MARX
ENGELS
LENIN

On Communist Society

PROGRESS Publishers

Workers of All Countries, Unite !

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LENIN

On Communist Society

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From THE HOLY FAMILY

There is no need for any great penetration to see from the teaching of materialism on the original goodness and equal intellectual endowment of men, the omnipotence of experience, habit and education, and the influence of environment on man, the great significance of industry, the justification of enjoyment, etc., how necessarily materialism is connected with communism and socialism. If man draws all his knowledge, sensation, etc., from the world of the senses and the experience gained in it, then what has to be done is to arrange the empirical world in such a way that man experiences and becomes accustomed to what is truly human in it and that he becomes aware of himself as man. If correctly understood interest is the principle of all morality, man's private interest must be made to coincide with the interest of humanity. If man is unfree in the materialistic sense, i.e., is free not through the negative power to avoid this or that, but through the positive power to assert his true individuality, crime must not be punished in the individual, but the anti-social sources of crime must be destroyed, and each man must be given social scope for the vital manifestation of his being. If man is shaped by environment, his environment must be made human. If man is social by nature, he will develop his true nature only in society, and the power of his nature must be measured not by the power of the separate individual but by the power of society.

Written in September-November 1844

Karl Marx,
Frederick Engels,
Collected Works, Vol. 4,
pp. 130-31

FREDERICK ENGELS

From SPEECHES IN ELBERFELD

In communist society, where the interests of individuals are not opposed to one another but, on the contrary, are united, competition is eliminated. As is self-evident, there can no longer be any question of the ruin of particular classes, nor of the very existence of classes such as the rich and the poor nowadays. As soon as private gain, the aim of the individual to enrich himself on his own, disappears from the production and distribution of the goods necessary to life, trade crises will also disappear of themselves. In communist society it will be easy to be informed about both production and consumption. Since we know how much, on the average, a person needs, it is easy to calculate how much is needed by a given number of individuals, and since production is no longer in the hands of private producers but in those of the community and its administrative bodies, it is a trifling matter *to regulate production according to needs.*

Thus we see how the main evils of the present social situation disappear under communist organisation. If, however, we go into a little more detail, we will find that the advantages of such a social organisation are not limited to this but also include the elimination of a host of other defects. I shall only touch today on a few of the economic drawbacks. From the economic point of view the present arrangement of society is surely the most irrational and unpractical we can possibly conceive. The opposition of interests results in a great amount of labour power being utilised in a way from which society gains nothing, and in a substantial amount of capital being unnecessarily lost without reproducing itself. We already see this in the commercial crises; we see how masses of goods, all of which men have produced with great effort, are thrown away at prices which cause loss to the

sellers; we see how masses of capital, accumulated with great effort, disappear before the very eyes of their owners as a result of bankruptcies. Let us, however, discuss present-day trade in a little more detail. Consider through how many hands every product must go before it reaches the actual consumer. Consider, gentlemen, how many speculating, swindling superfluous middlemen have now forced themselves in between the producer and the consumer! Let us take, for example, a bale of cotton produced in North America. The bale passes from the hands of the planter into those of the agent on some station or other on the Mississippi and travels down the river to New Orleans. Here it is sold—for a second time, for the agent has already bought it from the planter—sold, it might well be, to the speculator, who sells it once again, to the exporter. The bale now travels to Liverpool where, once again, a greedy speculator stretches out his hands towards it and grabs it. This man then trades it to a commission agent who, let us assume, is a buyer for a German house. So the bale travels to Rotterdam, up the Rhine, through another dozen hands of forwarding agents, being unloaded and loaded a dozen times, and only then does it arrive in the hands, not of the consumer, but of the manufacturer, who first makes it into an article of consumption, and who perhaps sells his yarn to a weaver, who disposes of what he has woven to the textile printer, who then does business with the wholesaler, who then deals with the retailer, who finally sells the commodity to the consumer. And all these millions of intermediary swindlers, speculators, agents, exporters, commission agents, forwarding agents, wholesalers and retailers, who actually contribute nothing to the commodity itself—they all want to live and make a profit—and they do make it too, on the average, otherwise they could not subsist. Gentlemen, is there no simpler, cheaper way of bringing a bale of cotton from America to Germany and of getting the product manufactured from it into the hands of the real consumer than this complicated business of ten times selling and a hundred times loading, unloading and transporting it from one warehouse to another? Is this not a striking example of the manifold waste of labour power brought about by the divergence of interests? Such a complicated way of transport is out of the question in a rationally organised society. To keep to our example, just as one can easily know how much cotton or manufactured cotton goods an individual colony needs, it will be equally easy for the central authority to determine

how much all the villages and townships in the country need. Once such statistics have been worked out—which can easily be done in a year or two—average annual consumption will only change in proportion to the increasing population; it is therefore easy at the appropriate time to determine in advance what amount of each particular article the people will need—the entire great amount will be ordered direct from the source of supply; it will then be possible to procure it directly, without middlemen, without more delay and unloading than is really required by the nature of the journey, that is, with a great saving of labour power; it will not be necessary to pay the speculators, the dealers large and small, their rake-off. But this is still not all—in this way these middlemen are not only made harmless to society, they are, in fact, made useful to it. Whereas they now perform to the disadvantage of everyone else a kind of work which is, at best, superfluous but which, nevertheless, provides them with a living, indeed, in many cases even with great riches, whereas they are thus at present directly prejudicial to the general good, they will then become free to engage in useful labour and to take up an occupation in which they can prove themselves as actual members, not merely apparent, sham members, of human society, and as participants in its activity as a whole.

Present-day society, which breeds hostility between the individual man and everyone else, thus produces a social war of all against all which inevitably in individual cases, notably among uneducated people, assumes a brutal, barbarously violent form—that of crime. In order to protect itself against crime, against direct acts of violence, society requires an extensive, complicated system of administrative and judicial bodies which requires an immense labour force. In communist society this would likewise be vastly simplified, and precisely because—strange though it may sound—precisely because the administrative body in this society would have to manage not merely individual aspects of social life, but the whole of social life, in all its various activities, in all its aspects. We eliminate the contradiction between the individual man and all others, we counterpose social peace to social war, we put the axe to the *root* of crime—and thereby render the greatest, by far the greatest, part of the present activity of the administrative and judicial bodies superfluous. Even now crimes of passion are becoming fewer and fewer in comparison with calculated crimes, crimes of

interest—crimes against *persons* are declining, crimes against *property* are on the increase. Advancing civilisation moderates violent outbreaks of passion even in our present-day society, which is on a war footing; how much more will this be the case in communist, peaceful society! Crimes against property cease of their own accord where everyone receives what he needs to satisfy his natural and his spiritual urges, where social gradations and distinctions cease to exist. Justice concerned with criminal cases ceases of itself, that dealing with civil cases, which are almost all rooted in the property relations or at least in such relations as arise from the situation of social war, likewise disappears; conflicts can then be only rare exceptions, whereas they are now the natural result of general hostility, and will be easily settled by arbitrators. The activities of the administrative bodies at present have likewise their source in the continual social war—the police and the entire administration do nothing else but see to it that the war remains concealed and indirect and does not erupt into open violence, into crimes. But if it is infinitely easier to maintain peace than to keep war within certain limits, so it is vastly more easy to administer a communist community rather than a competitive one. And if civilisation has already taught men to seek their interest in the maintenance of public order, public security, and the public interest, and therefore to make the police, administration and justice as superfluous as possible, how much more will this be the case in a society in which community of interests has become the basic principle, and in which the public interest is no longer distinct from that of each individual! What already exists now, *in spite of* the social organisation, how much more will it exist when it is no longer hindered, but supported by the social institutions! We may thus also in this regard count on a considerable increase in the labour force through that part of the labour force of which society is deprived by the present social condition.

One of the most expensive institutions which present-day society cannot dispense with are the standing armies, by which the nation is deprived of the most vigorous and useful section of the population and compelled to feed it since it thereby becomes unproductive. We know from our own budget what the standing army costs—twenty-four million a year and the withdrawal from production of twice one hundred thousand of the most muscular arms. In communist society it would not occur to anyone to have a standing army. What for, anyhow? To maintain peace in the

country? As we saw above, it will not occur to anyone to disturb internal peace. Fear of revolutions is, of course, the consequence only of the opposition of interests; where the interests of all coincide, such fears are out of the question.—For aggressive wars? But how could a communist society conceive the idea of undertaking an aggressive war?—this society which is perfectly well aware that in war it will only lose men and capital while the most it could gain would be a couple of recalcitrant provinces, which would as a consequence be disruptive of social order.—For a war of defence? For that there is no need of a standing army, as it will be easy to train every fit member of society, in addition to his other occupations, in real, not barrack-square handling of arms to the degree necessary for the defence of the country. And, gentlemen, consider this, that in the event of a war, which anyway could *only be waged against anti-communist* nations, the member of such a society has a *real* Fatherland, a *real* hearth and home to defend, so that he will fight with an enthusiasm, endurance and bravery before which the mechanically trained soldiers of a modern army must be scattered like chaff. Consider what wonders were worked by the enthusiasm of the revolutionary armies from 1792 to 1799,* which only fought for an *illusion,* for the *semblance of a Fatherland,* and you will be bound to realise how powerful an army must be which fights, not for an illusion, but for a tangible reality. Thus these immense masses of labour power of which the civilised nations are now deprived by the armies, would be returned to labour in a communist society; they would not only produce as much as they consume, but would be able to supply to the public store-houses a great many more products than those necessary for their own sustenance.

An even worse wastage of labour power is to be seen in our existing society in the way the rich exploit their social position. I will say nothing of all the useless and quite ridiculous luxury which arises only from the passion for display and occupies a great deal of labour power. But, gentlemen, just go into the house, the inmost sanctuary, of a rich man and tell me if it is not the most senseless waste of labour power when you have a number of people waiting on one single individual, spending their time in

* This refers to the wars waged by revolutionary France against the coalition of reactionary European states aimed at liquidating the achievements of the French bourgeois revolution of 1789-94.—*Ed.*

idleness or, at best, in work which results from the isolation of a single man inside his own four walls? This crowd of maids, cooks, lackeys, coachmen, domestic servants, gardeners and whatever they are called, what do they really do? For how *few moments* during the day they are occupied in making the lives of their masters *really* pleasant, in facilitating the free development and exercise of their human nature and inborn capacities—and *how many hours* during the day they are occupied in tasks which arise only from the bad arrangement of our social relations—standing at the back of the carriage, serving their employers' every whim, carrying lap-dogs, and other absurdities. In a rationally organised society, where everyone will be in a position to live without pandering to the whims of the rich and without lapsing into any such whims himself—in such a society, the labour power now thus wasted on the provision of luxury can naturally be used to the advantage of all and to its own.

A further waste of labour power occurs in our present society quite directly as a result of competition, for this creates a large number of destitute workers who *would* gladly work, but *cannot* get any work. Since society is not by any means arranged so as to be able to pay attention to the real utilisation of the labour force, since it is left to every individual to look for a source of gain, it is quite natural that when really or apparently useful work is being distributed, a number of workers are left without any. This is all the more the case as the competitive struggle compels everyone to strain his power to the utmost, to utilise all available advantages, to replace dearer labour by cheaper for which advancing civilisation provides more and more means or, in other words, everyone has to work at making others destitute, at displacing other people's labour by one means or another. Thus in every civilised society there are large numbers of unemployed people who would gladly work but cannot find work and their number is larger than is commonly believed. And so we find these people *prostituting* themselves in one way or another, begging, sweeping the streets, standing on corners, only barely keeping body and soul together by occasional small jobs, hawking and peddling all manner of petty wares or, as we saw a couple of poor girls doing this evening, going from place to place with a guitar, playing and singing for money, compelled to put up with all kinds of shameless talk, every insulting suggestion in order to earn a couple of *groschen.* How many finally fall victims to *real* prostitution! Gentlemen, the

number of these destitute people who have no other course open but to prostitute themselves in one way or another is very large—our Poor Relief authorities can tell you all about this—and don't forget that society nevertheless feeds these people in one way or another despite their uselessness. If, then, society has to bear the cost of their maintenance, it should also make it possible for these unemployed to earn their keep *honourably*. But the present competitive society *cannot* do this.

If you think about all this, gentlemen—and I could have given you many other examples of how our present society wastes its labour force—if you think about this, you will find that human society has an abundance of productive forces at its disposal which only await a rational organisation, regulated distribution, in order to go into operation to the greatest benefit for all. After this you will be able to judge how totally unfounded is the fear that, given a just distribution of social activity, individuals would have to bear such a load of labour as would make it impossible for them to engage in anything else. On the contrary, we can assume that given this kind of organisation, the present customary labour time of the individual will be reduced by half simply by making use of the labour which is either not used at all or used disadvantageously.

However, the benefits which communist organisation offers through the *utilisation of wasted labour power* are *not yet the most significant*. The greatest saving of labour power lies in the *fusing of the individual powers* into social, collective power and in the kind of organisation which is based on this concentration of powers hitherto opposed to one another.

Delivered on February 8,1845

Karl Marx,
Frederick Engels,
Collected Works, Vol. 4,
pp. 246-52

FREDERICK ENGELS

From PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNISM

Question 14: What kind of new social order will this have to be?

Answer: Above all, it will have to take the running of industry and all branches of production in general out of the hands of separate individuals competing with each other and instead will have to ensure that all these branches of production are run by society as a whole, i.e., for the social good, according to a social plan and with the participation of all members of society. It will therefore do away with competition and replace it by association. Since the running of industry by individuals had private ownership as its necessary consequence and since competition is nothing but the manner in which industry is run by individual private owners, private ownership cannot be separated from the individual running of industry and competition. Hence, private ownership will also have to be abolished, and in its stead there will be common use of all the instruments of production and the distribution of all products by common agreement, or the so-called community of property. The abolition of private ownership is indeed the most succinct and characteristic summary of the transformation of the entire social system necessarily following from the development of industry, and it is therefore rightly put forward by the Communists as their main demand.

Question 20: What will be the consequences of the final abolition of private ownership?

Answer: Above all, through society's taking out of the hands of the private capitalists the use of all the productive forces and means of communication as well as the exchange and distribution of products and managing them according to a plan corresponding to the means available and the needs of the whole of

society, all the evil consequences of the present running of large-scale industry will be done away with. There will be an end of crises; the extended production, which under the present system of society means overproduction and is such a great cause of misery, will then not even be adequate and will have to be expanded much further. Instead of creating misery, overproduction beyond the immediate needs of society will mean the satisfaction of the needs of all, create new needs and at the same time the means to satisfy them. It will be the condition and the cause of new advances, and it will achieve these advances without thereby, as always hitherto, bringing the order of society into confusion. Once liberated from the pressure of private ownership, large-scale industry will develop on a scale that will make its present level of development seem as paltry as seems the manufacturing system compared with the large-scale industry of our time. This development of industry will provide society with a sufficient quantity of products to satisfy the needs of all. Similarly agriculture, which is also hindered by the pressure of private ownership and the parcelling of land from introducing the improvements already available and scientific advancements, will be given a quite new impulse, and place at society's disposal an ample quantity of products. Thus society will produce enough products to be able so to arrange distribution that the needs of all its members will be satisfied. The division of society into various antagonistic classes will thereby become superfluous. Not only will it become superfluous, it is even incompatible with the new social order. Classes came into existence through the division of labour and the division of labour in its hitherto existing form will entirely disappear. For in order to bring industrial and agricultural production to the level described, mechanical and chemical aids alone are not enough; the abilities of the people who set these aids in motion must also be developed to a corresponding degree. Just as in the last century the peasants and the manufactory workers changed their entire way of life, and themselves became quite different people when they were drawn into large-scale industry, so also will the common management of production by the whole of society and the resulting new development of production require and also produce quite different people. The common management of production cannot be effected by people as they are today, each one being assigned to a single branch of production, shackled to it, exploited by it, each having developed only *one* of

his abilities at the cost of all the others and knowing only *one* branch, or only a branch of a branch of the total production. Even present-day industry finds less and less use for such people. Industry carried on in common and according to plan by the whole of society presupposes moreover people of all-round development, capable of surveying the entire system of production. Thus the division of labour making one man a peasant, another a shoemaker, a third a factory worker, a fourth a stockjobber, which has already been undermined by machines, will completely disappear. Education will enable young people quickly to go through the whole system of production, it will enable them to pass from one branch of industry to another according to the needs of society or their own inclinations. It will therefore free them from that one-sidedness which the present division of labour stamps on each one of them. Thus the communist organisation of society will give its members the chance of an all-round exercise of abilities that have received all-round development. With this, the various classes will necessarily disappear. Thus the communist organisation of society is, on the one hand, incompatible with the existence of classes and, on the other, the very establishment of this society furnishes the means to do away with these class differences.

It follows from this that the antagonism between town and country will likewise disappear. The carrying on of agriculture and industrial production by the same people, instead of by two different classes, is already for purely material reasons an essential condition of communist association. The scattering of the agricultural population over the countryside, along with the crowding of the industrial population into the big towns, is a state which corresponds only to an undeveloped stage of agriculture and industry, an obstacle to all further development which is already now making itself very keenly felt.

The general association of all members of society for the common and planned exploitation of the productive forces, the expansion of production to a degree where it will satisfy the needs of all, the termination of the condition where the needs of some are satisfied at the expense of others, the complete annihilation of classes and their antagonisms, the all-round development of the abilities of all the members of society through doing away with the hitherto existing division of labour, through industrial education, through change of activity, through the participation of all in

the enjoyments provided by all, through the merging of town and country—such are the main results of the abolition of private property.

Question 21: What influence will the communist order of society have upon the family?

Answer: It will make the relation between the sexes a purely private relation which concerns only the persons involved, and in which society has no call to interfere. It is able to do this because it abolishes private property and educates children communally, thus destroying the twin foundation of hitherto existing marriage—the dependence through private property of the wife upon the husband and of the children upon the parents. Here also is the answer to the outcry of moralising philistines against the communist community of women. Community of women is a relationship that belongs altogether to bourgeois society and is completely realised today in prostitution. But prostitution is rooted in private property and falls with it. Thus instead of introducing the community of women, communist organisation puts an end to it.

Written at the end of
October-November 1847

Karl Marx,
Frederick Engels,
Collected Works, Vol. 6,
pp. 348, 352-54

KARL MARX AND FREDERICK ENGELS

From MANIFESTO OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

II

PROLETARIANS AND COMMUNISTS

In what relation do the Communists stand to the proletarians as a whole?

The Communists do not form a separate party opposed to other working-class parties.

They have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole.

They do not set up any sectarian principles of their own, by which to shape and mould the proletarian movement.

The Communists are distinguished from the other working-class parties by this only: 1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality. 2. In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole.

The Communists, therefore, are on the one hand, practically, the most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties of every country, that section which pushes forward all others; on the other hand, theoretically, they have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement.

The immediate aim of the Communists is the same as that of all the other proletarian parties: formation of the proletariat into a class, overthrow of the bourgeois supremacy, conquest of political power by the proletariat.

The theoretical conclusions of the Communists are in no way

based on ideas or principles that have been invented, or discovered, by this or that would-be universal reformer.

They merely express, in general terms, actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes. The abolition of existing property relations is not at all a distinctive feature of Communism.

All property relations in the past have continually been subject to historical change consequent upon the change in historical conditions.

The French Revolution, for example, abolished feudal property in favour of bourgeois property.

The distinguishing feature of Communism is not the abolition of property generally, but the abolition of bourgeois property. But modern bourgeois private property is the final and most complete expression of the system of producing and appropriating products, that is based on class antagonisms, on the exploitation of the many by the few.

In this sense, the theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property.

We Communists have been reproached with the desire of abolishing the right of personally acquiring property as the fruit of a man's own labour, which property is alleged to be the groundwork of all personal freedom, activity and independence.

Hard-won, self-acquired, self-earned property! Do you mean the property of the petty artisan and of the small peasant, a form of property that preceded the bourgeois form? There is no need to abolish that; the development of industry has to a great extent already destroyed it, and is still destroying it daily.

Or do you mean modern bourgeois private property?

But does wage-labour create any property for the labourer? Not a bit. It creates capital, *i.e.*, that kind of property which exploits wage-labour, and which cannot increase except upon condition of begetting a new supply of wage-labour for fresh exploitation. Property, in its present form, is based on the antagonism of capital and wage-labour. Let us examine both sides of this antagonism

To be a capitalist is to have not only a purely personal, but a social *status* in production. Capital is a collective product, and only by the united action of many members, nay, in the last resort, only by the united action of all members of society, can it be set in motion.

Capital is, therefore, not a personal, it is a social power.

When, therefore, capital is converted into common property, into the property of all members of society, personal property is not thereby transformed into social property. It is only the social character of the property that is changed. It loses its class character.

Let us now take wage-labour.

The average price of wage-labour is the minimum wage, *i.e.*, that quantum of the means of subsistence, which is absolutely requisite to keep the labourer in bare existence as a labourer. What, therefore, the wage-labourer appropriates by means of his labour, merely suffices to prolong and reproduce a bare existence. We by no means intend to abolish this personal appropriation of the products of labour, an appropriation that is made for the maintenance and reproduction of human life, and that leaves no surplus wherewith to command the labour of others. All that we want to do away with, is the miserable character of this appropriation, under which the labourer lives merely to increase capital, and is allowed to live only in so far as the interest of the ruling class requires it.

In bourgeois society, living labour is but a means to increase accumulated labour. In Communist society, accumulated labour is but a means to widen, to enrich, to promote the existence of the labourer.

In bourgeois society, therefore, the past dominates the present; in Communist society, the present dominates the past. In bourgeois society capital is independent and has individuality, while the living person is dependent and has no individuality.

And the abolition of this state of things is called by the bourgeois abolition of individuality and freedom! And rightly so. The abolition of bourgeois individuality, bourgeois independence, and bourgeois freedom is undoubtedly aimed at.

By freedom is meant, under the present bourgeois conditions of production, free trade, free selling and buying.

But if selling and buying disappears, free selling and buying disappears also. This talk about free selling and buying, and all the other "brave words" of our bourgeoisie about freedom in general, have a meaning, if any, only in contrast with restricted selling and buying, with the fettered traders of the Middle Ages, but have no meaning when opposed to the Communistic abolition

of buying and selling, of the bourgeois conditions of production, and of the bourgeoisie itself.

You are horrified at our intending to do away with private property. But in your existing society, private property is already done away with for nine-tenths of the population; its existence for the few is solely due to its non-existence in the hands of those nine-tenths. You reproach us, therefore, with intending to do away with a form of property, the necessary condition for whose existence is the non-existence of any property for the immense majority of society.

In one word, you reproach us with intending to do away with your property. Precisely so; that is just what we intend.

From the moment when labour can no longer be converted into capital, money, or rent, into a social power capable of being monopolised, *i.e.*, from the moment when individual property can no longer be transformed into bourgeois property, into capital, from that moment, you say, individuality vanishes.

You must, therefore, confess that by "individual" you mean no other person than the bourgeois, than the middle-class owner of property. This person must, indeed, be swept out of the way, and made impossible.

Communism deprives no man of the power to appropriate the products of society; all that it does is to deprive him of the power to subjugate the labour of others by means of such appropriation.

It has been objected that upon the abolition of private property all work will cease, and universal laziness will overtake us.

According to this, bourgeois society ought long ago to have gone to the dogs through sheer idleness; for those of its members who work, acquire nothing, and those who acquire anything, do not work. The whole of this objection is but another expression of the tautology: that there can no longer be any wage-labour when there is no longer any capital.

