist as a permanent economical law, he would share in all the miseries of the slave, without the security of the slave.

5. In all the cases I have considered, and they form ninety-nine out of a hundred, you have seen that a struggle for a rise of wages follows only in the track of *previous* changes, and is the necessary offspring of previous changes in the amount of production, the productive powers of labor, the value of labor, the value of money, the extent or the intensity of labor extracted, the fluctuations of market prices, dependent upon the fluctuations of demand and supply, and consistent with the different phases of the industrial cycle; in one word, as reactions of labor against the previous action of capital. By treating the struggle for a rise of wages independently of all these circumstances, by looking only upon the change of wages, and overlooking all other changes from which they emanate, you proceed from a false premise in order to arrive at false conclusions.

Chapter 14: The Struggle Between Capital and Labor and its Results

1. Having shown that the periodical resistance on the part of the working men against a reduction of wages, and their periodical attempts at getting a rise of wages, are inseparable from the wages system, and dictated by the very fact of labor being assimilated to commodities, and therefore subject to the laws, regulating the general movement of prices; having furthermore, shown that a general rise of wages would result in a fall in the general rate of profit, but not affect the average prices of commodities, or their values, the question now ultimately arises, how far, in this incessant struggle between capital and labor, the latter is likely to prove successful.

I might answer by a generalization, and say that, as with all other commodities, so with labor, its *market price* will, in the long run, adapt itself to its *value*; that, therefore, despite all the ups and downs, and do what he may, the working man will, on an average, only receive the value of his labor, which resolves into the value of his laboring power, which is determined by the value of the necessaries required for its maintenance and reproduction, which value of necessaries finally is regulated by the quantity of labor wanted to produce them.

But there are some peculiar features which distinguish the *value of the laboring power, or the value of labor*, from the values of all other commodities. The value of the laboring power is formed by two elements—the one merely physical, the other historical or social. Its *ultimate limit* is determined by the *physical* element, that is to say, to maintain and reproduce itself, to perpetuate its physical existence, the working class must receive the necessaries absolutely indispensable for living and multiplying. The *value* of those indispensable necessaries forms, therefore, the ultimate limit of the *value of labor*. On the other hand, the length of the working day is also limited by ultimate, although very elastic boundaries. Its ultimate limit is given by the physical force of the laboring man. If the daily exhaustion of his vital forces exceeds a certain degree, it cannot be exerted anew, day by day.

However, as I said, this limit is very elastic. A quick succession of unhealthy and short-lived generations will keep the labor market as well supplied as a series of vigorous and long-lived generations. Besides this mere physical element, the value of labor is in every country determined by a *traditional standard of life*. It is not mere physical life, but it is the satisfaction of certain wants springing from the social conditions in which people are placed and reared up. The English standard of life may be reduced to the Irish standard; the standard of life of a German peasant to that of a Livonian peasant. The important part which historical tradition and social habitude play in this respect, you may learn from Mr. Thornton's work on *over-population*, where he shows that the average wages in different agricultural districts of England still nowadays differ more or less according to the more or less favorable circumstances under which the districts have emerged from the state of serfdom.

This historical or social element, entering into the value of labor, may be expanded, or contracted, or altogether extinguished, so that nothing remains but the *physical limit*. During the time of the anti-Jacobin war, undertaken, as the incorrigible tax-eater and sinecurist, old George Rose, used to say, to save the comforts of our holy religion from the inroads of the French infidels, the honest English farmers, so tenderly handled in a former chapter of ours, depressed the wages of the agricultural laborers even beneath that *mere physical minimum*, but made up by Poor Laws the remainder necessary for the physical perpetuation of the race. This was a glorious way to convert the wages laborer into a slave, and Shakespeare's proud yeoman into a pauper.

By comparing the standard wages or values of labor in different countries, and by comparing them in different historical epochs of the same country, you will find that the *value of labor* itself is not a fixed but a variable magnitude, even supposing the values of all other commodities to remain constant.

A similar comparison would prove that not only the *market rates* of profit change, but its *average* rates.

But as to *profits*, there exists no law which determines their *minimum*. We cannot say what is the ultimate limit of their decrease. And why cannot we fix that limit? Because, although we can fix the *minimum* of wages, we cannot fix their *maximum*.

We can only say that, the limits of the working day being given, the *maximum of profit* corresponds to the *physical minimum of wages*; and that wages being given, the *maximum of profit* corresponds to such a prolongation of the working day as is compatible with the physical forces of the laborer. The maximum of profit is therefore limited by the physical minimum of wages and the physical maximum of the working day. It is evident that between the two limits of the *maximum rate of profit* an immense scale of variations is possible. The fixation of its actual degree is only settled by the continuous struggle between capital and labor, the capitalist constantly tending to reduce wages to their physical minimum, and to extend the working day to its physical maximum, while the working man constantly presses in the opposite direction.

The matter resolves itself into a question of the respective powers of the combatants.

2. As to the *limitation of the working day* in England, as in all other countries, it has never been settled except by *legislative interference*. Without the working men's continuous pressure from without that interference would never have taken place. But at all events, the result was not to be attained by private settlement between the working men and the capitalists. This very necessity of *general political action* affords the proof that in its merely economical action capital is the stronger side.