All objections urged against the Communistic mode of producing and appropriating material products, have, in the same way, been urged against the Communistic modes of producing and appropriating intellectual products. Just as, to the bourgeois, the disappearance of class property is the disappearance of production itself, so the disappearance of class culture is to him identical with the disappearance of all culture.

That culture, the loss of which he laments, is, for the enormous majority, a mere training to act as a machine.

But don't wrangle with us so long as you apply, to our intended abolition of bourgeois property, the standard of your bourgeois notions of freedom, culture, law, etc. Your very ideas are but the outgrowth of the conditions of your bourgeois production and bourgeois property, just as your jurisprudence is but the will of your class made into a law for all, a will, whose essential character and direction are determined by the economical conditions of existence of your class.

The selfish misconception that induces you to transform into eternal laws of nature and of reason, the social forms springing from your present mode of production and form of property—historical relations that rise and disappear in the progress of production—this misconception you share with every ruling class that has preceded you. What you see clearly in the case of ancient property, what you admit in the case of feudal property, you are of course forbidden to admit in the case of your own bourgeois form of property.

Abolition of the family! Even the most radical flare up at this infamous proposal of the Communists.

On what foundation is the present family, the bourgeois family, based? On capital, on private gain. In its completely developed form this family exists only among the bourgeoisie. But this state of things finds its complement in the practical absence of the family among the proletarians, and in public prostitution.

The bourgeois family will vanish as a matter of course when its complement vanishes, and both will vanish with the vanishing of capital.

Do you charge us with wanting to stop the exploitation of children by their parents? To this crime we plead guilty.

But, you will say, we destroy the most hallowed of relations, when we replace home education by social.

And your education! Is not that also social, and determined by the social conditions under which you educate, by the intervention, direct or indirect, of society, by means of schools, etc.? The Communists have not invented the intervention of society in education; they do but seek to alter the character of that intervention, and to rescue education from the influence of the ruling class.

The bourgeois clap-trap about the family and education, about the hallowed co-relation of parent and child, becomes all the more disgusting, the more, by the action of Modern Industry, all

family ties among the proletarians are torn asunder, and their children transformed into simple articles of commerce and instruments of labour.

But you Communists would introduce community of women, screams the whole bourgeoisie in chorus.

The bourgeois sees in his wife a mere instrument of production. He hears that the instruments of production are to be exploited in common, and, naturally, can come to no other conclusion than that the lot of being common to all will likewise fall to the women.

He has not even a suspicion that the real point aimed at is to do away with the status of women as mere instruments of production.

For the rest, nothing is more ridiculous than the virtuous indignation of our bourgeois at the community of women which, they pretend, is to be openly and officially established by the Communists. The Communists have no need to introduce community of women; it has existed almost from time immemorial.

Our bourgeois, not content with having the wives and daughters of their proletarians at their disposal, not to speak of common prostitutes, take the greatest pleasure in seducing each other's wives.

Bourgeois marriage is in reality a system of wives in common and thus, at the most, what the Communists might possibly be reproached with, is that they desire to introduce, in substitution for a hypocritically concealed, an openly legalised community of women. For the rest, it is self-evident that the abolition of the present system of production must bring with it the abolition of the community of women springing from that system, *i.e.*, of prostitution both public and private.

The Communists are further reproached with desiring to abolish countries and nationality.

The working men have no country. We cannot take from them what they have not got. Since the proletariat must first of all acquire political supremacy, must rise to be the leading class of the nation, must constitute itself *the* nation, it is so far, itself national, though not in the bourgeois sense of the word.

National differences and antagonisms between peoples are daily more and more vanishing, owing to the development of the bourgeoisie, to freedom of commerce, to the world market, to uniformity in the mode of production and in the conditions of life corresponding thereto.

The supremacy of the proletariat will cause them to vanish still faster. United action, of the leading civilised countries at least, is one of the first conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat.

In proportion as the exploitation of one individual by another is put an end to, the exploitation of one nation by another will also be put an end to. In proportion as the antagonism between classes within the nation vanishes, the hostility of one nation to another will come to an end.

The charges against Communism made from a religious, a philosophical, and, generally, from an ideological standpoint, are not deserving of serious examination.

Does it require deep intuition to comprehend that man's ideas, views and conceptions, in one word, man's consciousness, changes with every change in the conditions of his material existence, in his social relations and in his social life?

What else does the history of ideas prove, than that intellectual production changes its character in proportion as material production is changed? The ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class.

When people speak of ideas that revolutionise society, they do but express the fact, that within the old society, the elements of a new one have been created, and that the dissolution of the old ideas keeps even pace with the dissolution of the old conditions of existence.

When the ancient world was in its last throes, the ancient religions were overcome by Christianity. When Christian ideas succumbed in the eighteenth century to rationalist ideas,* feudal society fought its death battle with the then revolutionary bourgeoisie. The ideas of religious liberty and freedom of conscience merely gave expression to the sway of free competition within the domain of knowledge.

"Undoubtedly," it will be said, "religious, moral, philosophical and juridical ideas have been modified in the course of historical development. But religion, morality, philosophy, political science, and law, constantly survived this change."

"There are, besides, eternal truths, such as Freedom, Justice, etc., that are common to all states of society. But Communism abolishes eternal truths, it abolishes all religion and all morality,

* The ideas of great French Enlighteners of the 18th century—Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, Helvétius, Holbach and others.—*Ed.*

instead of constituting them on a new basis; it therefore acts in contradiction to all past historical experience."

What does this accusation reduce itself to? The history of all past society has consisted in the development of class antagonisms, antagonisms that assumed different forms at different epochs.

But whatever form they may have taken, one fact is common to all past ages, *viz.*, the exploitation of one part of society by the other. No wonder, then, that the social consciousness of past ages, despite all the multiplicity and variety it displays, moves within certain common forms, or general ideas, which cannot completely vanish except with the total disappearance of class antagonisms.

The Communist revolution is the most radical rupture with traditional property relations; no wonder that its development involves the most radical rupture with traditional ideas.

But let us have done with the bourgeois objections to Communism.

We have seen above, that the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy.

The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the State, *i.e.*, of the proletariat organised as the ruling class; and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible.

Of course, in the beginning, this cannot be effected except by means of despotic inroads on the rights of property, and on the conditions of bourgeois production; by means of measures, therefore, which appear economically insufficient and untenable, but which, in the course of the movement, outstrip themselves, necessitate further inroads upon the old social order, and are unavoidable as a means of entirely revolutionising the mode of production.

These measures will of course be different in different countries.

Nevertheless in the most advanced countries, the following will be pretty generally applicable:

1. Abolition of property in land and application of all rents of land to public purposes.
2. A heavy progressive or graduated income tax.
3. Abolition of all right of inheritance.
4. Confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels.

5. Centralisation of credit in the hands of the State, by means of a national bank with State capital and an exclusive monopoly.
6. Centralisation of the means of communication and transport in the hands of the State.
7. Extension of factories and instruments of production owned by the State; the bringing into cultivation of waste-lands, and the improvement of the soil generally in accordance with a common plan.
8. Equal liability of all to labour. Establishment of industrial armies, especially for agriculture.
9. Combination of agriculture with manufacturing industries; gradual abolition of the distinction between town and country, by a more equable distribution of the population over the country.
10. Free education for all children in public schools. Abolition of children's factory labour in its present form. Combination of education with industrial production, &c., &c.

When, in the course of development, class distinctions have disappeared, and all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation, the public power will lose its political character. Political power, properly so called, is merely the organised power of one class for oppressing another. If the proletariat during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled, by the force of circumstances, to organise itself as a class, if, by means of a revolution, it makes itself the ruling class, and, as such, sweeps away by force the old conditions of production, then it will, along with these conditions, have swept away the conditions for the existence of class antagonisms and of classes generally, and will thereby have abolished its own supremacy as a class.

In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.

Written in December 1847-January 1848

Karl Marx,
Frederick Engels,
Collected Works, Vol. 6,
pp. 497-506

KARL MARX

From CRITIQUE OF THE GOTHA PROGRAMME

> 3. "The emancipation of labour demands the promotion of the instruments of labour to the common property of society and the co-operative regulation of the total labour with a fair distribution of the proceeds of labour."

"Promotion of the instruments of labour to the common property" ought obviously to read their "conversion into the common property"; but this only in passing.

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

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

What is "a fair distribution"?

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

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

* *Lassalle, Ferdinand* (1825-1864)—German Socialist and public figure, one of the founders of the General Association of German Workers. His erroneous views on theory and tactics of the working-class movement were criticised by Marx and Engels.—*Ed.*

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

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

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

From this must now be deducted:

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

Secondly, additional portion for expansion of production.

Thirdly, reserve or insurance funds to provide against accidents, dislocations caused by natural calamities, etc.

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

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

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

First, the general costs of administration not belonging to production.

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

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

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

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

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

which is divided among the individual producers of the co-operative society.

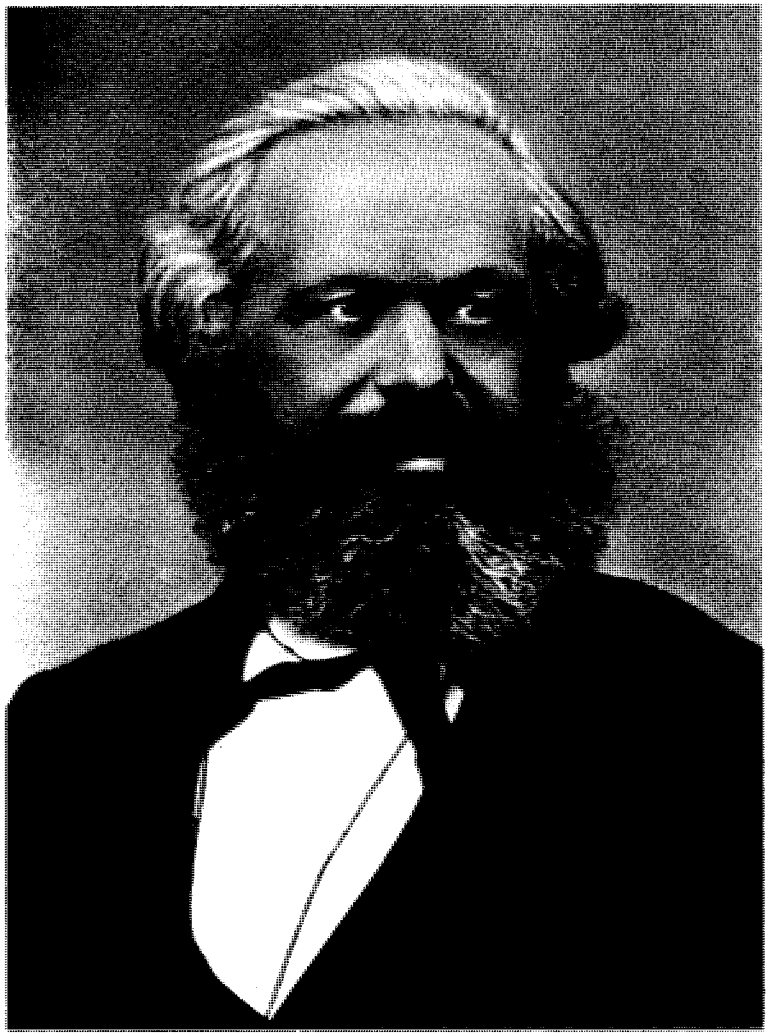
The "undiminished proceeds of labour" have already unnoticeably become converted into the "diminished" proceeds, although what the producer is deprived of in his capacity as a private individual benefits him directly or indirectly in his capacity as a member of society.

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

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

What we have to deal with here is a communist society, not as it has *developed* on its own foundations, but on the contrary, just as it *emerges* from capitalist society; which is thus in every respect, economically, morally and intellectually, still stamped with the birth marks of the old society from whose womb it emerges. Accordingly, the individual producer receives back from society—after the deductions have been made—exactly what he gives to it. What he has given to it is his individual quantum of labour. For example, the social working day consists of the sum of the individual hours of work; the individual labour time of the individual producer is the part of the social working day contributed by him, his share in it. He receives a certificate from society that he has furnished such and such an amount of labour (after deducting his labour for the common funds), and with this certificate he draws from the social stock of means of consumption as much as costs the same amount of labour. The same amount of labour which he has given to society in one form he receives back in another.

Here obviously the same principle prevails as that which regulates the exchange of commodities, as far as this is exchange of equal values. Content and form are changed, because under the altered circumstances no one can give anything except his labour,



Karl Marx

and because, on the other hand, nothing can pass to the ownership of individuals except individual means of consumption. But, as far as the distribution of the latter among the individual producers is concerned, the same principle prevails as in the exchange of commodity-equivalents: a given amount of labour in one form is exchanged for an equal amount of labour in another form.

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

In spite of this advance, this *equal right* is still constantly stigmatised by a bourgeois limitation. The right of the producers is *proportional* to the labour they supply; the equality consists in the fact that measurement is made with an *equal standard,* labour.

But one man is superior to another physically or mentally and so supplies more labour in the same time, or can labour for a longer time; and labour, to serve as a measure, must be defined by its duration or intensity, otherwise it ceases to be a standard of measurement. This *equal* right is an unequal right for unequal labour. It recognises no class differences, because everyone is only a worker like everyone else; but it tacitly recognises unequal individual endowment and thus productive capacity as natural privileges. *It is, therefore, a right of inequality, in its content, like every right.* Right by its very nature can consist only in the application of an equal standard; but unequal individuals (and they would not be different individuals if they were not unequal) are measurable only by an equal standard in so far as they are brought under an equal point of view, are taken from one *definite* side only, for instance, in the present case, are regarded *only as workers* and nothing more is seen in them, everything else being ignored. Further, one worker is married, another not; one has more children than another, and so on and so forth. Thus, with an equal performance of labour, 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, right instead of being equal would have to be unequal.

But these defects are inevitable in the first phase of communist society as it is when it has just emerged after prolonged birth pangs from capitalist society. Right can never be higher than the

economic structure of society and its cultural development conditioned thereby.

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

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

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

Any distribution whatever of the means of consumption is only a consequence of the distribution of the conditions of production themselves. The latter distribution, however, is a feature of the mode of production itself. The capitalist mode of production, for example, rests on the fact that the material conditions of production are in the hands of non-workers in the form of property in capital and land, while the masses are only owners of the personal condition of production, of labour power. If the elements of production are so distributed, then the present-day distribution of the means of consumption results automatically. If the material conditions of production are the co-operative property of the workers themselves, then there likewise results a distribution of the means of consumption different from the present one. Vulgar socialism (and from it in turn a section of the democracy) has taken over from the bourgeois economists the consideration and treatment of distribution as independent of the mode of production and hence the presentation of socialism as turning principally on distribution. After the real relation has long been made clear, why retrogress again?...

IV

I come now to the democratic section.

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

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

Free state—what is this?

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

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

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

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

Nevertheless, the different states of the different civilised countries, in spite of their motley diversity of form, all have this in common, that they are based on modern bourgeois society, 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.

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

Now the programme does not deal with this nor with the future state of communist society.

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

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

Since one has not the courage—and wisely so, for the circumstances demand caution—to demand the democratic republic, as

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

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

That, in fact, by the word "state" is meant the government machine, or the state in so far as it forms a special organism separated from society through division of labour, is shown by the words "the German workers' party demands *as the economic basis of the state*: a single progressive income tax", etc. Taxes are the economic basis of the government machinery and of nothing else. In the state of the future, existing in Switzerland, this demand has been pretty well fulfilled. Income tax presupposes various sources of income of the various social classes, and hence capitalist society. It is, therefore, nothing remarkable that the Liverpool financial reformers, bourgeois headed by Gladstone's brother, are putting forward the same demand as the programme.

Written in April or early May 1875

Karl Marx
and Frederick Engels,
Selected Works, Vol. 3,
Moscow, 1973, pp. 15-20,
25-27

* *Louis Philippe* (1773-1850)—King of the French (1830-1848).—*Ed.*

** *Louis Napoleon (Napoleon III Bonaparte)* (1808-1873)—Emperor of the French (1852-1870).—*Ed.*

FREDERICK ENGELS

From ANTI-DÜHRING

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

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

other, direct individual appropriation, as means of subsistence and of enjoyment.

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

But, in doing this, it abolishes itself as proletariat, abolishes all class distinctions and class antagonisms, abolishes also the state as state. Society thus far, based upon class antagonisms, had need of the state, that is, of an organisation of the particular class, which was *pro tempore* the exploiting class, for the maintenance of its external conditions of production, and, therefore, especially, for the purpose of forcibly keeping the exploited classes in the condition of oppression corresponding with the given mode of production (slavery, serfdom, wage-labour). The state was the official representative of society as a whole; the gathering of it together into a visible embodiment. But it was this only in so far as it was the state of that class which itself represented, for the time being, society as a whole: in ancient times, the state of slave-owning citizens; in the Middle Ages, the feudal lords; in our own time, the bourgeoisie. When at last it becomes the real representative of the whole of society, it renders itself unnecessary. As soon as there is no longer any social class to be held in subjection; as soon as class rule, and the individual struggle for existence based upon our present anarchy in production, with the collisions and excesses arising from these, are removed, nothing more remains to be repressed, and a special repressive force, a state, is no longer necessary. The first act by virtue of which the state really constitutes itself the representative of the whole of society—the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society—this is, at the same time, its last independent act as a state. State interference in social relations becomes, in one domain after another, superfluous, and then dies out of itself; the government of persons is replaced by the administration of things, and by the conduct of processes of production. The state is not "abolished". *It dies out.* This gives the measure of the value of the

phrase "a free state",* both as to its justifiable use at times by agitators, and as to its ultimate scientific insufficiency; and also of the demands of the so-called anarchists for the abolition of the state out of hand.

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

* "*A free state*" was in the 1870s a demand of the German Social-Democrats' programme. Marx criticised that slogan in his work ***Critique of the Gotha Programme.—Ed.***

in society presupposes a degree of historical evolution at which the existence, not simply of this or that particular ruling class, but of any ruling class at all, and, therefore, the existence of class distinction itself has become an obsolete anachronism. It presupposes, therefore, the development of production carried out to a degree at which appropriation of the means of production and of the products, and, with this, of political domination, of the monopoly of culture, and of intellectual leadership by a particular class of society, has become not only superfluous but economically, politically, intellectually a hindrance to development.

This point is now reached. Their political and intellectual bankruptcy is scarcely any longer a secret to the bourgeoisie themselves. Their economic bankruptcy recurs regularly every ten years. In every crisis, society is suffocated beneath the weight of its own productive forces and products, which it cannot use, and stands helpless, face to face with the absurd contradiction that the producers have nothing to consume, because consumers are wanting. The expansive force of the means of production bursts the bonds that the capitalist mode of production had imposed upon them. Their deliverance from these bonds is the one precondition for an unbroken, constantly-accelerated development of the productive forces, and therewith for a practically unlimited increase of production itself. Nor is this all. The socialised appropriation of the means of production does away, not only with the present artificial restrictions upon production, but also with the positive waste and devastation of productive forces and products that are at the present time the inevitable concomitants of production, and that reach their height in the crises. Further, it sets free for the community at large a mass of means of production and of products, by doing away with the senseless extravagance of the ruling classes of today and their political representatives. The possibility of securing for every member of society, by means of socialised production, an existence not only fully sufficient materially, and becoming day by day more full, but an existence guaranteeing to all the free development and exercise of their physical and mental faculties—this possibility is now for the first time here, but *it is here.**

* 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

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

... 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.

... In every society in wich production has developed spontaneously—and our present society is of this type—the situation is

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. [*Note by Engels.*]

not that the producers control the means of production, but that the means of production control the producers. In such a society each new lever of production is necessarily transformed into a new means for the subjection of the producers to the means of production. This is most of all true of that lever of production which, prior to the introduction of modern industry, was far the most powerful—the division of labour. The first great division of labour, the separation of town and country, condemned the rural population to thousands of years of mental torpidity, and the people of the towns each to subjection to his own individual trade. It destroyed the basis of the intellectual development of the former and the physical development of the latter. When the peasant appropriates his land, and the townsman his trade, his land appropriates the peasant and his trade the townsman to the very same extent. In the division of labour, man is also divided. All other physical and mental faculties are sacrificed to the development of one single activity. This stunting of man grows in the same measure as the division of labour, which attains its highest development in manufacture. Manufacture splits up each trade into its separate partial operations, allots each of these to an individual labourer as his life calling, and thus chains him for life to a particular detail function and a particular tool. "It converts the labourer into a crippled monstrosity, by forcing his detail dexterity at the expense of a world of productive capabilities and instincts.... The individual himself is made the automatic motor of a fractional operation" (Marx)*—a motor which in many cases is perfected only by literally crippling the labourer physically and mentally. The machinery of modern industry degrades the labourer from a machine to the mere appendage of a machine. "The lifelong speciality of handling one and the same tool, now becomes the lifelong speciality of serving one and the same machine. Machinery is put to a wrong use, with the object of transforming the workman, from his very childhood, into a part of a detail-machine" (Marx).** And not only the labourers, but also the classes directly or indirectly exploiting the labourers are made subject, through the division of labour, to the tool of their function: the empty-minded bourgeois to his own capital and his own insane craving for profits; the lawyer to his fossilised legal

* *Capital,* Vol. I, Moscow, 1972, p. 340.—*Ed.*
** *Ibid.,* p. 398.—*Ed.*

conceptions, which dominate him as an independent power; the "educated classes" in general to their manifold species of local narrow-mindedness and one-sidedness, to their own physical and mental short-sightedness, to their stunted growth due to their narrow specialised education and their being chained for life to this specialised activity—even when this specialised activity is merely to do nothing.

The utopians* were already perfectly clear in their minds as to the effects of the division of labour, the stunting on the one hand of the labourer, and on the other of the labour function, which is restricted to the lifelong, uniform, mechanical repetition of one and the same operation. The abolition of the antithesis between town and country was demanded by Fourier, as by Owen, as the first prerequisite for the abolition of the old division of labour altogether. Both of them thought that the population should be scattered through the country in groups of sixteen hundred to three thousand persons; each group was to occupy a gigantic palace, with a household run on communal lines, in the centre of their area of land. It is true that Fourier occasionally refers to towns, but these were to consist in turn of only four or five such palaces situated near each other. Both writers would have each member of society occupied in agriculture as well as in industry; with Fourier, industry covers chiefly handicrafts and manufacture, while Owen assigns the main role to modern industry and already demands the introduction of steam-power and machinery in domestic work. But within agriculture as well as industry both of them also demand the greatest possible variety of occupation for each individual, and in accordance with this, the training of the youth for the utmost possible all-round technical functions. They both consider that man should gain universal development through universal practical activity and that labour should recover the attractiveness of which the division of labour has despoiled it, in the first place through this variation of occupation, and through the correspondingly short duration of the "sitting"—to use Fourier's expression—devoted to each particular

* The 19th-century utopian socialists Charles Fourier, Henri Saint-Simon and Robert Owen who criticised capitalism and worked out projects of socialist reconstruction of society, but failed to understand the essence of capitalism, the laws of its development and to see the social force able to create a socialist society.—*Ed.*

kind of work. Both Fourier and Owen are far in advance of the mode of thought of the exploiting classes inherited by Herr Dühring,* according to which the antithesis between town and country is inevitable in the nature of things; the narrow view that a number of "entities" must in any event be condemned to the production of *one single* article, the view that desires to perpetuate the "economic species" of men distinguished by their way of life—people who take pleasure in the performance of precisely this and no other thing, who have therefore sunk so low that they *rejoice* in their own subjection and one-sidedness. In comparison with the basic conceptions even of the "idiot" Fourier's most recklessly bold fantasies; in comparison even with the paltriest ideas of the "crude, feeble, and paltry" Owen—Herr Dühring, himself still completely dominated by the division of labour, is no more than an impertinent dwarf.

In making itself the master of all the means of production to use them in accordance with a social plan, society puts an end to the former subjection of men to their own means of production. It goes without saying that society cannot free itself unless every individual is freed. The old mode of production must therefore be revolutionised from top to bottom, and in particular the former division of labour must disappear. Its place must be taken by an organisation of production in which, on the one hand no individual can throw on the shoulders of others his share in productive labour, this natural condition of human existence; and in which, on the other hand, productive labour, instead of being a means of subjugating men, will become a means of their emancipation, by offering each individual the opportunity to develop all his faculties, physical and mental, in all directions and exercise them to the full—in which, therefore, productive labour will become a pleasure instead of being a burden.

Today this is no longer a fantasy, no longer a pious wish. With the present development of the productive forces, the increase in production that will follow from the very fact of the socialisation of the productive forces, coupled with the abolition of the barriers and disturbances, and of the waste of products and means of production, resulting from the capitalist mode of production, will

* *Dühring, Eugen* (1833-1921)—German professor, eclectic philosopher and vulgar economist; represented reactionary petty-bourgeois socialism.—*Ed.*

suffice, with everybody doing his share of work, to reduce the time required for labour to a point which, measured by our present conceptions, will be small indeed.

Nor is the abolition of the old division of labour a demand which could only be carried through to the detriment of the productivity of labour. On the contrary. Thanks to modern industry it has become a condition of production itself. "The employment of machinery does away with the necessity of crystallising this distribution after the manner of Manufacture, by the constant annexation of a particular man to a particular function. Since the motion of the whole system does not proceed from the workman, but from the machinery, a change of persons can take place at any time without an interruption of the work.... Lastly, the quickness with which machine work is learnt by young people does away with the necessity of bringing up for exclusive employment by machinery, a special class of operatives."* But while the capitalist mode of employment of machinery necessarily perpetuates the old division of labour with its fossilised specialisation, although it has become superfluous from a technical standpoint, the machinery itself rebels against this anachronism. The technical basis of modern industry is revolutionary. "By means of machinery, chemical processes and other methods, it is continually causing changes not only in the technical basis of production, but also in the functions of the labourer, and in the social combinations of the labour process. At the same time, it thereby also revolutionises the division of labour within the society, and incessantly launches masses of capital and of workpeople from one branch of production to another. Modern industry, by its very nature, therefore necessitates variation of labour, fluency of function, universal mobility of the labourer.... We have seen how this absolute contradiction ... vents its rage ... in the incessant human sacrifices from among the working class, in the most reckless squandering of labour-power, and in the devastation caused by social anarchy. This is the negative side. But if, on the one hand, variation of work at present imposes itself after the manner of an overpowering natural law, and with the blindly destructive action of a natural law that meets with resistance at all points, modern industry, on the other hand, through its catastrophes imposes the necessity of recognising, as a fundamental law of production,

* *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1974, p. 397.—*Ed.*

variation of work, consequently fitness of the labourer for varied work, consequently the greatest possible development of his varied aptitudes. It becomes a question of life and death for society to adapt the mode of production to the normal functioning of this law. Modern industry, indeed, compels society, under penalty of death, to replace the detail-worker of today, crippled by lifelong repetition of one and the same trivial operation, and thus reduced to the mere fragment of a man, by the fully developed individual, fit for a variety of labours, ready to face any change of production, and to whom the different social functions he performs, are but so many modes of giving free scope to his own natural and acquired powers" (Marx, *Capital*).*

Modern industry, which has taught us to convert the movement of molecules, something more or less universally feasible, into the movement of masses for technical purposes, has thereby to a considerable extent freed production from restrictions of locality. Water-power was local; steam-power is free. While water-power is necessarily rural, steam-power is by no means necessarily urban. It is capitalist utilisation which concentrates it mainly in the towns and changes factory villages into factory towns. But in so doing it at the same time undermines the conditions under which it operates. The first requirement of the steam-engine, and a main requirement of almost all branches of production in modern industry, is relatively pure water. But the factory town transforms all water into stinking manure. However much therefore urban concentration is a basic condition of capitalist production, each individual industrial capitalist is constantly striving to get away from the large towns necessarily created by this production, and to transfer his plant to the countryside. This process can be studied in detail in the textile industry districts of Lancashire and Yorkshire; modern capitalist industry is constantly bringing new large towns into being there by constant flight from the towns into the country. The situation is similar in the metal-working districts where, in part, other causes produce the same effects.

Once more, only the abolition of the capitalist character of modern industry can bring us out of this new vicious circle, can resolve this contradiction in modern industry, which is constantly

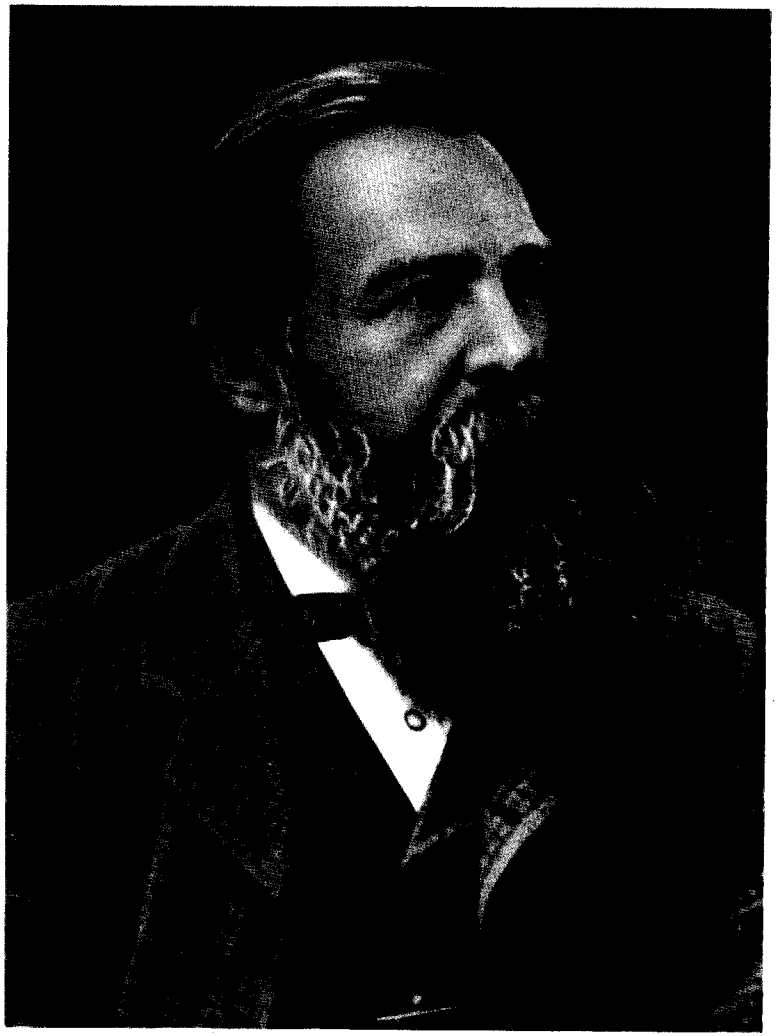
* *Ibid.*, pp. 457-58.—*Ed.*

reproducing itself. Only a society which makes it possible for its productive forces to dovetail harmoniously into each other on the basis of one single vast plan can allow industry to be distributed over the whole country in the way best adapted to its own development, and to the maintenance and development of the other elements of production.

Accordingly, abolition of the antithesis between town and country is not merely possible. It has become a direct necessity of industrial production itself, just as it has become a necessity of agricultural production and, besides, of public health. The present poisoning of the air, water and land can be put an end to only by the fusion of town and country; and only such fusion will change the situation of the masses now languishing in the towns, and enable their excrement to be used for the production of plants instead of for the production of disease.

Capitalist industry has already made itself relatively independent of the local limitations arising from the location of sources of the raw materials it needs. The textile industry works up, in the main, imported raw materials. Spanish iron ore is worked up in England and Germany and Spanish and South-American copper ores, in England. Every coalfield now supplies fuel to an industrial area far beyond its own borders, an area which is widening every year. Along the whole of the European coast steam-engines are driven by English and to some extent also by German and Belgian coal. Society liberated from the restrictions of capitalist production can go much further still. By generating a race of producers with an all-round development who understand the scientific basis of industrial production as a whole, and each of whom has had practical experience in a whole series of branches of production from start to finish, this society will bring into being a new productive force which will abundantly compensate for the labour required to transport raw materials and fuel from great distances.

The abolition of the separation of town and country is therefore not utopian, also, in so far as it is conditioned on the most equal distribution possible of modern industry over the whole country. It is true that in the huge towns civilisation has bequeathed us a heritage which it will take much time and trouble to get rid of. But it must and will be got rid of, however protracted a process it may be. Whatever destiny may be in store for the German Empire of the Prussian nation, Bismarck can go to his grave proudly



aware that the desire of his heart is sure to be fulfilled: the great towns will perish.*

And now see how puerile is Herr Dühring's idea that society can take possession of all means of production in the aggregate without revolutionising from top to bottom the old method of production and first of all putting an end to the old division of labour; that everything will be in order once "natural opportunities and personal capabilities are taken into account"—that therefore whole masses of entities will remain, as in the past, subjected to the production of *one single* article; whole "populations" will be engaged in a single branch of production, and humanity continue divided, as in the past, into a number of different crippled "economic species", for there still are "porters" and "architects". Society is to become master of the means of production as a whole, in order that each individual may remain the slave of his means of production, and have only a choice as to *which* means of production are to enslave him. And see also how Herr Dühring considers the separation of town and country as "inevitable in the nature of things", and can find only a tiny palliative in schnaps-distilling and beet-sugar manufacturing—two, in their connection specifically Prussian, branches of industry; how he makes the distribution of industry over the country dependent on certain future inventions and on the *necessity* of associating industry directly with the procurement of raw materials—raw materials which are already used at an ever increasing distance from their place of origin! And Herr Dühring finally tries to cover up his rear by assuring us that in the long run social wants will carry through the union between agriculture and industry even *against* economic considerations, as if this would be some economic sacrifice!

Certainly, to be able to see that the revolutionary elements, which will do away with the old division of labour, along with the separation of town and country, and will revolutionise the whole of production; see that these elements are already contained in embryo in the production conditions of modern large-scale

* *Bismarck, Otto* (1815-1890)—reactionary German statesman. Minister-President of Prussia in 1862-71; Chancellor of the German Empire in 1871-90.

Bismarck, who hated big cities as centres of revolutionary movement, suggested in his speech in the Prussian Landtag on March 20, 1852, that in the case of a new revolutionary rise they should be demolished.—*Ed.*

industry and that their development is hindered by the existing capitalist mode of production—to be able to see these things, it is necessary to have a somewhat wider horizon than the sphere of jurisdiction of the Prussian *Landrecht,* than the country where production of schnaps and beet-sugar are the key industries, and where commercial crises can be studied on the book market. To be able to see these things it is necessary to have some knowledge of real large-scale industry in its historical growth and in its present actual form, especially in the one country where it has its home and where alone it has attained its classical development. Then no one will think of attempting to vulgarise modern scientific socialism and to degrade it into Herr Dühring's *specifically Prussian socialism.*

Written in September
1876-June 1878

Frederick Engels,
Anti-Dühring, Moscow, 1975,
pp. 320-27, 335-42

FREDERICK ENGELS

From DIALECTICS OF NATURE

With man we enter *history.* Animals also have a history, that of their descent and gradual evolution to their present position. This history, however, is made for them, and in so far as they themselves take part in it, this occurs without their knowledge and desire. On the other hand, the more that human beings become removed from animals in the narrower sense of the word, the more they make their history themselves, consciously, the less becomes the influence of unforeseen effects and uncontrolled forces on this history, and the more accurately does the historical result correspond to the aim laid down in advance. If, however, we apply this measure to human history, to that of even the most developed peoples of the present day, we find that there still exists here a colossal disproportion between the proposed aims and the results arrived at, that unforeseen effects predominate, and that the uncontrolled forces are far more powerful than those set into motion according to plan. And this cannot be otherwise as long as the most essential historical activity of men, the one which has raised them from the animal to the human state and which forms the material foundation of all their other activities, namely the production of their requirements of life, i.e., in our day social production, is above all subject to the interplay of unintended effects from uncontrolled forces and achieves its desired end only by way of exception, but much more frequently the exact opposite. In the most advanced industrial countries we have subdued the forces of nature and pressed them into the service of mankind; we have thereby infinitely multiplied production, so that a child now produces more than a hundred adults previously did. And what is the result? Increasing overwork and increasing misery of the masses, and every ten years a great collapse. Darwin did not

know what a bitter satire he wrote on mankind, and especially on his countrymen, when he showed that free competition, the struggle for existence, which the economists celebrate as the highest historical achievement, is the normal state of the *animal kingdom*. Only conscious organisation of social production, in which production and distribution are carried on in a planned way, can lift mankind above the rest of the animal world as regards the social aspect, in the same way that production in general has done this for mankind in the specifically biological aspect. Historical evolution makes such an organisation daily more indispensable, but also with every day more possible. From it will date a new epoch of history, in which mankind itself, and with mankind all branches of its activity, and particularly natural science, will experience an advance that will put everything preceding it in the deepest shade.

Written in the main
in 1873-83, completed
in 1885-86

Frederick Engels,
Dialectics of Nature,
Moscow, 1972, pp. 34-35

FREDERICK ENGELS

From THE PEASANT QUESTION IN FRANCE AND GERMANY

What, then, is our attitude towards the small peasantry? How shall we have to deal with it on the day of our accession to power?

To begin with, the French programme* is absolutely correct in stating: that we foresee the inevitable doom of the small peasant but that it is not our mission to hasten it by any interference on our part.

Secondly, it is just as evident that when we are in possession of state power we shall not even think of forcibly expropriating the small peasants (regardless of whether with or without compensation), as we shall have to do in the case of the big landowners. Our task relative to the small peasant consists, in the first place, in effecting a transition of his private enterprise and private possession to co-operative ones, not forcibly but by dint of example and the proffer of social assistance for this purpose. And then of course we shall have ample means of showing to the small peasant prospective advantages that must be obvious to him even today.

Almost twenty years ago the Danish Socialists, who have only one real city in their country—Copenhagen—and therefore have to rely almost exclusively on peasant propaganda outside of it, were already drawing up such plans. The peasants of a village or parish—there are many big individual homesteads in Denmark—were to pool their land to form a single big farm in order to cultivate it for common account and distribute the yield in

* The agrarian programme of the French Socialists, adopted at the Marseilles Congress in 1892 and completed at the Nantes Congress in 1894.—*Ed.*

proportion to the land, money and labour contributed. In Denmark small landed property plays only a secondary role. But if we apply this idea to a region of small holdings we shall find that if these are pooled and the aggregate area cultivated on a large scale, part of the labour power employed hitherto is rendered superfluous. It is precisely this saving of labour that represents one of the main advantages of large-scale farming. Employment can be found for this labour power in two ways. Either additional land taken from big estates in the neighbourhood is placed at the disposal of the peasant co-operative or the peasants in question are provided with the means and the opportunity of engaging in industry as an accessory calling, primarily and as far as possible for their own use. In either case their economic position is improved and simultaneously the general social directing agency is assured the necessary influence to transform the peasant co-operative to a higher form, and to equalise the rights and duties of the co-operative as a whole as well as of its individual members with those of the other departments of the entire community. How this is to be carried out in practice in each particular case will depend upon the circumstances of the case and the conditions under which we take possession of political power. We may thus possibly be in a position to offer these co-operatives yet further advantages: assumption of their entire mortgage indebtedness by the national bank with a simultaneous sharp reduction of the interest rate; advances from public funds for the establishment of large-scale production (to be made not necessarily or primarily in money but in the form of required products: machinery, artificial fertiliser, etc.), and other advantages.

The main point is and will be to make the peasants understand that we can save, preserve their houses and fields for them only by transforming them into co-operative property operated co-operatively. It is precisely the individual farming conditioned by individual ownership that drives the peasants to their doom. If they insist on individual operation they will inevitably be driven from house and home and their antiquated mode of production superseded by capitalist large-scale production. That is how the matter stands. Now we come along and offer the peasants the opportunity of introducing large-scale production themselves, not for account of the capitalists but for their own, common account. Should it really be impossible to make the peasants understand

that this is in their own interest, that it is the sole means of their salvation?

Neither now nor at any time in the future can we promise the small-holding peasants to preserve their individual property and individual enterprise against the overwhelming power of capitalist production. We can only promise them that we shall not interfere in their property relations by force, against their will. Moreover, we can advocate that the struggle of the capitalists and big landlords against the small peasants should be waged from now on with a minimum of unfair means and that direct robbery and cheating, which are practised only too often, be as far as possible prevented. In this we shall succeed only in exceptional cases. Under the developed capitalist mode of production nobody can tell where honesty ends and cheating begins. But always it will make a considerable difference whether public authority is on the side of the cheater or the cheated. We of course are decidedly on the side of the small peasant; we shall do everything at all permissible to make his lot more bearable, to facilitate his transition to the co-operative should he decide to do so, and even to make it possible for him to remain on his small holding for a protracted length of time to think the matter over, should he still be unable to bring himself to this decision. We do this not only because we consider the small peasant living by his own labour as virtually belonging to us, but also in the direct interest of the Party. The greater the number of peasants whom we can save from being actually hurled down into the proletariat, whom we can win to our side while they are still peasants, the more quickly and easily the social transformation will be accomplished. It will serve us nought to wait with this transformation until capitalist production has developed everywhere to its utmost consequences, until the last small handicraftsman and the last small peasant have fallen victim to capitalist large-scale production. The material sacrifice to be made for this purpose in the interest of the peasants and to be defrayed out of public funds can, from the point of view of capitalist economy, be viewed only as money thrown away, but it is nevertheless an excellent investment because it will effect a perhaps tenfold saving in the cost of the social reorganisation in general. In this sense we can, therefore, afford to deal very liberally with the peasants. This is not the place to go into details, to make concrete proposals to that end; here we can deal only with general principles.

Accordingly we can do no greater disservice to the Party as well as to the small peasants than to make promises that even only create the impression that we intend to preserve the small holdings permanently. It would mean directly to block the way of the peasants to their emancipation and to degrade the Party to the level of rowdy anti-Semitism. On the contrary, it is the duty of our Party to make clear to the peasants again and again that their position is absolutely hopeless as long as capitalism holds sway, that it is absolutely impossible to preserve their small holdings for them as such, that capitalist large-scale production is absolutely sure to run over their impotent antiquated system of small production as a train runs over a pushcart. If we do this we shall act in conformity with the inevitable trend of economic development, and this development will not fail to bring our words home to the small peasants.

Incidentally, I cannot leave this subject without expressing my conviction that the authors of the Nantes programme are also essentially of my opinion. Their insight is much too great for them not to know that areas now divided into small holdings are also bound to become common property. They themselves admit that small-holding ownership is destined to disappear. The report of the National Council drawn up by Lafargue* and delivered at the Congress of Nantes likewise fully corroborates this view. It has been published in German in the Berlin *Sozialdemokrat* of October 18 of this year. The contradictory nature of the expressions used in the Nantes programme itself betrays the fact that what the authors actually say is not what they want to say. If they are not understood and their statements misused, as actually has already happened, that is of course their own fault. At any rate, they will have to elucidate their programme and the next French congress revise it thoroughly.

We now come to the bigger peasants. Here as a result of the divisions of inheritance as well as of indebtedness and forced sales of land we find a variegated pattern of intermediate stages, from small-holding peasant to big peasant proprietor, who has retained his old patrimony intact or even added to it. Where the middle peasant lives among small-holding peasants his interests and

* *Lafargue, Paul* (1841-1911)—one of the founders and leaders of the French Socialist Party; philosopher, economist, gifted populariser of Marxism.—*Ed.*

views will not differ greatly from theirs; he knows from his own experience how many of his kind have already sunk to the level of small peasants. But where middle and big peasants predominate and the operation of the farms requires, generally, the help of male and female servants it is quite a different matter. Of course a workers' party has to fight, in the first place, on behalf of the wage-workers, that is, for the male and female servantry and the day labourers. It is unquestionably forbidden to make any promises to the peasants which include the continuance of the wage slavery of the workers. But as long as the big and middle peasants continue to exist as such they cannot manage without wage-workers. If it would, therefore, be downright folly on our part to hold out prospects to the small-holding peasants of continuing permanently to be such, it would border on treason were we to promise the same to the big and middle peasants.

We have here again the parallel case of the handicraftsmen in the cities. True, they are more ruined than the peasants but there still are some who employ journeymen in addition to apprentices or for whom apprentices do the work of journeymen. Let those of these master craftsmen who want to perpetuate their existence as such cast in their lot with the anti-Semites until they have convinced themselves that they get no help in that quarter either. The rest, who have realised that their mode of production is inevitably doomed, are coming over to us and, moreover, are ready in future to share the lot that is in store for all other workers. The same applies to the big and middle peasants. It goes without saying that we are more interested in their male and famale servants and day labourers than in them themselves. If these peasants want to be guaranteed the continued existence of their enterprises we are in no position whatever to assure them of that. They must then take their place among the anti-Semites, peasant leaguers and similar parties who derive pleasure from promising everything and keeping nothing. We are economically certain that the big and middle peasant must likewise inevitably succumb to the competition of capitalist production and the cheap overseas corn, as is proved by the growing indebtedness and the everywhere evident decay of these peasants as well. We can do nothing against this decay except recommend here too the pooling of farms to form co-operative enterprises, in which the exploitation of wage labour will be eliminated more and more, and their gradual transformation into branches of the great national produc-

ers' co-operative with each branch enjoying equal rights and duties can be instituted. If these peasants realise the inevitability of the doom of their present mode of production and draw the necessary conclusions they will come to us and it will be incumbent upon us to facilitate to the best of our ability also their transition to the changed mode of production. Otherwise we shall have to abandon them to their fate and address ourselves to their wage-workers, among whom we shall not fail to find sympathy. Most likely we shall be able to abstain here as well from resorting to forcible expropriation, and as for the rest to count on future economic developments making also these harder pates amenable to reason.

Only the big landed estates present a perfectly simple case. Here we are dealing with undisguised capitalist production and no scruples of any sort need restrain us. Here we are confronted by rural proletarians in masses and our task is clear. As soon as our Party is in possession of political power it has simply to expropriate the big landed proprietors just like the manufacturers in industry. Whether this expropriation is to be compensated for or not will to a great extent depend not upon us but the circumstances under which we obtain power, and particularly upon the attitude adopted by these gentry, the big landowners, themselves. We by no means consider compensation as impermissible in any event; Marx told me (and how many times!) that in his opinion we would get off cheapest if we could buy out the whole lot of them. But this does not concern us here. The big estates thus restored to the community are to be turned over by us to the rural workers who are already cultivating them and are to be organised into co-operatives. They are to be assigned to them for their use and benefit under the control of the community. Nothing can as yet be stated as to the terms of their tenure. At any rate the transformation of the capitalist enterprise into a social enterprise is here fully prepared for and can be carried into execution overnight, precisely as in Mr. Krupp's or Mr. von Stumm's factory. And the example of these agricultural co-operatives would convince also the last of the still resistant small-holding peasants, and surely also many big peasants, of the advantages of co-operative, large-scale production.