As to the *limits* of the *value of labor*, its actual settlement always depends upon supply and demand, I mean the demand for labor on the part of capital, and the supply of labor by the working men. In colonial countries the law of supply and demand favors the working man. Hence the relatively high standard of wages in the United States. Capital may there try its utmost. It cannot prevent the labor market from being continuously emptied by the continuous conversion of wages laborers into independent, self-sustaining peasants. The position of a wages laborer is for a very large part of the American people but a probational state, which they are sure to leave within a longer or shorter term. To mend this colonial state of things the paternal British Government accepted for some time what is called the modern colonization theory, which consists in putting an artificial high price upon colonial land, in order to prevent the too quick conversion of the wages laborer into the independent peasant.

But let us now come to old civilized countries, in which capital domineers over the whole process of production. Take, for example, the rise in England of agricultural wages from 1849 to 1859. What was its consequence? The farmers could not, as our friend Weston would have advised them, raise the value of wheat, nor even its market prices. They had, on the contrary, to submit to their fall. But during these eleven years they introduced machinery of all sorts, adopted more scientific methods, converted part of arable land into pasture, increased the size of farms, and with this the scale of production, and by these and other processes diminishing the demand for labor by increasing its productive power, made the agricultural population again relatively redundant. This is the general method in which a reaction, quicker or slower, of capital against a rise of wages takes place in old, settled countries. Ricardo has justly remarked that machinery is in constant competition with labor, and can often be only introduced when the price of labor has reached a certain height, but the appliance of machinery is but one of the many methods for increasing the productive powers of labor. The very same development which makes common labor relatively redundant simplifies, on the other hand, skilled labor, and thus depreciates it.

The same law obtains in another form. With the development of the productive powers of labor the accumulation of capital will be accelerated, even despite a relatively high rate of wages. Hence, one might infer, as Adam Smith, in whose days modern industry was still in its infancy, did infer, that the accelerated accumulation of capital must turn the balance in favor of the working man, by securing a growing demand for his labor. From this same standpoint many contemporary writers have wondered that English capital having grown in that last twenty years so much quicker than English population, wages should not have been more enhanced. But simultaneously with the progress of accumulation there takes place a *progressive change in the composition of capital*. That part of the aggregate capital which consists of fixed capital, machinery, raw materials, means of production in all possible forms, progressively increases as compared with the other part of capital, which is laid out in wages or in the purchase of labor. This law has been stated in a more or less accurate manner by Mr. Barton, Ricardo, Sismondi, Professor Richard Jones, Professor Ramsey, Cherbuilliez, and others.

If the proportion of these two elements of capital was originally one to one, it will, in the progress of industry, become five to one, and so forth. If of a total capital of 600, 300 is laid out in instruments, raw materials, and so forth, and 300 in wages, the total capital wants only to be doubled to create a demand for 600 working men instead of for 300. But if of a capital of 600, 500 is laid out in machinery, materials, and so forth and 100 only in wages, the same capital must increase from 600 to 3,600 in order to create a demand for 600 workmen instead of 300. In the progress of industry, the demand for labor keeps, therefore, no pace with the accumulation of capital. It will still increase, but increase in a constantly diminishing ratio as compared with the increase of capital.

These few hints will suffice to show that the very development of modern industry must progressively turn the scale in favor of the capitalist against the working man, and that consequently the general tendency of capitalistic production is not to raise, but to sink the average standard of wages, or to push the *value of labor* more or less to its *minimum limit*. Such being the tendency of *things* in this system, is this saying that the working class ought to renounce their resistance against the encroachments of capital, and abandon their attempts at making the best of the occasional chances for their temporary improvement? If they did, they would be degraded to one level mass of broken wretches past salvation. I think I have shown that their struggles for the standard of wages are incidents inseparable from the whole wages system, that in 99 cases out of 100 their efforts at raising wages are only efforts at maintaining the given value of labor, and that the necessity of debating their price with the capitalist is inherent to their condition of having to sell themselves as commodities. By cowardly giving way in their everyday conflict with capital, they would certainly disqualify themselves for the initiating of any larger movement.

At the same time, and quite apart from the general servitude involved in the wages system, the working class ought not to exaggerate to themselves the ultimate working of these everyday struggles. They ought not to forget that they are fighting with effects, but not with the causes of those effects; that they are retarding the downward movement, but not changing its direction; that they are applying palliatives, not curing the malady. They ought, therefore, not to be exclusively absorbed in these unavoidable guerilla fights incessantly springing up from the never ceasing encroachments of capital or changes of the market. They ought to understand that, with all the miseries it imposes upon them, the present system simultaneously engenders the *material conditions* and the *social forms* necessary for an economical reconstruction of society. Instead of the *conservative* motto: "*A fair day's wage for a fair day's work!*" they ought to inscribe on their banner the *revolutionary* watchword: "*Abolition of the wages system!*"

After this very long and, I fear, tedious exposition, which I was obliged to enter into to do some justice to the subject matter, I shall conclude by proposing the following resolutions:

Firstly. A general rise in the rate of wages would result in a fall of the general rate of profit, but broadly speaking, not affect the prices of commodities.

Secondly. The general tendency of capitalist production is not to raise, but to sink the average standard of wages.

Thirdly. Trades Unions work well as centers of resistance against the encroachments of capital. They fail partially from an injudicious use of their power. They fail generally from limiting themselves to a guerilla war against the effects of the existing system, instead of simultaneously trying to change it, instead of using their organized forces as a lever for the final emancipation of the working class that is to say the ultimate abolition of the wages system.