Written between November 15 and 22, 1894

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works,* Vol. 3, Moscow, 1973, pp. 469-74

From KARL MARX'S LETTER TO JOSEPH WEYDEMEYER* IN NEW WORK

London, March 5, 1852

As to myself, no credit is due to me for discovering either 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 the classes. What I did that was new was to demonstrate: 1) that the *existence of classes* is merely linked to *particular historical phases in the development of production,* 2) that 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.* Ignorant louts like Heinzen, who deny not merely the class struggle but even the existence of classes, only prove that, despite all their blood-curdling yelps and the humanitarian airs they give themselves, they regard the social conditions under which the bourgeoisie rules as the final product, the *non plus ultra*** of history, and that they are only the servants of the bourgeoisie. And the less these louts realise the magnitude and the transitory necessity of the bourgeois regime the more disgusting is their servitude.

Karl Marx
and Frederick Engels,
Selected Correspondence,
Moscow, 1975, p. 64

* *Weydemeyer, Joseph* (1818-1866)—a leader of the German and American working-class movements, a friend of Marx and Engels.—*Ed.*

** Highest point attainable (*Lat.*).—*Ed.*

From FREDERICK ENGELS' LETTER TO KARL KAUTSKY* IN VIENNA**

London, February 1,1881
122, Regent's Park Road, N. W.

2. Even if the Kätheder Socialists obstinately call on us proletarian socialists to solve for them the riddle of how we can avoid an alleged impending overpopulation and the danger threatening therefrom of the collapse of our modern social order, that by no means gives me any ground for doing those people this pleasure. I consider it a pure waste of time to solve for these people all their scruples and doubts, for which they have to thank their own muddled super-wisdom, or, for example, to refute all the frightful nonsense that Schäffle alone has written up in his many thick books. It would already produce a fair-sized volume if one wanted to correct all the *false citations* from *Capital* that these gentlemen give in quotation marks. They should first learn to read and copy out before demanding that their questions be answered.

Moreover, I do not consider the question to be urgent at a moment when the just beginning American mass production and *truly* large-scale agriculture threatens really to smother us under the weight of the foodstuffs produced; on the eve of an upheaval which, among other consequences, must also have that of *first populating the Earth*—what you say about this on pp. 169 and 170 skims too lightly over this point—and which certainly *requires of necessity* a strong increase of population also in Europe....

* *Kautsky, Karl* (1854-1938)—a leader and theoretician of German Social-Democracy and the Second International. Ideologist of centrism; since the beginning of the First World War, a renegade of Marxism.—*Ed.*

The abstract possibility that the human population is becoming so great that barriers must be raised to its increase, is indeed present. But if communist society should once see itself in the necessity to regulate the production of human beings as it has already regulated the production of things, then it will be precisely that communist society, and [it] alone, which will do so without difficulty. To achieve in a planned manner in such a society a result which has already now spontaneously and without any plan developed in France and in Lower Austria, seems to me by no means so difficult. In any case it is those people's business, whether, when and how, and what means they will use for that purpose. I do not feel that I have the mission to advise and counsel them on that matter. These people will certainly be as shrewd as we are.

For the rest, I wrote already in 1844 *(Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, p. 109): "Even if Malthus* were unconditionally right, then this (socialist) transformation should be undertaken immediately, because only it, only the education of the masses which it will give, makes possible that moral limitation of the procreative urge which Malthus himself presents as the most effective and easiest antidote against overpopulation."

Marx/Engels, *Werke*,
Bd. 35, Berlin, 1967,
S. 150-51

* *Malthus, Thomas Robert* (1766-1834)—English economist, the author of an unscientific population theory.—*Ed.*

From FREDERICK ENGELS' LETTER TO PHILIPP VAN PATTEN* IN NEW YORK

London, April 18, 1883

Marx and I, ever since 1845, have held the view that *one* of the final results of the future proletarian revolution will be the gradual dissolution and ultimate disappearance of that political organisation called *the state*; an organisation the main object of which has ever been to secure, by armed force, the economical subjection of the working majority to the wealthy minority. With the disappearance of a wealthy minority the necessity for an armed repressive state-force disappears also. At the same time we have always held that in order to arrive at this and the other, far more important ends of the social revolution of the future, the proletarian class will first have to possess itself of the organised political force of the state and with this aid stamp out the resistance of the capitalist class and re-organise society. This is stated already in the *Communist Manifesto* of 1847, end of Chapter II.

Karl Marx
and Frederick Engels,
Selected Correspondence,
Moscow, 1975, pp. 340-41

* *Patten, Philipp van*—an American socialist leader.—*Ed.*

From FREDERICK ENGELS' LETTER TO OTTO VON BOENIGK* IN BRESLAU

Folkestone, near Dover
August 21, 1890

...I can reply only briefly and in general terms to your enquiries, for as concerns the first question I should otherwise have to write a treatise.

Ad. I. To my mind, the so-called "socialist society" is not anything immutable. Like all other social formations, it should be conceived in a state of constant flux and change. Its crucial difference from the present order consists naturally in production organised on the basis of common ownership by the nation of all means of production. To begin this reorganisation tomorrow, but performing it gradually, seems to me quite feasible. That our workers are capable of it is borne out by their many producer and consumer co-operatives which, whenever they are not deliberately ruined by the police, are equally well and far more honestly run than the bourgeois stock companies. I cannot see how you can speak of the ignorance of the masses in Germany after the brilliant evidence of political maturity shown by the workers in their victorious struggle against the Anti-Socialist Law.** The patronising and errant lecturing of our so-called intellectuals seems to me a far greater impediment. We are still in need of techni-

* *Boenigk, Otto von*—German public figure.—*Ed.*

** *The Anti-Socialist Exceptional Law* was introduced in Germany by the Bismarck government in 1878. The law prohibited the Social-Democratic party, all the mass workers' organisations and the workers' press. The best representatives of the German Social-Democrats, headed by August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht, started large-scale illegal work, and the party's influence among the workers not only did not drop but rose considerably. During the 1890 Reichstag elections Social-Democrats got about 1.5 million votes. That very year the government was forced to revoke the Anti-Socialist Law.—*Ed.*

cians, agronomists, engineers, chemists, architects, etc., it is true, but if the worst comes to the worst we can always buy them just as well as the capitalists buy them, and if a severe example is made of a few of the traitors among them—for traitors there are sure to be—they will find it to their own advantage to deal fairly with us. But apart from these specialists, among whom I also include schoolteachers, we can get along perfectly well without the other "intellectuals". The present influx of literati and students into the party, for example, may be quite damaging if these gentlemen are not properly kept in check.

The Junker latifundia east of the Elbe could be easily leased under the due technical management to the present day-labourers and the other retinue, who would work the estates jointly. If any disturbances occur, the Junkers, who have brutalised people by flouting all the existing school legislation, will alone be to blame.

The biggest obstacle are the small peasants and the importunate super-clever intellectuals who always think they know everything so much the better, the less they understand it.

Once we have a sufficient number of followers among the masses, the big industries and the large-scale latifundia farming can be quickly socialised, provided we hold the political power. The rest will follow shortly, sooner or later. And we shall have it all our own way in large-scale production.

You speak of an absence of uniform insight. This exists—but on the part of the intellectuals who stem from the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie and who do not suspect how much they still have to learn from the workers....

Karl Marx
and Frederick Engels,
Selected Works, Vol. 3,
Moscow, 1973, pp. 485-
86

VLADIMIR LENIN

From KARL MARX

SOCIALISM

...It is evident that Marx deduces the inevitability of the transformation of capitalist society into socialist society wholly and exclusively from the economic law of the development of contemporary society. The socialisation of labour, which is advancing ever more rapidly in thousands of forms and has manifested itself very strikingly, during the half-century since the death of Marx, in the growth of large-scale production, capitalist cartels, syndicates and trusts, as well as in the gigantic increase in the dimensions and power of finance capital, provides the principal material foundation for the inevitable advent of socialism. The intellectual and moral motive force and the physical executor of this transformation is the proletariat, which has been trained by capitalism itself. The proletariat's struggle against the bourgeoisie, which finds expression in a variety of forms ever richer in content, inevitably becomes a political struggle directed towards the conquest of political power by the proletariat ("the dictatorship of the proletariat"). The socialisation of production cannot but lead to the means of production becoming the property of society, to the "expropriation of the expropriators". A tremendous rise in labour productivity, a shorter working day, and the replacement of the remnants, the ruins, of small-scale, primitive and disunited production by collective and improved labour—such are the direct consequences of this transformation. Capitalism breaks for all time the ties between agriculture and industry, but at the same time, through its highest development, it prepares new elements of those ties, a union between industry and agriculture based on the conscious application of science and the concentration of collective labour, and on a redistribution of the human population (thus

putting an end both to rural backwardness, isolation and barbarism, and to the unnatural concentration of vast masses of people in big cities). A new form of family, new conditions in the status of women and in the upbringing of the younger generation are prepared by the highest forms of present-day capitalism: the labour of women and children and the break-up of the patriarchal family by capitalism inevitably assume the most terrible, disastrous, and repulsive forms in modern society. Nevertheless, "modern industry, by assigning as it does, an important part in the socially organised process of production, outside the domestic sphere, to women, to young persons, and to children of both sexes, creates a new economic foundation for a higher form of the family and of the relations between the sexes. It is, of course, just as absurd to hold the Teutonic-Christian form of the family to be absolute and final as it would be to apply that character to the ancient Roman, the ancient Greek, or the Eastern forms which, moreover, taken together form a series in historic development. Moreover, it is obvious that the fact of the collective working group being composed of individuals of both sexes and all ages, must necessarily, under suitable conditions, become a source of humane development; although in its spontaneously developed, brutal, capitalistic form, where the labourer exists for the process of production, and not the process of production for the labourer, that fact is a pestiferous source of corruption and slavery" (*Capital,* Vol. I, end of Chap. 13). The factory system contains "the germ of the education of the future, an education that will, in the case of every child over a given age, combine productive labour with instruction and gymnastics, not only as one of the methods of adding to the efficiency of social production, but as the only method of producing fully developed human beings" (*Ibid.*) Marx's socialism places the problems of nationality and of the state on the same historical footing, not only in the sense of explaining the past but also in the sense of a bold forecast of the future and of bold practical action for its achievement. Nations are an inevitable product, an inevitable form, in the bourgeois epoch of social development. The working class could not grow strong, become mature and take shape without "constituting itself within the nation", without being "national" ("though not in the bourgeois sense of the word"). The development of capitalism, however, breaks down national barries more and more, does away with national seclusion,

and substitutes class antagonisms for national antagonisms. It is, therefore, perfectly true of the developed capitalist countries that "the workingmen have no country" and that "united action" by the workers, of the civilised countries at least, "is one of the first conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat" (*Communist Manifesto*). The state, which is organised coercion, inevitably came into being at a definite stage in the development of society, when the latter had split into irreconcilable classes, and could not exist without an "authority" ostensibly standing above society, and to a certain degree separate from society. Arising out of class contradictions, the state becomes "... 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. Thus, the state of antiquity was above all the state of the slave-owners for the purpose of holding down the slaves, as the feudal state was the organ of the nobility for holding down the peasant serfs and bondsmen, and the modern representative state is an instrument of exploitation of wage labour by capital" (Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State,* a work in which the writer expounds his own views and Marx's). Even the democratic republic, the freest and most progressive form of the bourgeois state, does not eliminate this fact in any way, but merely modifies its form (the links between the government and the stock exchange, the corruption—direct and indirect—of officialdom and the press, etc.). By leading to the abolition of classes, socialism will thereby lead to the abolition of the state as well. "The first act," Engels writes in *Anti-Dühring,* "by virtue of which the state really constitutes itself the representative of society as a whole—the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society—is, at the same time, its last independent act as a state. The state interference in social relations becomes superfluous in one sphere after another, and then ceases of itself. The government of persons is replaced by the administration of things and by the direction of the processes of production. The state is not 'abolished', it withers away." "The society that will organise 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 the Museum of Antiquities, by the side of the spinning wheel and the bronze axe" (Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*).

Finally as regards the attitude of Marx's socialism towards the small peasantry, which will continue to exist in the period of the expropriation of the expropriators, we must refer to a declaration made by Engels, which expresses Marx's views: "... when we are in possession of state power we shall not even think of forcibly expropriating the small peasants (regardless of whether with or without compensation), as we shall have to do in the case of the big landowners. Our task relative to the small peasant consists, in the first place, in effecting a transition of his private enterprise and private possession to co-operative ones, not forcibly but by dint of example and the proffer of social assistance for this purpose. And then of course we shall have ample means of showing to the small peasant prospective advantages that must be obvious to him even today" (Engels, *The Peasant Question in France and Germany*, p. 17, published by Alexeyeva; there are errors in the Russian translation. Original in *Die Neue Zeit*).

Written in July-November 1914

V. I. Lenin,
Collected Works,
Vol. 21, pp. 71-74

From THE DISCUSSION ON SELF-DETERMINATION SUMMED UP

1. SOCIALISM AND THE SELF-DETERMINATION OF NATIONS

We have affirmed that it would be a betrayal of socialism to refuse to implement the self-determination of nations under socialism. We are told in reply that "the right of self-determination is not applicable to a socialist society". The difference is a radical one. Where does it stem from?

"We know," runs our opponents' reasoning, "that socialism will abolish every kind of national oppression since it abolishes the class interests that lead to it...." What has this argument about the *economic* prerequisites for the abolition of national oppression, which are very well known and undisputed, to do with a discussion of *one* of the forms of *political* oppression, namely, the forcible retention of one nation within the state frontiers of another? This is nothing but an attempt to evade political questions! And subsequent arguments further convince us that our judgement is right: "We have no reason to believe that in a socialist society, the nation will exist as an economic and political unit. It will in all probability assume the character of a cultural and linguistic unit only, because the territorial division of a socialist cultural zone, if practised at all, can be made only according to the needs of production and, furthermore, the question of such a division will naturally not be decided by individual nations alone and in possession of full sovereignty [as is required by "the right to self-determination"], but will be *determined jointly* by all the citizens concerned...."

Our Polish comrades like this last argument, on *joint* determination instead of *self*-determination, so much that they repeat it *three times* in their theses! Frequency of repetition, however, does

not turn this Octobrist* and reactionary argument into a Social-Democratic argument. All reactionaries and bourgeois grant to nations forcibly retained within the frontiers of a given state the right to "determine jointly" their fate in a common parliament. Wilhelm II** also gives the Belgians the right to "determine jointly" the fate of the German Empire in a common German parliament.

Our opponents try to evade precisely the point at issue, the only one that is up for discussion—the right to secede. This would be funny if it were not so tragic!

Our very first thesis said that the liberation of oppressed nations implies a dual transformation in the political sphere: (1) the full equality of nations. This is not disputed and applies only to what takes place within the state; (2) freedom of political separation. This refers to the demarcation of state frontiers. This *only* is disputed. But it is precisely this that our opponents remain silent about. They do not want to think either about state frontiers or even about the state as such. This is a sort of "imperialist Economism" like the old Economism of 1894-1902,*** which argued in this way: capitalism is victorious, *therefore* political questions are a waste of time. Imperialism is victorious, *therefore* political questions are a waste of time! Such an apolitical theory is extremely harmful to Marxism.

In his *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Marx wrote: "Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the

* *Octobrists* ("The Union of October 17")—a counter-revolutionary party of industrial bourgeoisie and big landowners founded after the tsar's manifesto of October 17, 1905, was published. The tsar, frightened by the revolution, promised to give "civic freedoms" and a constitution to the people. The Octobrists lended an unconditional support to the home and foreign policy of the tsarist government. The leaders of the party were A. Guchkov, a big industrialist, and M. Rodzyanko who possessed enormous landed estates.—*Ed.*

** *Wilhelm II* (1859-1941)—German Emperor and King of Prussia (1888-1918).—*Ed.*

*** *Economism*—an opportunist trend in Russian Social-Democracy at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. The Economists considered the liberal bourgeoisie to be the main force to wage political struggle against tsarism, while workers were to confine themselves to economic struggle—for improvement of working conditions, increase in wages, etc. The Economists denied the Party's leading role and the significance of revolutionary theory in the working-class movement and considered it was to develop exclusively in a spontaneous way. In his book *What Is To Be Done?* Lenin subjected Economism to a sweeping criticism.—*Ed.*

revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. There corresponds to this also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat." Up to now this truth has been indisputable for socialists and it includes the recognition of the fact that the *state* will exist until victorious socialism develops into full communism. Engels' dictum about the *withering away* of the state is well known. We deliberately stressed, in the first thesis, that democracy is a form of state that will also wither away when the state withers away. And until our opponents replace Marxism by some sort of "non-state" viewpoint their arguments will constitute one big mistake.

Instead of speaking about the state (which *means,* about the demarcation of its *frontiers*!), they speak of a "socialist cultural zone", i.e., they deliberately choose an expression that is indefinite in the sense that all state questions are obliterated! Thus we get a ridiculous tautology: if there is no state there can, of course, be no question of frontiers. In that case the *whole* democratic-political programme is unnecessary. Nor will there be any republic, when the state "withers away".

The German chauvinist Lensch,* in the articles we mentioned in Thesis 5 (footnote), quoted an interesting passage from Engels' article "The Po and the Rhine". Amongst other things, Engels says in this article that in the course of historical development, which swallowed up a number of small and non-viable nations, the "frontiers of great and viable European nations" were being increasingly determined by the "language and sympathies" of the population. Engels calls these frontiers "natural". Such was the case in the period of progressive capitalism in Europe, roughly from 1848 to 1871. Today, these democratically determined frontiers are more and more often being *broken down* by reactionary, imperialist capitalism. There is every sign that imperialism will leave its successor, socialism, a heritage of *less* democratic frontiers, a number of annexations in Europe and in other parts of the world. Is it to be supposed that victorious socialism, restoring and implementing full democracy all along the line, will refrain from *democratically* demarcating state frontiers and ignore the "sympathies" of the population? These questions need only be stated

* *Lensch, Paul* (1873-1926)—German Social-Democrat, opportunist, a supporter of the imperialist war.—*Ed.*

to make it quite clear that our Polish colleagues are sliding down from Marxism towards imperialist Economism.

The old Economists, who made a caricature of Marxism, told the workers that "only the economic" was of importance to Marxists. The new Economists seem to think either that the democratic state of victorious socialism will exist without frontiers (like a "complex of sensations" without matter) or that frontiers will be delineated "only" in accordance with the needs of production. In actual fact its frontiers will be delineated democratically, i.e., in accordance with the will and "sympathies" of the population. Capitalism rides roughshod over these sympathies, adding more obstacles to the rapprochement of nations. Socialism, by organising production *without* class oppression, by ensuring the well-being of *all* members of the state, gives *full play* to the "sympathies" of the population, thereby promoting and greatly accelerating the drawing together and fusion of the nations.

To give the reader a rest from the heavy and clumsy Economism let us quote the reasoning of a socialist writer who is outside our dispute. That writer is Otto Bauer, who also has his own "pet little point"—"cultural and national autonomy"*—but who argues quite correctly on a large number of most important questions. For example, in Chapter 29 of his book *The National Question and Social-Democracy,* he was doubly right in noting the use of national ideology to cover up *imperialist* policies. In Chapter 30, "Socialism and the Principle of Nationality", he says:

"The socialist community will never be able to include whole nations within its make-up by the use of force. Imagine the masses of the people, enjoying all the blessings of national culture, taking a full and active part in legislation and government, and, finally, supplied with arms—would it be possible to subordinate such a nation to the rule of an alien social organism by force? All state power rests on the force of arms. The present-day people's army, thanks to an ingenious mechanism, still constitutes a tool in the hands of a definite person, family or class exactly like the knightly and mercenary armies of the past. The army of the democratic community of a socialist society is nothing but the people armed, since it consists of highly cultured persons, working without compulsion in socialised workshops and taking full part in all spheres of political life. In such conditions any possibility of alien rule disappears."

* *Cultural and national autonomy*—an opportunist programme on the national question put forward in 1890s by Austrian Social-Democrats Otto Bauer and Karl Renner. Its essential point was that people of the same nationality, in whatever part of a given country they live, form an autonomous national union into whose competence the state passes schools (separate schools for children of different nationalities) and other educational and cultural institutions. If carried out, this programme would have strengthened the influence of the clerical and reactionary nationalistic ideology within each national group and hampered the organisation of the working class by increasing national differences among workers. In a number of articles Lenin subjected the slogan of cultural and national autonomy to severe criticism.—*Ed.*

This is true. It is *impossible* to abolish national (or any other political) oppression under capitalism, since this *requires* the abolition of classes, i.e., the introduction of socialism. But while being based on economics, socialism cannot be reduced to economics alone. A foundation—socialist production—is essential for the abolition of national oppression, but this foundation must *also* carry a democratically organised state, a democratic army, etc. By transforming capitalism into socialism the proletariat creates the *possibility* of abolishing national oppression; the possibility becomes *reality* "only"—"only"!—with the establishment of full democracy in all spheres, including the delineation of state frontiers in accordance with the "sympathies" of the population, including complete freedom to secede. And this, in turn, will serve as a basis for developing the *practical* elimination of even the slightest national friction and the least national mistrust, for an accelerated drawing together and fusion of nations that will be completed when the state *withers away.* This is the Marxist theory, the theory from which our Polish colleagues have mistakenly departed.

Written in July 1916

V. I. Lenin,
Collected Works,
Vol. 22, pp. 321-25

From THE STATE AND REVOLUTION

Chapter V

THE ECONOMIC BASIS OF THE WITHERING AWAY OF THE STATE

Marx explains this question most thoroughly in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (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 programme altogether and the word "community" substituted for it. Engels even declared that the Commune was no longer 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 recognise 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 Programme brought into the question of the relationship between state and society. He wrote:

> " 'Present-day society' is capitalist society, which exists in all civilised 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

* *Bracke, Wilhelm* (1842-1880)—German Social-Democrat.—*Ed.*

** *Bebel, August* (1840-1913)—a leader of German Social-Democracy and the Second International.—*Ed.*

England from what it is in the United States. 'The present-day state' is, therefore, a faction.

"Nevertheless, the different states of the different civilised countries, in spite of their motley diversity of form, all have this in common, that they are based on modern bourgeois society, 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."

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?

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 favourable 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 "utilising legality", and organised 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? One million members of the Social-Democratic Par-

ty—out of fifteen million wage-workers! Three million organised in trade unions—out of fifteen million!

Democracy for an insignificant minority, democracy for the rich—that is the democracy of capitalist society. If we look more closely into the machinery of capitalist democracy, we see everywhere, in the "petty"—supposedly petty—details of the suffrage (residential qualification, 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 organisation 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 ten, if not ninety-nine out of a hundred, 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 analysing the experience of the Commune, he said that the oppressed are allowed once every few years to decide which particular representative 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 organisation 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 has been completely crushed, when 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 realised, a democracy without any exceptions whatever. 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 labour.

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-labourers, 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 organisation 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 civilised 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 want and their poverty. With the removal of this chief cause, excesses will inevitably begin to "*wither away*". We do not know how quickly and in what succession, but we 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 difference between the lower and higher phases (levels, stages) of communist society.

3. THE FIRST PHASE OF COMMUNIST SOCIETY

In the *Critique of the Gotha Programme,* Marx goes into detail to disprove Lassalle's idea that under socialism the worker will receive the "undiminished" or "full product of his labour". Marx shows that from the whole of the social labour 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 deducted a fund 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 labour 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 analysing the programme 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 labour 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 labour", Lassalle is mistaken and Marx exposes the mistake.

"Hence, the equal right," says Marx, in this case *still* certainly conforms to "bourgeois law" [German: das bürgerliche Recht] 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 labour 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 labour, 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 labour 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 of society (commonly called "socialism") *does not remove* the defects of distribution and the inequality of "bourgeois law", which *continues to prevail* so long as products are divided "according to the amount of labour 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" recognises 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 labour among the members of society. The socialist principle, "He who does not work shall not eat", is *already* realised; the other socialist principle, "An equal amount of products for an equal amount of labour", is also *already* realised. 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 labour, 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 labour 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 labour, and with it also the antithesis between mental and physical labour, has vanished, after labour 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 co-operative 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 stage of development of communism at which the antithesis between mental and physical labour 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 labour, of doing away with the antithesis between mental and physical labour, of transforming labour 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, emphasising 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 labour 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 somebody else, whether one is not getting less pay than somebody 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

* *Shylock*—a character in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, a cruel and merciless usurer who inexorably demanded to cut a pound of flesh of his debtor who had failed to pay the debt.—*Ed.*

promising everyone the right to receive from society, without any control over the labour 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 defence 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 great socialists' *forecast* that it will arrive, it presupposes not the present productivity of labour and *not the present* ordinary run of people, who, like the seminary students in Pomyalovsky's stories,* 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 labour 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 defence 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

* Theological seminaries in Russia were noted for their most severe conditions and extremely crude customs. The Russian writer N. G. Pomyalovsky described life in such schools in his *Seminary Sketches.*—*Ed.*

** *Tsereteli, Irakly Georgiyevich* (1882-1959)—a Menshevik leader, who in 1917 supported the policy of the bourgeois Provisional Government.

Chernov, Victor Mikhailovich (1876-1952)—a leader of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party who in 1917 supported the policy of the bourgeois Provisional Government.—*Ed.*

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 recognise 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, Cornelissen** and other "stars" of anarchism into social-chauvinists, or into "anarcho-trenchists", as Ghe,*** one of the few anarchists who have still preserved a sense of honour 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 become *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 invested, "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

* *Plekhanov, Georgi Valentinovich* (1856-1918)—founder of the Russian Social-Democratic movement; during the First World War, a social-chauvinist.—*Ed.*

** Prominent anarchist leaders, advocated participation in the imperialist war.—*Ed.*

*** *Ghe, A. Y.* (died in 1919)—Russian anarchist, opponent of the imperialist war.—*Ed.*

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 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 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 labour and wages, humanity will inevitably be confronted with the question of advancing farther, 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 realise 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 a form of the state, one of its varieties.

Consequently, like every state, it represents, on the one hand, the organised, 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 reorganisation. 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, socialised 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 labour 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* country-wide 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.*

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 labour 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 organised 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 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 do independently administer social production, independently keep

* 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 IV, 2, Engels' controversy with the anarchists). [*Note by Lenin.*]

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 will 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.

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V. I. Lenin,
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From MARXISM ON THE STATE

Thus, the dictatorship of the proletariat is a "political transition period"; it is clear that *the state of this period* is also a transition from state to non-state, i.e., "no longer a state in the proper sense of the word". Consequently, Marx and Engels were not at all contradicting each other on this point.

Further Marx speaks of the "future state of communist society"!! Thus, even in a "*c o m m u n i s t* society" there will be statehood!! Is there no contradiction here?

No:

the state is needed by the bourgeoisie	I— in capitalist society the state in the proper sense
the state is needed by the proletariat	II— transition (dictatorship of the proletariat): the state of a transitional type (not state in the proper sense of the word)
the state is not necessary, it withers away	III— communist society: the *withering away* of the state

Full consistency and clarity!!
Otherwise:

I— democracy only for the rich and a thin layer of the proletariat. [The poor are not in a position to think of it!]	I— democracy only as an exception, never complete...
II— democracy for the poor, for 9/10 of the population, forcible suppression of the resistance of the rich	II— democracy almost complete, limited only by the *suppression* of the resistance of the bourgeoisie
III— full democracy, which becomes a habit and is therefore withering away, yielding place to the principle: "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs"	III— genuinely full democracy, becoming a habit and *t h e r e f o r e* withering away... Full democracy equals no democracy. This is not a paradox but a truth!

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V. I. Lenin,
Marxism on the State,
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HOW TO ORGANISE COMPETITION?

Bourgeois authors have been using up reams of paper praising competition, private enterprise, and all the other magnificent virtues and blessings of the capitalists and the capitalist system. Socialists have been accused of refusing to understand the importance of these virtues, and of ignoring "human nature". As a matter of fact, however, capitalism long ago replaced small, independent commodity production, under which competition could develop enterprise, energy and bold initiative to any *considerable* extent, by large- and very large-scale factory production, joint-stock companies, syndicates and other monopolies. Under *such* capitalism, competition means the incredibly brutal suppression of the enterprise, energy and bold initiative of the *mass* of the population, of its overwhelming majority, of ninety-nine out of every hundred toilers; it also means that competition is replaced by financial fraud, nepotism, servility on the upper rungs of the social ladder.

Far from extinguishing competition, socialism, on the contrary, for the first time creates the opportunity for employing it on a really *wide* and on a really *mass* scale, for actually drawing the majority of working people into a field of labour in which they can display their abilities, develop the capacities, and reveal those talents, so abundant among the people whom capitalism crushed, suppressed and strangled in thousands and millions.

Now that a socialist government is in power our task is to organise competition.

The hangers-on and spongers on the bourgeoisie described socialism as a uniform, routine, monotonous and drab barrack system. The lackeys of the money-bags, the lickspittles of the exploiters, the bourgeois intellectual gentlemen used socialism as

a bogey to "frighten" the people, who, under capitalism, were doomed to the penal servitude and the barrack-like discipline of arduous, monotonous toil, to a life of dire poverty and semi-starvation. The first step towards the emancipation of the people from this penal servitude is the confiscation of the landed estates, the introduction of workers' control and the nationalisation of the banks. The next steps will be the nationalisation of the factories, the compulsory organisation of the whole population in consumers' societies, which are at the same time societies for the sale of products, and the state monopoly of the trade in grain and other necessities.

Only now is the opportunity created for the truly mass display of enterprise, competition and bold initiative. Every factory from which the capitalist has been ejected, or in which he has at least been curbed by genuine workers' control, every village from which the landowning exploiter has been smoked out and his land confiscated has only now become a field in which the working man can reveal his talents, unbend his back a little, rise to his full height, and feel that he is a human being. For the first time after centuries of working for others, of forced labour for the exploiter, it has become possible to *work for oneself* and moreover to employ all the achievements of modern technology and culture in one's work.

Of course, this greatest change in human history from working under compulsion to working for oneself cannot take place without friction, difficulties, conflicts and violence against the inveterate parasites and their hangers-on. No worker has any illusions on that score. The workers and poor peasants, hardened by dire want and by many long years of slave labour for the exploiters, by their countless insults and acts of violence, realise that it will take time to *break* the resistance of those exploiters. The workers and peasants are not in the least infected with the sentimental illusions of the intellectual gentlemen, of the *Novaya Zhizn** crowd and other slush, who "shouted" themselves hoarse "denouncing" the capitalists and "gesticulated" against them,

* *Novaya Zhizn* (New Life)—a newspaper published in 1917-18 by a Social-Democratic group, the so-called "Internationalists", which united Left Mensheviks and intellectuals of semi-Menshevik orientation. Up to October 1917 it was inconsistently oppositional—now to the Provisional Government, now to the Bolsheviks. After the October Revolution the paper adopted a hostile attitude to the Soviet power.—*Ed.*

only to burst into tears and to behave like whipped puppies when it came to *deeds*, to putting threats into action, to carrying out in practice the work of *removing* the capitalists.

The great change from working under compulsion to working for oneself, to labour planned and organised on a gigantic, national (and to a certain extent international, world) scale, also requires—in addition to "*military*" measures for the suppression of the exploiters' resistance—tremendous *organisational*, organising effort on the part of the proletariat and the poor peasants. The organisational task is interwoven to form a single whole with the task of ruthlessly suppressing by military methods yesterday's slave-owners (capitalists) and their packs of lackeys—the bourgeois intellectual gentlemen. Yesterday's slave-owners and their "intellectual" stooges say and think, "We have always been organisers and chiefs. We have commanded, and we want to continue doing so. We shall refuse to obey the 'common people', the workers and peasants. We shall not submit to them. We shall convert knowledge into a weapon for the defence of the privileges of the money-bags and of the rule of capital over the people."

That is what the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois intellectuals say, think, and do. From the point of view of *self-interest* their behaviour is comprehensible. The hangers-on and spongers on the feudal landowners, the priests, the scribes, the bureaucrats as Gogol* depicted them, and the "intellectuals" who hated Belinsky,** also found it "hard" to part with serfdom. But the cause of the exploiters and of their "intellectual" menials is hopeless. The workers and peasants are beginning to break down their resistance—unfortunately, not yet firmly, resolutely and ruthlessly enough—*and break it down they will.*

"They" think that the "common people", the "common" workers and poor peasants, will be unable to cope with the great, truly heroic, in the world-historic sense of the word, organisational tasks which the socialist revolution has imposed upon the working people. The intellectuals who are accustomed to serving the capitalists and the capitalist state say in order to console themselves: "You cannot do without us." But their insolent

* *Gogol, Nikolai Vasilyevich* (1809-1852)—Russian novelist.—*Ed.*

** *Belinsky, Vissarion Grigoryevich* (1811-1848)—Russian revolutionary democrat, literary critic and publicist; irreconcilable enemy of serfdom which existed in Russia up to 1861.—*Ed.*

assumption has no truth in it; educated men are already making their appearance on the side of the people, on the side of the working people, and are helping to break the resistance of the servants of capital. There are a great many talented organisers among the peasants and the working class, and they are only just beginning to become aware of themselves, to awaken, to stretch out towards great, vital, creative work, to tackle with their own forces the task of building socialist society.

One of the most important tasks today, if not the most important, is to develop this independent initiative of the workers, and of all the working and exploited people generally, develop it as widely as possible in creative *organisational* work. At all costs we must break the old, *absurd*, savage, despicable and disgusting prejudice that only the so-called "upper classes", only the rich, and those who have gone through the school of the rich, are capable of administering the state and directing the organisational development of socialist society.

This is a prejudice fostered by rotten routine, by petrified views, slavish habits, and still more by the sordid selfishness of the capitalists, in whose interest it is to administer while plundering and to plunder while administering. The workers will not forget for a moment that they need the power of knowledge. The extraordinary striving after knowledge which the workers reveal, particularly now, shows that mistaken ideas about this do not and cannot exist among the proletariat. But every *rank-and-file* worker and peasant who can read and write, who can judge people and has practical experience, is capable of *organisational* work. Among the "common people", of whom the bourgeois intellectuals speak with such haughtiness and contempt, there are *many* such men and women. This sort of talent among the working class and the peasants is a rich and still untapped source.

The workers and peasants are still "timid", they have not yet become accustomed to the idea that *they* are now the *ruling* class; they are not yet resolute enough. The revolution could not *at one stroke* instil these qualities into millions and millions of people who all their lives had been compelled by want and hunger to work under the threat of the stick. But the Revolution of October 1917 is strong, viable and invincible because it *awakens* these qualities, breaks down the old impediments, removes the worn-out shackles, and leads the working people on to the road of the *independent* creation of a new life.

Accounting and control—this is the *main* economic task of every Soviet of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, of every consumers' society, of every union or committee of supplies, of every factory committee or organ of workers' control in general.

We must fight against the old habit of regarding the measure of labour and the means of production, from the point of view of the slave whose sole aim is to lighten the burden of labour or to obtain at least some little bit *from the bourgeoisie*. The advanced, class-conscious workers have already started this fight, and they are offering determined resistance to the newcomers who flocked to the factory world in particularly large numbers during the war and who now would like to treat the *people's* factory, the factory that has come into the possession of the people, in the old way, with the sole aim of "snatching the biggest possible piece of the pie and clearing out". All the class-conscious, honest and thinking peasants and working people will take their place in this fight by the side of the advanced workers.

Accounting and control, *if* carried on by the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies as the supreme state power, or on the instructions, on the authority, of *this* power—widespread, general, universal accounting and control, the accounting and control of the amount of labour performed and of the distribution of products—is the *essence* of socialist transformation, once the political rule of the proletariat has been established and secured.

The accounting and control essential for the transition to socialism can be exercised only by the people. Only the voluntary and conscientious co-operation of the *mass* of the workers and peasants in accounting and controlling *the rich, the rogues, the idlers and the rowdies*, a co-operation marked by revolutionary enthusiasm, can conquer these survivals of accursed capitalist society, these dregs of humanity, these hopelessly decayed and atrophied limbs, this contagion, this plague, this ulcer that socialism has inherited from capitalism.

Workers and peasants, working and exploited people! The land, the banks and the factories have now become the property of the entire people! You *yourselves* must set to work to take account of and control the production and distribution of products—this, and this *alone* is the road to the victory of socialism, the only guarantee of its victory, the guarantee of victory

over all exploitation, over all poverty and want! For there is enough bread, iron, timber, wool, cotton and flax in Russia to satisfy the needs of everyone, if only labour and its products are properly distributed, if only a *business-like, practical* control over this distribution by the entire people is established, provided only we can defeat the enemies of the people: the rich and their hangers-on, and the rogues, the idlers and the rowdies, *not only* in politics, but also in *everyday economic* life.

No mercy for these enemies of the people, the enemies of socialism, the enemies of the working people! War to the death against the rich and their hangers-on, the bourgeois intellectuals; war on the rogues, the idlers and the rowdies! All of them are of the same brood—the spawn of capitalism, the offspring of aristocratic and bourgeois society; the society in which a handful of men robbed and insulted the people; the society in which poverty and want forced thousands and thousands on to the path of rowdyism, corruption and roguery, and caused them to lose all human semblance; the society which inevitably cultivated in the working man the desire to escape exploitation even by means of deception, to wriggle out of it, to escape, if only for a moment, from loathsome labour, to procure at least a crust of bread by any possible means, at any cost, so as not to starve, so as to subdue the pangs of hunger suffered by himself and by his near ones.

The rich and the rogues are two sides of the same coin, they are the two principal categories of *parasites* which capitalism fostered; they are the principal enemies of socialism. These enemies must be placed under the special surveillance of the entire people; they must be ruthlessly punished for the slightest violation of the laws and regulations of socialist society. Any display of weakness, hesitation or sentimentality in this respect would be an immense crime against socialism.

In order to render these parasites harmless to socialist society we must organise the accounting and control of the amount of work done and of production and distribution by the entire people, by millions and millions of workers and peasants, participating voluntarily, energetically and with revolutionary enthusiasm. And in order to organise this accounting and control, which is *fully within the ability* of every honest, intelligent and efficient worker and peasant, we must rouse their organising talent, the talent that is to be found in their midst; we must rouse

among them—and organise on a national scale—*competition* in the sphere of organisational achievement; the workers and peasants must be brought to see clearly the difference between the necessary advice of an educated man and the necessary control by the "common" worker and peasant of the *slovenliness* that is so usual among the "educated".

This slovenliness, this carelessness, untidiness, unpunctuality, nervous haste, the inclination to substitute discussion for action, talk for work, the inclination to undertake everything under the sun without finishing anything, are characteristics of the "educated"; and this is not due to the fact that they are bad by nature, still less is it due to their evil will; it is due to all their habits of life, the conditions of their work, to fatigue, to the abnormal separation of mental from manual labour, and so on, and so forth.

Among the mistakes, shortcomings and defects of our revolution a by no means unimportant place is occupied by the mistakes, etc., which are due to these deplorable—but at present inevitable—characteristics of the intellectuals in our midst, and to the *lack* of sufficient supervision by the *workers* over the *organisational* work of the intellectuals.

The workers and peasants are still "timid"; they must get rid of this timidity, and they *certainly* will get rid of it. We cannot dispense with the advice, the instruction of educated people, of intellectuals and specialists. Every sensible worker and peasant understands this perfectly well, and the intellectuals in our midst cannot complain of a lack of attention and comradely respect on the part of the workers and peasants. Advice and instruction, however, is one thing, and the organisation of *practical* accounting and control is another. Very often the intellectuals give excellent advice and instruction, but they prove to be ridiculously, *absurdly,* shamefully "unhandy" and incapable of *carrying out* this advice and instruction, of exercising *practical control* over the translation of words into deeds.

In this very respect it is utterly impossible to dispense with the help and the *leading role* of the practical organisers from among the "people", from among the factory workers and working peasants. "It is not the gods who make pots"—this is the truth that the workers and peasants should get well drilled into their minds. They must understand that the whole thing now is *practical work*; that the historical moment has arrived when theory is being transformed into practice, vitalised by practice, corrected

by practice, tested by practice; when the words of Marx, "Every step of real movement is more important than a dozen programmes", become particularly true—every step in really curbing in practice, restricting, fully registering the rich and the rogues and keeping them under control is worth more than a dozen excellent arguments about socialism. For "theory, my friend, is grey, but green is the eternal tree of life".*

Competition must be arranged between practical organisers from among the workers and peasants. Every attempt to establish stereotyped forms and to impose uniformity from above, as intellectuals are so inclined to do, must be combated. Stereotyped forms and uniformity imposed from above have nothing in common with democratic and socialist centralism. The unity of essentials, of fundamentals, of the substance, is not disturbed but ensured by *variety* in details, in specific local features, in methods of *approach*, in *methods* of exercising control, in *ways* of exterminating and rendering harmless the parasites (the rich and the rogues, slovenly and hysterical intellectuals, etc., etc.).

The Paris Commune gave a great example of how to combine initiative, independence, freedom of action and vigour from below with voluntary centralism free from stereotyped forms.** Our Soviets*** are following the same road. But they are still "timid"; they have not yet got into their stride, have not yet "bitten into" their new, great, creative task of building the socialist system. The Soviets must set to work more boldly and display greater initiative. All "communes"—factories, villages, consumers' societies, and committees of supplies—must *compete* with each other as practical organisers of accounting and control

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* Quotation from *Faust,* the work of the great German writer Goethe; the words quoted are said by Mephistopheles.—*Ed.*

** *The Paris Commune* of 1871 was the first attempt in the history of mankind to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. It existed since March 18 to May 28, 1871. The Paris Commune separated the church from the state and school from church, it substituted general arming of the people for a standing army, introduced electivity of judges and other officials by the people, establishing at the same time that an official's salary was not to exceed a worker's wages. It also took a series of measures to improve the economic condition of the workers and the city poor. On May 21, 1871 the troops of the Thiers counter-revolutionary government invaded Paris and cruelly suppressed the workers—about 30,000 people were killed, 50,000 arrested, many were sentenced to hard labour.—*Ed.*

*** *The Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies,* which after the October Socialist Revolution of 1917 became organs of state power.—*Ed.*

of labour and distribution of products. The programme of this accounting and control is simple, clear and intelligible to all—everyone to have bread; everyone to have sound footwear and good clothing; everyone to have warm dwellings; everyone to work conscientiously; not a single rogue (including those who shirk their work) to be allowed to be at liberty, but kept in prison, or serve his sentence of compulsory labour of the hardest kind; not a single rich man who violates the laws and regulations of socialism to be allowed to escape the fate of the rogue, which should, in justice, be the fate of the rich man. "He who does not work, neither shall he eat"—this is the *practical* commandment of socialism. This is how things should be organised *practically*. These are the *practical* successes our "communes" and our worker and peasant organisers should be proud of. And this applies particularly to the organisers among the intellectuals (*particularly*, because they are *too much, far too much* in the habit of being proud of their general instructions and resolutions).

Thousands of practical forms and methods of accounting and controlling the rich, the rogues and the idlers must be devised and put to a practical test by the communes themselves, by small units in town and country. Variety is a guarantee of effectiveness here, a pledge of success in achieving the single common aim—to *clean* the land of Russia of all vermin, of fleas—the rogues, of bugs—the rich, and so on and so forth. In one place half a score of rich, a dozen rogues, half a dozen workers who shirk their work (in the manner of rowdies, the manner in which many compositors in Petrograd, particularly in the Party printing-shops, shirk their work) will be put in prison. In another place they will be put to cleaning latrines. In a third place they will be provided with "yellow tickets" after they have served their time, so that everyone shall keep an eye on them, as *harmful* persons, until they reform. In a fourth place, one out of every ten idlers will be shot on the spot. In a fifth place mixed methods may be adopted, and by probational release, for example, the rich, the bourgeois intellectuals, the rogues and rowdies who are corrigible will be given an opportunity to reform quickly. The more variety there will be, the better and richer will be our general experience, the more certain and rapid will be the success of socialism, and the easier will it be for practice to devise—for only practice can devise—the *best* methods and means of struggle.

In what commune, in what district of a large town, in what factory and in what village are there *no* starving people, *no* unemployed, *no* idle rich, *no* despicable lackeys of the bourgeoisie, saboteurs who call themselves intellectuals? Where has most been done to raise the productivity of labour, to build good new houses for the poor, to put the poor in the houses of the rich, to regularly provide a bottle of milk for every child of every poor family? It is on these points that *competition* should develop between the communes, communities, producer-consumers' societies and associations, and Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. This is the work in which *talented organisers* should come to the fore *in practice* and be promoted to work in state administration. There is a great deal of talent among the people. It is merely suppressed. It must be given an opportunity to display itself. It *and it alone*, with the support of the people, can save Russia and save the cause of socialism.

Written on December 24-27, 1917

V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, pp. 404-15

SPEECH AT THE FIRST CONGRESS OF ECONOMIC COUNCILS MAY 26, 1918

Comrades, permit me first of all to greet the Congress of Economic Councils in the name of the Council of People's Commissars. (*Applause.*)

Comrades, the Supreme Economic Council now has a difficult, but a most rewarding task. There is not the slightest doubt that the further the gains of the October Revolution go, the more profound the upheaval it started becomes, the more firmly the socialist revolution's gains become established and the socialist system becomes consolidated, the greater and higher will become the role of the Economic Councils, which alone of all the state institutions are to endure. And their position will become all the more durable the closer we approach the establishment of the socialist system and the less need there will be for a purely administrative apparatus, for an apparatus which is solely engaged in administration. After the resistance of the exploiters has been finally broken, after the working people have learned to organise socialist production, this apparatus of administration in the proper, strict, narrow sense of the word, this apparatus of the old state, is doomed to die; while the apparatus of the type of the Supreme Economic Council is destined to grow, to develop and become strong, performing all the main activities of organised society.

That is why, comrades, when I look at the experience of our Supreme Economic Council and of the local councils, with the activities of which it is closely and inseparably connected, I think that, in spite of much that is unfinished, incomplete and unorganised, we have not even the slightest grounds for pessimistic conclusions. For the task which the Supreme Economic Council sets itself, and the task which all the regional and local councils

set themselves, is so enormous, so all-embracing, that there is absolutely nothing that gives rise to alarm in what we all observe. Very often—of course, from our point of view, perhaps too often—the proverb "measure thrice and cut once" has not been applied. Unfortunately, things are not so simple in regard to the organisation of the economy on socialist lines as they are expressed in that proverb.

With the transition of all power—this time not only political and not even mainly political, but economic power, that is, power that affects the deepest foundations of everyday human existence—to a new class, and, moreover, to a class which for the first time in the history of humanity is the leader of the overwhelming majority of the population, of the whole mass of the working and exploited people—our tasks become more complicated.

It goes without saying that in view of the supreme importance and the supreme difficulty of the organisational tasks that confront us, when we must organise the deepest foundations of the existence of hundreds of millions of people on entirely new lines, it is impossible to arrange matters as simply as in the proverb "measure thrice and cut once". We, indeed, are not in a position to measure a thing innumerable times and then cut out and fix what has been finally measured and fitted. We must build our economic edifice as we go along, trying out various institutions, watching their work, testing them by the collective common experience of the working people, and, above all, by the results of their work. We must do this as we go along, and, moreover, in a situation of desperate struggle and frenzied resistance by the exploiters, whose frenzy grows the nearer we come to the time when we can pull out the last bad teeth of capitalist exploitation. It is understandable that if even within a brief period we have to alter the types, the regulations and the bodies of administration in various branches of the national economy several times, there are not the slightest grounds for pessimism in these conditions, although, of course, this gives considerable grounds for malicious outbursts on the part of the bourgeoisie and the exploiters, whose best feelings are hurt. Of course, those who take too close and too direct a part in this work, say, the Chief Water Board, do not always find it pleasant to alter the regulations, the norms and the laws of administration three times; the pleasure obtained from work of this kind cannot be great. But if we abstract ourselves somewhat from the direct unpleasantness of extremely frequent

alteration of decrees, and if we look a little deeper and further into the enormous world-historic task that the Russian proletariat has to carry out with the aid of its own still inadequate forces, it will become immediately understandable that even far more numerous alterations and testing in practice of various systems of administration and various forms of discipline are inevitable; that in such a gigantic task, we could never claim, and no sensible socialist who has ever written on the prospects of the future ever even thought, that we could immediately establish and compose the forms of organisation of the new society according to some predetermined instruction and at one stroke.

All that we knew, all that the best experts on capitalist society, the greatest minds who foresaw its development, exactly indicated to us was that transformation was historically inevitable and must proceed along a certain main line, that private ownership of the means of production was doomed by history, that it would burst, that the exploiters would inevitably be expropriated. This was established with scientific precision, and we knew this when we grasped the banner of socialism, when we declared ourselves socialists, when we founded socialist parties, when we transformed society. We knew this when we took power for the purpose of proceeding with socialist reorganisation; but we could not know the forms of transformation, or the rate of development of the concrete reorganisation. Collective experience, the experience of millions can alone give us decisive guidance in this respect, precisely because, for our task, for the task of building socialism, the experience of the hundreds and hundreds of thousands of those upper sections which have made history up to now in feudal society and in capitalist society is insufficient. We cannot proceed in this way precisely because we rely on joint experience, on the experience of millions of working people.

We know, therefore, that organisation, which is the main and fundamental task of the Soviets, will inevitably entail a vast number of experiments, a vast number of steps, a vast number of alterations, a vast number of difficulties, particularly in regard to the question of how to fit every person into his proper place, because we have no experience of this; here we have to devise every step ourselves, and the more serious the mistakes we make on this path, the more the certainty will grow that with every increase in the membership of the trade unions, with every additional thousand, with every additional hundred thousand that

come over from the camp of working people, of exploited, who have hitherto lived according to tradition and habit, into the camp of the builders of Soviet organisations, the number of people who should prove suitable and organise the work on proper lines is increasing.

Take one of the secondary tasks that the Economic Council—the Supreme Economic Council—comes up against with particular frequency, the task of utilising bourgeois experts. We all know, at least those who take their stand on the basis of science and socialism, that this task can be fulfilled only when—that this task can be fulfilled only to the extent that international capitalism has developed the material and technical prerequisites of labour, organised on an enormous scale and based on science, and hence on the training of an enormous number of scientifically educated specialists. We know that without this socialism is impossible. If we reread the works of those socialists who have observed the development of capitalism during the last half-century, and who have again and again come to the conclusion that socialism is inevitable, we shall find that all of them without exception have pointed out that socialism alone will liberate science from its bourgeois fetters, from its enslavement to capital, from its slavery to the interests of dirty capitalist greed. Socialism alone will make possible the wide expansion of social production and distribution on scientific lines and their actual subordination to the aim of easing the lives of the working people and of improving their welfare as much as possible. Socialism alone can achieve this. And we know that it must achieve this, and in the understanding of this truth lies the whole complexity and the whole strength of Marxism.

We must achieve this while relying on elements which are opposed to it, because the bigger capital becomes the more the bourgeoisie suppresses the workers. Now that power is in the hands of the proletariat and the poor peasants and the government is setting itself tasks with the support of the people, we have to achieve these socialist changes with the help of bourgeois experts who have been trained in bourgeois society, who know no other conditions, who cannot conceive of any other social system. Hence, even in cases when these experts are absolutely sincere and loyal to their work they are filled with thousands of bourgeois prejudices, they are connected by thousands of ties, imperceptible to themselves, with bourgeois society, which is dying and

decaying and is therefore putting up furious resistance.

We cannot conceal these difficulties of endeavour and achievement from ourselves. Of all the socialists who have written about this, I cannot recall the work of a single socialist or the opinion of a single prominent socialist on future socialist society, which pointed to this concrete, practical difficulty that would confront the working class when it took power, when it set itself the task of turning the sum total of the very rich, historically inevitable and necessary for us store of culture and knowledge and technique accumulated by capitalism from an instrument of capitalism into an instrument of socialism. It is easy to do this in a general formula, in abstract reasoning, but in the struggle against capitalism, which does not die at once but puts up increasingly furious resistance the closer death approaches, this task is one that calls for tremendous effort. If experiments take place in this field, if we make repeated corrections of partial mistakes, this is inevitable because we cannot, in this or that sphere of the national economy, immediately turn specialists from servants of capitalism into servants of the working people, into their advisers. If we cannot do this at once it should not give rise to the slightest pessimism, because the task which we set ourselves is a task of world-historic difficulty and significance. We do not shut our eyes to the fact that in a single country, even if it were a much less backward country than Russia, even if we were living in better conditions than those prevailing after four years of unprecedented, painful, severe and ruinous war, we could not carry out the socialist revolution completely, solely by our own efforts. He who turns away from the socialist revolution now taking place in Russia and points to the obvious disproportion of forces is like the conservative "man in a muffler"* who cannot see further than his nose, who forgets that not a single historical change of any importance takes place without there being several instances of a disproportion of forces. Forces grow in the process of the struggle, as the revolution grows. When a country has taken the path of profound change, it is to the credit of that country and the party of the working class which achieved victory in that country, that they should take up in a practical manner the tasks that were formerly

* *The man in a muffler*—the main character of A. P. Chekhov's story of the same name—a narrow-minded philistine who is afraid of anything new, of any initiative.—*Ed.*

raised abstractly, theoretically. This experience will never be forgotten. The experience which the workers now united in trade unions and local organisations are acquiring in the practical work of organising the whole of production on a national scale cannot be taken away, no matter how difficult the vicissitudes the Russian revolution and the international socialist revolution may pass through. It has gone down in history as socialism's gain, and on it the future world revolution will erect its socialist edifice.

Permit me to mention another problem, perhaps the most difficult problem, for which the Supreme Economic Council has to find a practical solution. This is the problem of labour discipline. Strictly speaking, in mentioning this problem, we ought to admit and emphasise with satisfaction that it was precisely the trade unions, their largest organisations, namely, the Central Committee of the Metalworkers' Union and the All-Russia Trade Union Council, the supreme trade union organisations uniting millions of working people, that were the first to set to work independently to solve this problem and this problem is of world-historic importance. In order to understand it we must abstract ourselves from those partial, minor failures, from the incredible difficulties which, if taken separately, seem to be insurmountable. We must rise to a higher level and survey the historical change of systems of social economy. Only from this angle will it be possible to appreciate the immensity of the task which we have undertaken. Only then will it be possible to appreciate the enormous significance of the fact that on this occasion, the most advanced representatives of society, the working and exploited people are, on their own initiative, taking on themselves the task which hitherto, in feudal Russia, up to 1861,* was solved by a handful of landed proprietors, who regarded it as their own affair. At that time it was their affair to bring about state integration and discipline.

We know how the feudal landowners created this discipline. It was oppression, humiliation and the incredible torments of penal servitude for the majority of the people. Recall the whole of this transition from serfdom to the bourgeois economy. From all that you have witnessed—although the majority of you could not have witnessed it—and from all that you have learned from the older generations, you know how easy, historically, seemed the

* On February 19, 1861 serfdom was eliminated in Russia.—*Ed.*

transition to the new bourgeois economy after 1861, the transition from the old feudal discipline of the stick, from the discipline of the most senseless, arrogant and brutal humiliation and personal violence, to bourgeois discipline, to the discipline of starvation, to so-called free hire, which in fact was the discipline of capitalist slavery. This was because mankind passed from one exploiter to another; because one minority of plunderers and exploiters of the people's labour gave way to another minority, who were also plunderers and exploiters of the people's labour; because the feudal landowners gave way to the capitalists, one minority gave way to another minority, while the toiling and exploited classes remained oppressed. And even this change from one exploiter's discipline to another exploiter's discipline took years, if not decades, of effort; it extended over a transition period of years, if not decades. During this period the old feudal landowners quite sincerely believed that everything was going to rack and ruin, that it was impossible to manage the country without serfdom; while the new, capitalist boss encountered practical difficulties at every step and gave up his enterprise as a bad job. The material evidence, one of the substantial proofs of the difficulty of this transition was that Russia at that time imported machinery from abroad, in order to have the best machinery to use, and it turned out that no one was available to handle this machinery, and there were no managers. And all over Russia one could see excellent machinery lying around unused, so difficult was the transition from the old feudal discipline to the new, bourgeois, capitalist discipline.

And so, comrades, if you look at the matter from this angle, you will not allow yourselves to be misled by those people, by those classes, by those bourgeoisie and their hangers-on whose sole task is to sow panic, to sow despondency, to cause complete despondency concerning the whole of our work, to make it appear to be hopeless, who point to every single case of indiscipline and corruption, and for that reason give up the revolution as a bad job, as if there has ever been in the world, in history, a single really great revolution in which there was no corruption, no loss of discipline, no painful experimental steps, when the people were creating a new discipline. We must not forget that this is the first time that this preliminary stage in history has been reached, when a new discipline, labour discipline, the discipline of comradely contact, Soviet discipline, is being created in fact by millions of

working and exploited people. We do not claim, nor do we expect, quick successes in this field. We know that this task will take an entire historical epoch. We have begun this historical epoch, an epoch in which we are breaking up the discipline of capitalist society in a country which is still bourgeois, and we are proud that all politically conscious workers, absolutely all the toiling peasants are everywhere helping this destruction; an epoch in which the people voluntarily, on their own initiative, are becoming aware that they must—not on instructions from above, but on the instructions of their own living experience—change this discipline based on the exploitation and slavery of the working people into the new discipline of united labour, the discipline of the united, organised workers and working peasants of the whole of Russia, of country with a population of tens and hundreds of millions. This is a task of enormous difficulty, but it is also a thankful one, because only when we solve it in practice shall we have driven the last nail into the coffin of capitalist society which we are burying. (*Applause.*)

V. I. Lenin,
Collected Works, Vol. 27, pp. 408-15

From A GREAT BEGINNING

As I have had occasion to point out more than once, among other occasions in the speech I delivered at a session of the Petrograd Soviet on March 12, the dictatorship of the proletariat is not only the use of force against the exploiters, and not even mainly the use of force. The economic foundation of this use of revolutionary force, the guarantee of its effectiveness and success is the fact that the proletariat represents and creates a higher type of social organisation of labour compared with capitalism. This is what is important, this is the source of the strength and the guarantee that the final triumph of communism is inevitable.

The feudal organisation of social labour rested on the discipline of the bludgeon, while the working people, robbed and tyrannised by a handful of landowners, were utterly ignorant and downtrodden. The capitalist organisation of social labour rested on the discipline of hunger, and, notwithstanding all the progress of bourgeois culture and bourgeois democracy, the vast mass of the working people in the most advanced, civilised and democratic republics remained an ignorant and downtrodden mass of wage-slaves or oppressed peasants, robbed and tyrannised by a handful of capitalists. The communist organisation of social labour, the first step towards which is socialism, rests, and will do so more and more as time goes on, on the free and conscious discipline of the working people themselves who have thrown off the yoke both of the landowners and capitalists.

This new discipline does not drop from the skies, nor is it born from pious wishes; it grows out of the material conditions of large-scale capitalist production, and out of them alone. Without them it is impossible. And the repository, or the vehicle, of these material conditions is a definite historical class, created, organised, united, trained, educated and hardened by large-scale capitalism. This class is the proletariat.

If we translate the Latin, scientific, historico-philosophical term "dictatorship of the proletariat" into simpler language, it means just the following:

Only a definite class, namely, the urban workers and the factory, industrial workers in general, is able to lead the whole mass of the working and exploited people in the struggle to throw off the yoke of capital, in actually carrying it out, in the struggle to maintain and consolidate the victory, in the work of creating the new, socialist social system and in the entire struggle for the complete abolition of classes. (Let us observe in parenthesis that the only scientific distinction between socialism and communism is that the first term implies the first stage of the new society arising out of capitalism, while the second implies the next and higher stage.)

The mistake the "Berne" yellow International* makes is that its leaders accept the class struggle and the leading role of the proletariat only in word and are afraid to think it out to its logical conclusion. They are afraid of that inevitable conclusion which particularly terrifies the bourgeoisie, and which is absolutely unacceptable to them. They are afraid to admit that the dictatorship of the proletariat is *also* a period of class struggle, which is inevitable as long as classes have not been abolished, and which changes in form, being particularly fierce and particularly peculiar in the period immediately following the overthrow of capital. The proletariat does not cease the class struggle after it has captured political power, but continues it until classes are abolished—of course, under different circumstances, in different form and by different means.

And what does the "abolition of classes" mean? All those who call themselves socialists recognise this as the ultimate goal of socialism, but by no means all give thought to its significance. Classes are large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated

* *The Berne,* or *yellow, International,* was what Lenin called the Second International which ceased to exist in 1914, when the world imperialist war broke out, and was restored at the Berne conference of social-chauvinist and centrist parties in February 1919.—*Ed.*

in law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organisation of labour, and, consequently, by the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it. Classes are groups of people one of which can appropriate the labour of another owing to the different places they occupy in a definite system of social economy.

Clearly, in order to abolish classes completely, it is not enough to overthrow the exploiters, the landowners and capitalists, not enough to abolish *their* rights of ownership; it is necessary also to abolish *all* private ownership of the means of production, it is necessary to abolish the distinction between town and country, as well as the distinction between manual workers and brain workers. This requires a very long period of time. In order to achieve this an enormous step forward must be taken in developing the productive forces; it is necessary to overcome the resistance (frequently passive, which is particularly stubborn and particularly difficult to overcome) of the numerous survivals of small-scale production; it is necessary to overcome the enormous force of habit and conservatism which are connected with these survivals.

The assumption that all "working people" are equally capable of doing this work would be an empty phrase, or the illusion of an antediluvian, pre-Marxist socialist; for this ability does not come of itself, but grows historically, and grows *only* out of the material conditions of large-scale capitalist production. This ability, at the beginning of the road from capitalism to socialism, is possessed by the proletariat *alone*. It is capable of fulfilling the gigantic task that confronts it, first, because it is the strongest and most advanced class in civilised societies; secondly, because in the most developed countries it constitutes the majority of the population, and thirdly, because in backward capitalist countries, like Russia, the majority of the population consists of semi-proletarians, i.e., of people who regularly live in a proletarian way part of the year, who regularly earn a part of their means of subsistence as wage-workers in capitalist enterprises.

Those who try to solve the problems involved in the transition from capitalism to socialism on the basis of general talk about liberty, equality, democracy in general, equality of labour democracy, etc. (as Kautsky, Martov* and other heroes of the Berne

* *Martov, L. (Tsederbaum, Yuli Osipovich)* (1873-1923)—Russian Social-Democrat, Menshevik.—*Ed.*

yellow International do), thereby only reveal their petty-bourgeois, philistine nature and ideologically slavishly follow in the wake of the bourgeoisie. The correct solution of this problem can be found only in a concrete study of the specific relations between the specific class which has conquered political power, namely, the proletariat, and the whole non-proletarian, and also semi-proletarian, mass of the working population—relations which do not take shape in fantastically harmonious, "ideal" conditions, but in the real conditions of the frantic resistance of the bourgeoisie which assumes many and diverse forms.

The vast majority of the population—and all the more so of the working population—of any capitalist country, including Russia, have thousands of times experienced, themselves and through their kith and kin, the oppression of capital, the plunder and every sort of tyranny it perpetrates. The imperialist war, i.e., the slaughter of ten million people in order to decide whether British or German capital was to have supremacy in plundering the whole world, has greatly intensified these ordeals, has increased and deepened them, and has made the people realise their meaning. Hence the inevitable sympathy displayed by the vast majority of the population, particularly the working people, for the proletariat, because it is with heroic courage and revolutionary ruthlessness throwing off the yoke of capital, overthrowing the exploiters, suppressing their resistance, and shedding its blood to pave the road for the creation of the new society, in which there will be no room for exploiters.

Great and inevitable as may be their petty-bourgeois vacillations and their tendency to go back to bourgeois "order", under the "wing" of the bourgeoisie, the non-proletarian and semi-proletarian mass of the working population cannot but recognise the moral and polifical authority of the proletariat, who are not only overthrowing the exploiters and suppressing their resistance, but are building a new and higher social bond, a social discipline, the discipline of class-conscious and united working people, who know no yoke and no authority except the authority of their own unity, of their own, more class-conscious, bold, solid, revolutionary and steadfast vanguard.

In order to achieve victory, in order to build and consolidate socialism, the proletariat must fulfil a two-fold or dual task: first, it must, by its supreme heroism in the revolutionary struggle against capital, win over the entire mass of the working and

exploited people; it must win them over, organise them and lead them in the struggle to overthrow the bourgeoisie and utterly suppress their resistance. Secondly, it must lead the whole mass of the working and exploited people, as well as all the petty-bourgeois groups, on to the road of new economic development, towards the creation of a new social bond, a new labour discipline, a new organisation of labour, which will combine the last word in science and capitalist technology with the mass association of class-conscious workers creating large-scale socialist industry.

The second task is more difficult than the first, for it cannot possibly be fulfilled by single acts of heroic fervour; it requires the most prolonged, most persistent and most difficult mass heroism in *plain, everyday* work. But this task is more essential than the first, because, in the last analysis, the deepest source of strength for victories over the bourgeoisie and the sole guarantee of the durability and permanence of these victories can only be a new and higher mode of social production, the substitution of large-scale socialist production for capitalist and petty-bourgeois production.

... In the last analysis, productivity of labour is the most important, the principal thing for the victory of the new social system. Capitalism created a productivity of labour unknown under serfdom. Capitalism can be utterly vanquished, and will be utterly vanquished by socialism creating a new and much higher productivity of labour. This is a very difficult matter and must take a long time; but *it has been started,* and that is the main thing. If in starving Moscow, in the summer of 1919, the starving workers who had gone through four trying years of imperialist war and another year and a half of still more trying civil war could start this great work, how will things develop later when we triumph in the civil war and win peace?

Communism is the higher productivity of labour—compared with that existing under capitalism—or voluntary, class-conscious and united workers employing advanced techniques. Communist subbotniks are extraordinarily valuable as the *actual* beginning of *communism;* and this is a very rare thing, because we are in a stage when "only the *first steps* in the transition from capitalism to communism are being taken" (as our Party Programme quite rightly says).

Communism begins when the *rank-and-file workers* display an

enthusiastic concern that is undaunted by arduous toil to increase the productivity of labour, husband *every pood of grain, coal, iron* and other products, which do not accrue to the workers personally or to their "close" kith and kin, but to their "distant" kith and kin, i.e., to society as a whole, to tens and hundreds of millions of people united first in one socialist state, and then in a union of Soviet republics.

In *Capital,* Karl Marx ridicules the pompous and grandiloquent bourgeois-democratic great charter of liberty and the rights of man, ridicules all this phrase-mongering about liberty, equality and fraternity *in general,* which dazzles the petty bourgeois and philistines of all countries, including the present despicable heroes of the despicable Berne International. Marx contrasts these pompous declarations of rights to the plain, modest, practical, simple manner in which the question is presented by the proletariat—the legislative enactment of a shorter working day is a typical example of such treatment. The aptness and profundity of Marx's observation become the clearer and more obvious to us the more the content of the proletarian revolution unfolds. The "formulas" of genuine communism differ from the pompous, intricate, and solemn phraseology of the Kautskys, the Mensheviks* and the Socialist-Revolutionaries** and their beloved "brethren" of Berne in that they reduce everything to the *conditions of labour.* Less chatter about "labour democracy", about "liberty, equality and fraternity", about "government by the people", and all such stuff;

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* *Menshevism*—an opportunist trend in Russian Social-Democracy, one of the trends of international opportunism. It was formed at the Second RSDLP Congress (1903) by the opponents of Leninist *Iskra.* When the central Party organs were elected at the Congress the Leninists got the majority of votes and were called Bolsheviks (from Russian *bolshinstvo*), and the opportunists were left in the minority and got the name of Mensheviks (from Russian *menshinstvo*).

In 1917 Mensheviks participated in the bourgeois Provisional Government, and after the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution, waged a struggle against the Soviet power together with other counter-revolutionary parties.—*Ed.*

** *Socialist-Revolutionaries*—a Russian petty-bourgeois party founded in 1901-02 through the merger of various Narodnik groups and circles. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution the Socialist-Revolutionaries, together with the Mensheviks, participated in the bourgeois Provisional Government and supported its imperialist policy. After the triumph of the socialist revolution in Russia, they took part in the armed struggle of the Russian counter-revolutionary forces against the Soviet people.—*Ed.*

the class-conscious workers and peasants of our day see through these pompous phrases of the bourgeois intellectual and discern the trickery as easily as a person of ordinary common sense and experience, when glancing at the irreproachably "polished" features and immaculate appearance of the "fain fellow, dontcher know", immediately and unerringly puts him down as "in all probability, a scoundrel".

Fewer pompous phrases, more plain, *everyday* work, concern for the pood of grain and the pood of coal! More concern about providing this pood of grain and pood of coal needed by the hungry workers and ragged and barefoot peasants *not* by *haggling,* not in a capitalist manner, but by the conscious, voluntary, boundlessly heroic labour of plain working men like the unskilled labourers and railwaymen of the Moscow-Kazan line.

We must all admit that vestiges of the bourgeois-intellectual phrase-mongering approach to questions of the revolution are in evidence at every step, everywhere, even in our own ranks. Our press, for example, does little to fight these rotten survivals of the rotten, bourgeois-democratic past; it does little to foster the simple, modest, ordinary but viable shoots of genuine communism.

Take the position of women. In this field, not a single democratic party in the world, not even in the most advanced bourgeois republic, has done in decades so much as a hundredth part of what we did in our very first year in power. We really razed to the ground the infamous laws placing women in a position of inequality, restricting divorce and surrounding it with disgusting formalities, denying recognition to children born out of wedlock, enforcing a search for their fathers, etc., laws numerous survivals of which, to the shame of the bourgeoisie and of capitalism, are to be found in all civilised countries. We have a thousand times the right to be proud of what we have done in this field. But the more *thoroughly* we have cleared the ground of the lumber of the old, bourgeois laws and institutions, the clearer it is to us that we have only cleared the ground to build on but are not yet building.

Notwithstanding all the laws emancipating woman, she continues to be a *domestic slave,* because *petty housework* crushes, strangles, stultifies and degrades her, chains her to the kitchen and the nursery, and she wastes her labour on barbarously unproductive, petty, nerve-racking, stultifying and crushing drudgery. The real *emancipation of women,* real communism, will begin only

where and when an all-out struggle begins (led by the proletariat wielding the state power) against this petty housekeeping, or rather when its *wholesale transformation* into a large-scale socialist economy begins.

Do we in practice pay sufficient attention to this question, which in theory every Communist considers indisputable? Of course not. Do we take proper care of the *shoots* of communism which already exist in this sphere? Again the answer is *no.* Public catering establishments, nurseries, kindergartens—here we have examples of these shoots, here we have the simple, everyday means, involving nothing pompous, grandiloquent or ceremonial, which can *really emancipate women,* really lessen and abolish their inequality with men as regards their role in social production and public life. These means are not new, they (like all the material prerequisites for socialism) were created by large-scale capitalism. But under capitalism they remained, first, a rarity, and secondly—which is particularly important—either *profit-making* enterprises, with all the worst features of speculation, profiteering, cheating and fraud, or "acrobatics of bourgeois charity", which the best workers rightly hated and despised.

There is no doubt that the number of these institutions in our country has increased enormously and that they are *beginning* to change in character. There is no doubt that we have far more *organising talent* among the working and peasant women than we are aware of, that we have far more people than we know of who can organise practical work, with the co-operation of large numbers of workers and of still larger numbers of consumers, without that abundance of talk, fuss, squabbling and chatter about plans, systems, etc., with which our big-headed "intellectuals" or half-baked "Communists" are "affected". But we *do not nurse* these shoots of the new as we should.

Look at the bourgeoisie. How very well they know how to advertise what *they* need! See how millions of copies of *their* newspapers extol what the capitalist regard as "model" enterprises, and how "model" bourgeois institutions are made an object of national pride! Our press does not take the trouble, or hardly ever, to describe the best catering establishments or nurseries, in order, by daily insistence, to get some of them turned into models of their kind. It does not give them enough publicity, does not describe in detail the saving in human labour, the conveniences for the consumer, the economy of products, the emanci-

pation of women from domestic slavery, the improvement in sanitary conditions, that can be achieved with *exemplary communist work* and extended to the whole of society, to all working people.

Exemplary production, exemplary communist subbotniks, exemplary care and conscientiousness in procuring and distributing every pood of grain, exemplary catering establishments, exemplary cleanliness in such-and-such a workers' house, in such-and-such a block, should all receive ten times more attention and care from our press, as well as from *every* workers' and peasants' organisation, than they receive now. All these are shoots of communism, and it is our common and primary duty to nurse them. Difficult as our food and production situation is, in the year and a half of Bolshevik rule there has been undoubted progress *all along the line*: grain procurements have increased from 30 million poods (from August 1, 1917 to August 1, 1918) to 100 million poods (from August 1, 1918 to May 1, 1919); vegetable gardening has expanded, the margin of unsown land has diminished, railway transport has begun to improve despite the enormous fuel difficulties, and so on. Against this general background, and with the support of the proletarian state power, the shoots of communism will not wither; they will grow and blossom into complete communism.

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V. I. Lenin,
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427-31

From ECONOMICS AND POLITICS IN THE ERA OF THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

Socialism means the abolition of classes.

In order to abolish classes it is necessary, first, to overthrow the landowners and capitalists. This part of our task has been accomplished, but it is only a part, and moreover, *not* the most difficult part. In order to abolish classes it is necessary, secondly, to abolish the difference between factory worker and peasant, to make *workers of all of them.* This cannot be done all at once. This task is incomparably more difficult and will of necessity take a long time. It is not a problem that can be solved by overthrowing a class. It can be solved only by the organisational reconstruction of the whole social economy, by a transition from individual, disunited, petty commodity production to large-scale social production. This transition must of necessity be extremely protracted. It may only be delayed and complicated by hasty and incautious administrative and legislative measures. It can be accelerated only by affording such assistance to the peasant as will enable him to effect an immense improvement in his whole farming technique, to reform it radically.

In order to solve the second and most difficult part of the problem, the proletariat, after having defeated the bourgeoisie, must unswervingly conduct its policy towards the peasantry along the following fundamental lines. The proletariat must separate, demarcate the working peasant from the peasant owner, the peasant worker from the peasant huckster, the peasant who labours from the peasant who profiteers.

In this demarcation lies the *whole essence* of socialism.

And it is not surprising that the socialists who are socialists in word but petty-bourgeois democrats in deed (the Martovs, the

Chernovs, the Kautskys and others) do not understand this essence of socialism.

The demarcation we here refer to is an extremely difficult one, because in real life all the features of the "peasant", however diverse they may be, however contradictory they may be, are fused into one whole. Nevertheless, demarcation is possible; and not only is it possible, it inevitably follows from the conditions of peasant farming and peasant life. The working peasant has for ages been oppressed by the landowners, the capitalists, the hucksters and profiteers and by *their* state, including even the most democratic bourgeois republics. Throughout the ages the working peasant has trained himself to hate and loathe these oppressors and exploiters, and this "training", engendered by the conditions of life, *compels* the peasant to seek an alliance with the worker against the capitalist and against the profiteer and huckster. Yet at the same time, economic conditions, the conditions of commodity production, inevitably turn the peasant (not always, but in the vast majority of cases) into a huckster and profiteer.

The statistics quoted above reveal a striking difference between the working peasant and the peasant profiteer. That peasant who during 1918-19 delivered to the hungry workers of the cities 40,000,000 poods of grain at fixed state prices, who delivered this grain to the state agencies despite all the shortcomings of the latter, shortcomings fully realised by the workers' government, but which were unavoidable in the first period of the transition to socialism—that peasant is a working peasant, the comrade and equal of the socialist worker, his most faithful ally, his blood brother in the fight against the yoke of capital. Whereas that peasant who clandestinely sold 40,000,000 poods of grain at ten times the state price, taking advantage of the need and hunger of the city worker, deceiving the state, and everywhere increasing and creating deceit, robbery and fraud—that peasant is a profiteer, an ally of the capitalist, a class enemy of the worker, an exploiter. For whoever possesses surplus grain gathered from land belonging to the whole state with the help of implements in which in one way or another is embodied the labour not only of the peasant but also of the worker and so on—whoever possesses a surplus of grain and profiteers in that grain is an exploiter of the hungry worker.

You are violators of freedom, equality, and democracy—they

shout at us on all sides, pointing to the inequality of the worker and the peasant under our Constitution, to the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, to the forcible confiscation of surplus grain, and so forth. We reply—never in the world has there been a state which has done so much to remove the actual inequality, the actual lack of freedom from which the working peasant has been suffering for centuries. But we shall never recognise equality with the peasant profiteer, just as we do not recognise "equality" between the exploiter and the exploited, between the sated and the hungry, nor the "freedom" for the former to rob the latter. And those educated people who refuse to recognise this difference we shall treat as whiteguards, even though they may call themselves democrats, socialists, internationalists, Kautskys, Chernovs, or Martovs.

Petrogradskaya Pravda No. 255,
November 7, 1919

V. I. Lenin,
Collected Works,
Vol. 30, pp. 112-14

From REPORT ON SUBBOTNIKS DELIVERED TO A MOSCOW CITY CONFERENCE OF THE R.C.P.(B.) DECEMBER 20, 1919

If we were to ask ourselves in what way communism differs from socialism, we should have to say that socialism is the society that grows directly out of capitalism, it is the first form of the new society. Communism is a higher form of society, and can only develop when socialism has become firmly established. Socialism implies work without the aid of the capitalists, socialised labour with strict accounting, control and supervision by the organised vanguard, the advanced section of the working people; the measure of labour and remuneration for it must be fixed. It is necessary to fix them because capitalist society has left behind such survivals and such habits as the fragmentation of labour, no confidence in social economy, and the old habits of the petty proprietor that dominate in all peasant countries. All this is contrary to real communist economy. We give the name of communism to the system under which people form the habit of performing their social duties without any special apparatus for coercion, and when unpaid work for the public good becomes a general phenomenon. It stands to reason that the concept of "communism" is a far too distant one for those who are taking the first steps towards complete victory over capitalism. No matter how correct it may have been to change the name of the Party, no matter how great the benefit the change has brought us, no matter how great the accomplishments of our cause and the scale on which it has developed—Communist Parties now exist throughout the world and although less than a year has passed since the foundation of the Communist International, from the point of view of the labour movement it is incomparably stronger than the old, dying Second International—if the name "Communist Party" were interpreted to mean that the communist

system is being introduced immediately, that would be a great distortion and would do practical harm since it would be nothing more than empty boasting.

That is why the word "communist" must be treated with great caution, and that is why communist subbotniks that have begun to enter into our life are of particular value, because it is only in this extremely tiny phenomenon that something communist has begun to make its appearance. The expropriation of the landowners and capitalists enabled us to organise only the most primitive forms of socialism, and there is not yet anything communist in it. If we take our present-day economy we see that the germs of socialism in it are still very weak and that the old economic forms dominate overwhelmingly; these are expressed either as the domination of petty proprietorship or as wild, uncontrolled profiteering. When our adversaries, the petty-bourgeois democrats, Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, assert in their objections to us that we have smashed large-scale capitalism but that the worst kind of profiteering, usury capitalism, persists in its place, we tell them that if they imagine that we can go straight from large-scale capitalism to communism they are not revolutionaries but reformists and utopians.

Large-scale capitalism has been seriously undermined everywhere, even in those countries where no steps towards socialism have yet been taken. From this point of view, none of the criticisms or the objections levelled against us by our opponents are serious. Obviously the beginnings of a new, petty, profiteering capitalism began to make their appearance after large-scale capitalism had been crushed. We are living through a savage battle against the survivals of large-scale capitalism which grasps at every kind of petty speculation where it is difficult to counteract it and where it takes on the worst and most unorganised form of trading.

The struggle has become much fiercer under war conditions and has led to the most brutal forms of profiteering, especially in places where capitalism was organised on a larger scale, and it would be quite incorrect to imagine that the revolutionary transition could have any other form. That is how matters stand in respect of our present-day economy. If we were to ask ourselves what the present economic system of Soviet Russia is, we should have to say that it consists in laying the foundations of socialism in large-scale industry, in reorganising the old capitalist economy

with the capitalists putting up a stubborn resistance in millions and millions of different ways. The countries of Western Europe that have emerged from the war as badly off as we are—Austria, for instance—differ from us only in that the disintegration of capitalism and speculation are more pronounced there than in our country and that there are no germs of socialist organisation to offer resistance to capitalism. There is, however, not yet anything communist in our economic system. The "communist" begins when subbotniks (i.e., unpaid labour with no quota set by any authority or any state) make their appearance; they constitute the labour of individuals on an extensive scale for the public good. This is not helping one's neighbour in the way that has always been customary in the countryside; it is work done to meet the needs of the country as a whole, and it is organised on a broad scale and is unpaid. It would, therefore, be more correct if the word "communist" were applied not only to the name of the Party but also to those economic manifestations in our reality that are actually communist in character. If there is anything communist at all in the prevailing system in Russia, it is only the subbotniks, and everything else is nothing but the struggle against capitalism for the consolidation of socialism out of which, after the full victory of socialism, there should grow that communism that we see at subbotniks, not with the aid of a book, but in living reality.

V. I. Lenin,
Collected Works,
Vol. 30, pp. 284-87

FROM THE DESTRUCTION OF THE OLD SOCIAL SYSTEM TO THE CREATION OF THE NEW

Our newspaper is devoted to the problem of communist labour.

This is the paramount problem in the building of socialism. First of all, we must make it quite clear to ourselves that this question *could* be raised in a practical way only after the proletariat had captured political power, only after the landowners and capitalists had been expropriated, only after the proletariat, having captured state power, had achieved decisive victories over the exploiters who put up a desperate resistance and organised counter-revolutionary rebellions and civil war.

It seemed that the time had arrived early in 1918—and it had indeed arrived after the February (1918) military campaign of German imperialism against Russia. But on that occasion the period was so short-lived, a new and more powerful wave of counter-revolutionary rebellions and invasions swept over us so quickly, that the Soviet government had no opportunity to devote itself at all closely and persistently to problems of peaceful development.

We have now passed through two years of unprecedented and incredible difficulties, two years of famine, privation, and distress, accompanied by the unprecedented victories of the Red Army over the hordes of international capitalist reaction.

Today there are serious grounds for hoping (if the French capitalists do not incite Poland to make war on us) that we shall get a more durable and lasting peace.

During these two years we have acquired some experience in organisation on the basis of socialism. That is why we can, and should, get right down to the problem of communist labour, or rather, it would be more correct to say, not communist, but socialist labour; for we are dealing not with the higher, but the

lower, the primary stage of development of the new social system that is growing out of capitalism.

Communist labour in the narrower and stricter sense of the term is labour performed gratis for the benefit of society, labour performed not as a definite duty, not for the purpose of obtaining a right to certain products, not according to previously established and legally fixed quotas, but voluntary labour, irrespective of quotas; it is labour performed without expectation of reward, without reward as a condition, labour performed because it has become a habit to work for the common good, and because of a conscious realisation (that has become a habit) of the necessity of working for the common good—labour as the requirement of a healthy organism.

It must be clear to everybody that we, i.e., our society, our social system, are still a very long way from the application of *this* form of labour on a broad, really mass scale.

But the very fact that this question has been raised, and raised both by the whole of the advanced proletariat (the Communist Party and the trade unions) and by the state authorities, is a step in this direction.

To achieve big things we must start with little things.

On the other hand, after the "big things", after the revolution which overthrew capitalist ownership and placed the proletariat in power, the organisation of economic life on the *new* basis *can* only start from *little* things.

Subbotniks, labour armies, labour conscription—these are the practical realisation of socialist and communist labour in various forms.

This practical realisation still suffers from numerous defects. Only people who are totally incapable of thinking, if we leave aside the champions of capitalism, can laugh scornfully (or rage) at them.

Defects, mistakes, blunders in such a new, difficult and great undertaking are inevitable. Those who are afraid of the difficulties of building socialism, those who allow themselves to be scared by them, those who give way to despair or cowardly dismay, are no socialists.

It will take many years, decades, to create a new labour discipline, new forms of social ties between people, and new forms and methods of drawing people into labour.

It is a most gratifying and noble work.

It is our good fortune that, by overthrowing the bourgeoisie and suppressing its resistance, we have been able to win the ground on which this work *has become possible.*

And we will set about this work with all our might. Perseverance, persistence, willingness, determination and ability to test things a hundred times, to correct them a hundred times, but to achieve the goal come what may—these are qualities which the proletariat acquired in the course of the ten, fifteen or twenty years that preceded the October Revolution, and which it has acquired in the two years that have passed since this revolution, years of unprecedented privation, hunger, ruin and destitution. These qualities of the proletariat are a guarantee that the proletariat will conquer.

April 8, 1920

Kommunistichesky Subbotnik,
April 11, 1920

V. I. Lenin,
Collected Works,
Vol. 30, pp. 516-18

FROM THE FIRST SUBBOTNIK ON THE MOSCOW-KAZAN RAILWAY TO THE ALL-RUSSIA MAY DAY SUBBOTNIK

The distance indicated in the above title has been covered in a single year. This is an enormous distance. Although all our subbotniks are still weak, and each subbotnik reveals a host of defects in arrangement, organisation and discipline, the main thing has been done. A heavy and ponderous mass has been shifted, and that is the essence of the matter.

We are not deceiving ourselves in the least about the little that has yet been done and about the infinite amount of work that has yet to be done; however, only malicious enemies of the working people, only malicious supporters of the bourgeoisie, can treat the May 1 subbotnik with disdain; only the most contemptible people, who have irrevocably sold themselves to the capitalists, can condemn the utilisation of the great First of May festival for a mass-scale attempt to introduce communist labour.

This is the very first time since the overthrow of the tsars, the landowners and the capitalists that the ground is being cleared for the actual building of socialism, for the development of new social links, a new discipline of work in common and a new national (and later an international) system of economy of world-historic importance. This is a matter of transforming the very habits of the people, habits which, for a long time to come, have been defiled and debased by the accursed private ownership of the means of production, and also by the entire atmosphere of bickering, distrust, enmity, disunity and mutual intrigue that is inevitably generated—and constantly regenerated—by petty individual economy, the economy of private owners in conditions of "free" exchange among them. For hundreds of years, freedom of trade and of exchange has been to millions of people the supreme gospel of economic wisdom, the most deep-rooted habit of

hundreds and hundreds of millions of people. This freedom is just as utterly false, serving to mask capitalist deception, coercion and exploitation, as are the other "freedoms" proclaimed and implemented by the bourgeoisie, such as the "freedom to work" (actually the freedom to starve), and so on.

In the main we have broken irrevocably with this "freedom" of the property-owner to be a property-owner, with this "freedom" of capital to exploit labour, and we shall finish the job. We are combating its remnants ruthlessly, with all our might.

Down with the old social links, the old economic relationships, the old "freedom" of labour (*subordinated to capital*), the old laws, the old habits!

Let us build a new society!

We were not daunted by defeats during the great revolutionary war against tsarism, against the bourgeoisie, against the omnipotent imperialist world powers.

We shall not be daunted by the gigantic difficulties and by the errors that are inevitable at the outset of a most difficult task; the transformation of all labour habits and customs requires decades. We solemnly and firmly promise one another that we shall make every sacrifice, that we shall hold out and win in this most arduous struggle—the struggle against the force of habit—that we shall work indefatigably for years and decades. We shall work to do away with the accursed maxim: "Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost", the habit of looking upon work merely as a duty, and of considering rightful only that work which is paid for at certain rates. We shall work to inculcate in people's minds, turn into a habit, and bring into the day-by-day life of the masses, the rule: "All for each and each for all"; the rule: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs"; we shall work for the gradual but steady introduction of communist discipline and communist labour.

We have shifted a huge mountain, a huge mass of conservatism, ignorance, stubborn adherence to the habits of "freedom of trade" and of the "free" buying and selling of human labour-power like any other commodity. We have begun to undermine and destroy the most deep-rooted prejudices, the firmest, age-long and ingrained habits. In a single year our subbotniks have made an immense stride forward. They are still infinitely weak, but that will not daunt us. We have seen our "infinitely weak" Soviet state, before our very eyes, gaining strength and becoming

a mighty world force, as a result of our own efforts. We shall work for years and decades practising subbotniks, developing them, spreading them, improving them and converting them into a habit. We shall achieve the victory of communist labour.

Pervomaisky Subbotnik,
May 2, 1920

V. I. Lenin,
Collected Works,
Vol. 31, pp. 123-25

ON CO-OPERATION

I

It seems to me that not enough attention is being paid to the co-operative movement in our country. Not everyone understands that now, since the time of the October Revolution and quite apart from NEP* (on the contrary, in this connection we must say—because of NEP), our co-operative movement has become one of great significance. There is a lot of fantasy in the dreams of the old co-operators. Often they are ridiculously fantastic. But why are they fantastic? Because people do not understand the fundamental, the rock-bottom significance of the working-class political struggle for the overthrow of the rule of the exploiters. We have overthrown the rule of the exploiters, and much that was fantastic, even romantic, even banal in the dreams of the old co-operators is now becoming unvarnished reality.

Indeed, since political power is in the hands of the working class, since this political power owns all the means of production, the only task, indeed, that remains for us is to organise the population in co-operative societies. With most of the population orga-

* *NEP*—"New Economic Policy", the economic policy of the proletarian state in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism. During NEP commodity-money relations became the main form of relations between socialist industry and small peasant farms. The peasants paid to the state a tax in kind and could freely dispose of the extra products, they could sell them and buy manufactured goods with the money.

The New Economic Policy allowed limited existence of capitalist elements for a certain period of time with the main elements of economics remaining in the hands of the proletarian state. Its aim was the development of productive forces, a rise of agriculture and accumulation of means necessary for building socialist industry.—*Ed.*

nised in co-operatives, the socialism which in the past was legitimately treated with ridicule, scorn and contempt by those who were rightly convinced that it was necessary to wage the class struggle, the struggle for political power, etc., will achieve its aim automatically. But not all comrades realise how vastly, how infinitely important it is now to organise the population of Russia in co-operative societies. By adopting NEP we made a concession to the peasant as a trader, to the principle of private trade; it is precisely for this reason (contrary to what some people think) that the co-operative movement is of such immense importance. All we actually need under NEP is to organise the population of Russia in co-operative societies on a sufficiently large scale, for we have now found that degree of combination of private interest, of private commercial interest, with state supervision and control of this interest, that degree of its subordination to the common interests which was formerly the stumbling-block for very many socialists. Indeed, the power of the state over all large-scale means of production, political power in the hands of the proletariat, the alliance of this proletariat with the many millions of small and very small peasants, the assured proletarian leadership of the peasantry, etc.—is this not all that is necessary to build a complete socialist society out of co-operatives, out of co-operatives alone, which we formerly ridiculed as huckstering and which from a certain aspect we have the right to treat as such now, under NEP? Is this not all that is necessary to build a complete socialist society? It is still not the building of socialist society, but it is all that is necessary and sufficient for it.

It is this very circumstance that is underestimated by many of our practical workers. They look down upon our co-operative societies, failing to appreciate their exceptional importance, first, from the standpoint of principle (the means of production are owned by the state), and, second, from the standpoint of transition to the new system by means that are the *simplest, easiest and most acceptable to the peasant.*

But this again is of fundamental importance. It is one thing to draw up fantastic plans for building socialism through all sorts of workers' associations, and quite another to learn to build socialism in practice in such a way that *every* small peasant could take part in it. That is the very stage we have now reached. And there is no doubt that, having reached it, we are taking too little advantage of it.

We went too far when we introduced NEP, but not because we attached too much importance to the principle of free enterprise and trade—we went too far because we lost sight of the co-operatives, because we now underrate the co-operatives, because we are already beginning to forget the vast importance of the co-operatives from the above two points of view.

I now propose to discuss with the reader what can and must at once be done practically on the basis of this "co-operative" principle. By what means can we, and must we, start at once to develop this "co-operative" principle so that its socialist meaning may be clear to all?

Co-operation must be politically so organised that it will not only generally and always enjoy certain privileges, but that these privileges should be of a purely material nature (a favourable bank-rate, etc). The co-operatives must be granted state loans that are greater, if only by a little, than the loans we grant to private enterprises, even to heavy industry, etc.

A social system emerges only if it has the financial backing of a definite class. There is no need to mention the hundreds of millions of rubles that the birth of "free" capitalism cost. At present we have to realise that the co-operative system is the social system we must now give more than ordinary assistance, and we must actually give that assistance. But it must be assistance in the real sense of the word, i. e., it will not be enough to interpret it to mean assistance for any kind of co-operative trade; by assistance we must mean aid to co-operative trade in which *really large masses of the population actually take part.* It is certainly a correct form of assistance to give a bonus to peasants who take part in co-operative trade; but the whole point is to verify the nature of this participation, to verify the awareness behind it, and to verify its quality. Strictly speaking, when a co-operator goes to a village and opens a co-operative store, the people take no part in this whatever; but at the same time guided by their own interests they will hasten to try to take part in it.

There is another aspect to this question. From the point of view of the "enlightened" (primarily, literate) European there is not much left for us to do to induce absolutely everyone to take not a passive, but an active part in co-operative operations. Strictly speaking, there is "*only*" one thing we have left to do and that is

to make our people so "enlightened" that they understand all the advantages of everybody participating in the work of the co-operatives, and organise this participation. "*Only*" that. There are now no other devices needed to advance to socialism. But to achieve this "only", there must be a veritable revolution—the entire people must go through a period of cultural development. Therefore, our rule must be: as little philosophising and as few acrobatics as possible. In this respect NEP is an advance, because it is adjustable to the level of the most ordinary peasant and does not demand anything higher of him. But it will take a whole historical epoch to get the entire population into the work of the co-operatives through NEP. At best we can achieve this in one or two decades. Nevertheless, it will be a distinct historical epoch, and without this historical epoch, without universal literacy, without a proper degree of efficiency, without training the population sufficiently to acquire the habit of book-reading, and without the material basis for this, without a certain sufficiency to safeguard against, say, bad harvests, famine, etc.—without this we shall not achieve our object. The thing now is to learn to combine the wide revolutionary range of action, the revolutionary enthusiasm which we have displayed, and displayed abundantly, and crowned with complete success—to learn to combine this with (I am almost inclined to say) the ability to be an efficient and capable trader, which is quite enough to be a good co-operator. By ability to be a trader I mean the ability to be a cultured trader. Let those Russians, or peasants, who imagine that since they trade they are good traders, get that well into their heads. This does not follow at all. They do trade, but that is far from being cultured traders. They now trade in an Asiatic manner, but to be a good trader one must trade in the European manner. They are a whole epoch behind in that.

In conclusion: a number of economic, financial and banking privileges must be granted to the co-operatives—this is the way our socialist state must promote the new principle on which the population must be organised. But this is only the general outline of the task; it does not define and depict in detail the entire content of the practical task, i. e., we must find what form of "bonus" to give for joining the co-operatives (and the terms on which we should give it), the form of bonus by which we shall assist the co-operatives sufficiently, the form of bonus that will produce the civilised co-operator. And given social ownership of the means of production, given the class victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, the system of civilised co-operators is the system of socialism.

January 4, 1923

II

Whenever I wrote about the New Economic Policy I always quoted the article on state capitalism which I wrote in 1918. This has more than once aroused doubts in the minds of certain young comrades. But their doubts were mainly on abstract political points.

It seemed to them that the term "state capitalism" could not be applied to a system under which the means of production were owned by the working class, a working class that held political power. They did not notice, however, that I used the term "state capitalism", *firstly*, to connect historically our present position with the position adopted in my controversy with the so-called Left Communists;* also, I argued at the time that state capitalism would be superior to our existing economy. It was important for me to show the continuity between ordinary state capitalism and the unusual, even very unusual, state capitalism to which I referred in introducing the reader to the New Economic Policy. *Secondly*, the practical purpose was always important to me. And the practical purpose of our New Economic Policy was to lease out concessions. In the prevailing circumstances, concessions in our country would unquestionably have been a pure type of state capitalism. That is how I argued about state capitalism.

But there is another aspect of the matter for which we may need state capitalism, or at least a comparison with it. It is the question of co-operatives.

In the capitalist state, co-operatives are no doubt collective capitalist institutions. Nor is there any doubt that under our

* *Left Communists*—a group of Russian Communists who in 1918 opposed the Brest peace treaty with Germany and the economic policy of the Party within the country. Their position did not find wide support among the Party members, and by the end of 1918 the group was dissolved.—*Ed.*

present economic conditions, when we combine private capitalist enterprises—but in no other way than on nationalised land and in no other way than under the control of the working-class state—with enterprises of a consistently socialist type (the means of production, the land on which the enterprises are situated, and the enterprises as a whole belonging to the state), the question arises about a third type of enterprise, the co-operatives, which were not formerly regarded as an independent type differing fundamentally from the others. Under private capitalism, co-operative enterprises differ from capitalist enterprises as collective enterprises differ from private enterprises. Under state capitalism, co-operative enterprises differ from state capitalist enterprises, firstly, because they are private enterprises, and, secondly, because they are collective enterprises. Under our present system, co-operative enterprises differ from private capitalist enterprises because they are collective enterprises, but do not differ from socialist enterprises if the land on which they are situated and the means of production belong to the state, i.e., the working class.

This circumstance is not considered sufficiently when co-operatives are discussed. It is forgotten that owing to the special features of our political system, our co-operatives acquire an altogether exceptional significance. If we exclude concessions, which, incidentally, have not developed on any considerable scale, co-operation under our conditions nearly always coincides fully with socialism.

Let me explain what I mean. Why were the plans of the old co-operators, from Robert Owen onwards, fantastic? Because they dreamed of peacefully remodelling contemporary society into socialism without taking account of such fundamental questions as the class struggle, the capture of political power by the working class, the overthrow of the rule of the exploiting class. That is why we are right in regarding as entirely fantastic this "co-operative" socialism, and as romantic, and even banal, the dream of transforming class enemies into class collaborators and class war into class peace (so-called class truce) by merely organising the population in co-operative societies.

Undoubtedly we were right from the point of view of the fundamental task of the present day, for socialism cannot be established without a class struggle for political power in the state.

But see how things have changed now that political power is in the hands of the working class, now that the political power of the exploiters is overthrown and all the means of production (except those which the workers' state voluntarily abandons on specified terms and for a certain time to the exploiters in the form of concessions) are owned by the working class.

Now we are entitled to say that for us the mere growth of co-operation (with the "slight" exception mentioned above) is identical with the growth of socialism, and at the same time we have to admit that there has been a radical modification in our whole outlook on socialism. The radical modification is this; formerly we placed, and had to place, the main emphasis on the political struggle, on revolution, on winning political power, etc. Now the emphasis is changing and shifting to peaceful, organisational, "cultural" work. I should say that emphasis is shifting to educational work, were it not for our international relations, were it not for the fact that we have to fight for our position on a world scale. If we leave that aside, however, and confine ourselves to internal economic relations, the emphasis in our work is certainly shifting to education.

Two main tasks confront us, which constitute the epoch—to reorganise our machinery of state, which is utterly useless, and which we took over in its entirety from the preceding epoch; during the past five years of struggle we did not, and could not, drastically reorganise it. Our second task is educational work among the peasants. And the economic object of this educational work among the peasants is to organise the latter in co-operative societies. If the whole of the peasantry had been organised in co-operatives, we would by now have been standing with both feet on the soil of socialism. But the organisation of the entire peasantry in co-operative societies presupposes a standard of culture among the peasants (precisely among the peasants as the overwhelming mass) that cannot, in fact, be achieved without a cultural revolution.

Our opponents told us repeatedly that we were rash in undertaking to implant socialism in an insufficiently cultured country. But they were misled by our having started from the opposite end to that prescribed by theory (the theory of pedants of all kinds), because in our country the political and social revolution preceded the cultural revolution, that very cultural revolution which nevertheless now confronts us.

This cultural revolution would now suffice to make our country a completely socialist country; but it presents immense difficulties of a purely cultural (for we are illiterate) and material character (for to be cultured we must achieve a certain development of the material means of production, must have a certain material base).

January 6, 1923

Pravda Nos. 115 and 116,
May 26 and 27, 1923

V. I. Lenin,
Collected Works,
Vol. 33, pp. 467-75

BETTER FEWER, BUT BETTER

In the matter of improving our state apparatus, the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection should not, in my opinion, either strive after quantity or hurry. We have so far been able to devote so little thought and attention to the efficiency of our state apparatus that it would now be quite legitimate if we took special care to secure its thorough organisation, and concentrated in the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection a staff of workers really abreast of the times, i.e., not inferior to the best West-European standards. For a socialist republic this condition is, of course, too modest. But our experience of the first five years has fairly crammed our heads with mistrust and scepticism. These qualities assert themselves involuntarily when, for example, we hear people dilating at too great length and too flippantly on "proletarian" culture. For a start, we should be satisfied with real bourgeois culture; for a start, we should be glad to dispense with the cruder types of pre-bourgeois culture, i.e., bureaucratic culture or serf culture, etc. In matters of culture, haste and sweeping measures are most harmful. Many of our young writers and Communists should get this well into their heads.

Thus, in the matter of our state apparatus we should now draw the conclusion from our past experience that it would be better to proceed more slowly.

Our state apparatus is so deplorable, not to say wretched, that we must first think very carefully how to combat its defects, bearing in mind that these defects are rooted in the past, which, although it has been overthrown, has not yet been overcome, has not yet reached the stage of a culture that has receded into the distant past. I say culture deliberately, because in these matters we can only regard as achieved what has become part and parcel

of our culture, of our social life, our habits. We might say that the good in our social system has not been properly studied, understood, and taken to heart; it has been hastily grasped at; it has not been verified or tested, corroborated by experience, and not made durable, etc. Of course, it could not be otherwise in a revolutionary epoch, when development proceeded at such breakneck speed that in a matter of five years we passed from tsarism to the Soviet system.

It is time we did something about it. We must show sound scepticism for too rapid progress, for boastfulness, etc. We must give thought to testing the steps forward we proclaim every hour, take every minute and then prove every second that they are flimsy, superficial and misunderstood. The most harmful thing here would be haste. The most harmful thing would be to rely on the assumption that we know at least something, or that we have any considerable number of elements necessary for the building of a really new state apparatus, one really worthy to be called socialist, Soviet, etc.

No, we are ridiculously deficient of such an apparatus, and even of the elements of it, and we must remember that we should not stint time on building it, and that it will take many, many years.

What elements have we for building this apparatus? Only two. First, the workers who are absorbed in the struggle for socialism. These elements are not sufficiently educated. They would like to build a better apparatus for us, but they do not know how. They cannot build one. They have not yet developed the culture required for this; and it is culture that is required. Nothing will be achieved in this by doing things in a rush, by assault, by vim or vigour, or in general, by any of the best human qualities. Secondly, we have elements of knowledge, education and training, but they are ridiculously inadequate compared with all other countries.

Here we must not forget that we are too prone to compensate (or imagine that we can compensate) our lack of knowledge by zeal, haste, etc.

In order to renovate our state apparatus we must at all costs set out, first, to learn, secondly, to learn, and thirdly, to learn, and then see to it that learning shall not remain a dead letter, or a fashionable catch-phrase (and we should admit in all frankness that this happens very often with us), that learning shall really

become part of our very being, that it shall actually and fully become a constituent element of our social life. In short, we must not make the demands that are made by bourgeois Western Europe, but demands that are fit and proper for a country which has set out to develop into a socialist country.

The conclusions to be drawn from the above are the following: we must make the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection a really exemplary institution, an instrument to improve our state apparatus.

In order that it may attain the desired high level, we must follow the rule: "Measure your cloth seven times before you cut."

For this purpose, we must utilise the very best of what there is in our social system, and utilise it with the greatest caution, thoughtfulness and knowledge, to build up the new People's Commissariat.

For this purpose, the best elements that we have in our social system—such as, first, the advanced workers, and, second, the really enlightened elements for whom we can vouch that they will not take the word for the deed, and will not utter a single word that goes against their conscience—should not shrink from admitting any difficulty and should not shrink from any struggle in order to achieve the object they have seriously set themselves.

We have been bustling for five years trying to improve our state apparatus, but it has been mere bustle, which has proved useless in these five years, or even futile, or even harmful. This bustle created the impression that we were doing something, but in effect it was only clogging up our institutions and our brains.

It is high time things were changed.

We must follow the rule: Better fewer, but better. We must follow the rule: Better get good human material in two or even three years than work in haste without hope of getting any at all.

I know that it will be hard to keep to this rule and apply it under our conditions. I know that the opposite rule will force its way through a thousand loopholes. I know that enormous resistance will have to be put up, that devilish persistence will be required, that in the first few years at least work in this field will be hellishly hard. Nevertheless, I am convinced that only by such effort shall we be able to achieve our aim; and that only by achieving this aim shall we create a republic that is really worthy of the name of Soviet, socialist, and so on, and so forth.

Many readers probably thought that the figures I quoted by way of illustration in my first article were too small. I am sure that many calculations may be made to prove that they are. But I think that we must put one thing above all such and other calculations, i.e., our desire to obtain really exemplary quality.

I think that the time has at last come when we must work in real earnest to improve our state apparatus and in this there can scarcely be anything more harmful than haste. That is why I would sound a strong warning against inflating the figures. In my opinion, we should, on the contrary, be especially sparing with figures in this matter. Let us say frankly that the People's Commissariat of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection does not at present enjoy the slightest authority. Everybody knows that no other institutions are worse organised than those of our Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, and that under present conditions nothing can be expected from this People's Commissariat. We must have this firmly fixed in our minds if we really want to create within a few years an institution that will, first, be an exemplary institution, secondly, win everybody's absolute confidence, and, thirdly, prove to all and sundry that we have really justified the work of such a highly placed institution as the Central Control Commission. In my opinion, we must immediately and irrevocably reject all general figures for the size of office staffs. We must select employees for the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection with particular care and only on the basis of the strictest test. Indeed, what is the use of establishing a People's Commissariat which carries on anyhow, which does not enjoy the slightest confidence, and whose word carries scarcely any weight? I think that our main object in launching the work of reconstruction that we now have in mind is to avoid all this.

The workers whom we are enlisting as members of the Central Control Commission must be irreproachable Communists, and I think that a great deal has yet to be done to teach them the methods and objects of their work. Furthermore, there must be a definite number of secretaries to assist in this work, who must be put to a triple test before they are appointed to their posts. Lastly, the officials whom in exceptional cases we shall accept directly as employees of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection must conform to the following requirements:

First, they must be recommended by several Communists.

Second, they must pass a test for knowledge of our state apparatus.

Third, they must pass a test in the fundamentals of the theory of our state apparatus, in the fundamentals of management, office routine, etc.

Fourth, they must work in such close harmony with the members of the Central Control Commission and with their own secretariat that we could vouch for the work of the whole apparatus.

I know that these requirements are extraordinarily strict, and I am very much afraid that the majority of the "practical" workers in the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection will say that these requirements are impracticable, or will scoff at them. But I ask any of the present chiefs of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, or anyone associated with that body, whether they can honestly tell me the practical purpose of a People's Commissariat like the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection. I think this question will help them recover their sense of proportion. Either it is not worth while having another of the numerous reorganisations that we have had of this hopeless affair, the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, or we must really set to work, by slow, difficult and unusual methods, and by testing these methods over and over again, to create something really exemplary, something that will win the respect of all and sundry for its merits, and not only because of its rank and title.

It we do not arm ourselves with patience, if we do not devote several years to this task, we had better not tackle it at all.

In my opinion we ought to select a minimum number of the higher labour research institutes, etc., which we have baked so hastily, see whether they are organised properly, and allow them to continue working, but only in a way that conforms to the high standards of modern science and gives us all its benefits. If we do that it will not be utopian to hope that within a few years we shall have an institution that will be able to perform its functions, to work systematically and steadily on improving our state apparatus, an institution backed by the trust of the working class, of the Russian Communist Party, and the whole population of our Republic.

The spade-work for this could be begun at once. If the People's Commissariat of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection accepted the present plan of reorganisation, it could now take preparatory

steps and work methodically until the task is completed, without haste, and not hesitating to alter what has already been done.

Any half-hearted solution would be extremely harmful in this matter. A measure for the size of the staff of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection based on any other consideration would, in fact, be based on the old bureaucratic considerations, on old prejudices, on what has already been condemned, universally ridiculed, etc.

In substance, the matter is as follows:

Either we prove now that we have really learned something about state organisation (we ought to have learned something in five years), or we prove that we are not sufficiently mature for it. If the latter is the case, we had better not tackle the task.

I think that with the available human material it will not be immodest to assume that we have learned enough to be able systematically to rebuild at least one People's Commissariat. True, this one People's Commissariat will have to be the model for our entire state apparatus.

We ought at once to announce a contest in the compilation of two or more textbooks on the organisation of labour in general, and on management in particular. We can take as a basis the book already published by Yermansky, although it should be said in parentheses that he obviously sympathises with Menshevism and is unfit to compile textbooks for the Soviet system. We can also take as a basis the recent book by Kerzhentsev, and some of the other partial textbooks available may be useful too.

We ought to send several qualified and conscientious people to Germany, or to Britain, to collect literature and to study this question. I mention Britain in case it is found impossible to send people to the USA or Canada.

We ought to appoint a commission to draw up the preliminary programme of examinations for prospective employees of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection; ditto for candidates to the Central Control Commission.

These and similar measures will not, of course, cause any difficulties for the People's Commissar or the collegium of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, or for the Presidium of the Central Control Commission.

Simultaneously, a preparatory commission should be appointed to select candidates for membership of the Central

Control Commission. I hope that we shall now be able to find more than enough candidates for this post among the experienced workers in all departments, as well as among the students of our Soviet higher schools. It would hardly be right to exclude one or another category beforehand. Probably preference will have to be given to a mixed composition for this institution, which should combine many qualities, and dissimilar merits. Consequently, the task of drawing up the list of candidates will entail a considerable amount of work. For example, it would be least desirable for the staff of the new People's Commissariat to consist of people of one type, only of officials, say, or for it to exclude people of the propagandist type, or people whose principal quality is sociability or the ability to penetrate into circles that are not altogether customary for officials in this field, etc.

* * *

I think I shall be able to express my idea best if I compare my plan with that of academic institutions. Under the guidance of their Presidium, the members of the Central Control Commission should systematically examine all the papers and documents of the Political Bureau. Moreover, they should divide their time correctly between various jobs in investigating the routine in our institutions, from the very small and privately-owned offices to the highest state institutions. And lastly, their functions should include the study of theory, i.e., the theory of organisation of the work they intend to devote themselves to, and practical work under the guidance either of older comrades or of teachers in the higher institutes for the organisation of labour.

I do not think, however, that they will be able to confine themselves to this sort of academic work. In addition, they will have to prepare themselves for work which I would not hesitate to call training to catch, I will not say rogues, but something like that, and working out special ruses to screen their movements, their approach, etc.

If such proposals were made in West-European government institutions they would rouse frightful resentment, a feeling of moral indignation, etc.; but I trust that we have not become so bureaucratic as to be capable of that. NEP has not yet succeeded in gaining such respect as to cause any of us to be shocked at the

idea that somebody may be caught. Our Soviet Republic is of such recent construction, and there are such heaps of the old lumber still lying around that it would hardly occur to anyone to be shocked at the idea that we should delve into them by means of ruses, by means of investigations sometimes directed to rather remote sources or in a roundabout way. And even if it did occur to anyone to be shocked by this, we may be sure that such a person would make himself a laughing-stock.

Let us hope that our new Workers' and Peasants' Inspection will abandon what the French call *pruderie,* which we may call ridiculous primness, or ridiculous swank, and which plays entirely into the hands of our Soviet and Party bureaucracy. Let it be said in parentheses that we have bureaucrats in our Party offices as well as in Soviet offices.

When I said above that we must study and study hard in institutes for the higher organisation of labour, etc., I did not by any means imply "studying" in the schoolroom way, nor did I confine myself to the idea of studying only in the schoolroom way. I hope that not a single genuine revolutionary will suspect me of refusing, in this case, to understand "studies" to include resorting to some semi-humorous trick, cunning device, piece of trickery or something of that sort. I know that in the staid and earnest states of Western Europe such an idea would horrify people and that not a single decent official would even entertain it. I hope, however, that we have not yet become as bureaucratic as all that and that in our midst the discussion of this idea will give rise to nothing more than amusement.

Indeed, why not combine pleasure with utility? Why not resort to some humorous or semi-humorous trick to expose something ridiculous, something harmful, something semi-ridiculous, semi-harmful, etc.?

It seems to me that our Workers' and Peasants' Inspection will gain a great deal if it undertakes to examine these ideas, and that the list of cases in which our Central Control Commission and its colleagues in the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection achieved a few of their most brilliant victories will be enriched by not a few exploits of our future Workers' and Peasants' Inspection and Central Control Commission members in places not quite mentionable in prim and staid textbooks.

* * *

How can a Party institution be amalgamated with a Soviet institution? Is there not something improper in this suggestion?

I do not ask these questions on my own behalf, but on behalf of those I hinted at above when I said that we have bureaucrats in our Party institutions as well as in the Soviet institutions.

But why, indeed, should we not amalgamate the two if this is in the interests of our work? Do we not all see that such an amalgamation has been very beneficial in the case of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, where it was brought about at the very beginning? Does not the Political Bureau discuss from the Party point of view many questions, both minor and important, concerning the "moves" we should make in reply to the "moves" of foreign powers in order to forestall their, say, cunning, if we are not to use a less respectable term? Is not this flexible amalgamation of a Soviet institution with a Party institution a source of great strength in our politics? I think that what has proved its usefulness, what has been definitely adopted in our foreign politics and has become so customary that it no longer calls forth any doubt in this field, will be at least as appropriate (in fact, I think it will be much more appropriate) for our state apparatus as a whole. The functions of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection cover our state apparatus as a whole, and its activities should ffect all and every state institution without exception: local, central, commercial, purely administrative, educational, archive, theatrical, etc.—in short, all without any exception.

Why then should not an institution, whose activities have such wide scope, and which moreover requires such extraordinary flexibility of forms, be permitted to adopt this peculiar amalgamation of a Party control institution with a Soviet control institution?

I see no obstacles to this. What is more, I think that such an amalgamation is the only guarantee of success in our work. I think that all doubts on this score arise in the dustiest corners of our government offices, and that they deserve to be treated with nothing but ridicule.

* * *

Another doubt: is it expedient to combine educational activities with official activities? I think that it is not only expedient, but

necessary. Generally speaking, in spite of our revolutionary attitude towards the West-European form of state, we have allowed ourselves to become infected with a number of its most harmful and ridiculous prejudices; to some extent we have been diliberately infected with them by our dear bureaucrats, who counted on being able again and again to fish in the muddy waters of these prejudices. And they did fish in these muddy waters to so great an extent that only the blind among us failed to see how extensively this fishing was practised.

In all spheres of social, economic and political relationships we are "frightfully" revolutionary. But as regards precedence, the observance of the forms and rites of office management, our "revolutionariness" often gives way to the mustiest routine. On more than one occasion, we have witnessed the very interesting phenomenon of a great leap forward in social life being accompanied by amazing timidity whenever the slightest changes are proposed.

This is natural, for the boldest steps forward were taken in a field which was long reserved for theoretical study, which was promoted mainly, and even almost exclusively, in theory. The Russian, when away from work, found solace from bleak bureaucratic realities in unusually bold theoretical constructions, and that is why in our country these unusually bold theoretical constructions assumed an unusually lopsided character. Theoretical audacity in general constructions went hand in hand with amazing timidity as regards certain very minor reforms in office routine. Some great universal agrarian revolution was worked out with an audacity unexampled in any other country, and at the same time the imagination failed when it came to working out a tenth-rate reform in office routine; the imagination, or patience, was lacking to apply to this reform the general propositions that produced such brilliant results when applied to general problems.

That is why in our present life reckless audacity goes hand in hand, to an astonishing degree, with timidity of thought even when it comes to very minor changes.

I think that this has happened in all really great revolutions, for really great revolutions grow out of the contradictions between the old, between what is directed towards developing the old, and the very abstract striving for the new, which must be so new as not to contain the tiniest particle of the old.

And the more abrupt the revolution, the longer will many of these contradictions last.

* * *

The general feature of our present life is the following: we have destroyed capitalist industry and have done our best to raze to the ground the medieval institutions and landed proprietorship, and thus created a small and very small peasantry, which is following the lead of the proletariat because it believes in the results of its revolutionary work. It is not easy for us, however, to keep going until the socialist revolution is victorious in more developed countries merely with the aid of this confidence, because economic necessity, especially under NEP, keeps the productivity of labour of the small and very small peasants at an extremely low level. Moreover, the international situation, too, threw Russia back and, by and large, reduced the labour productivity of the people to a level considerably below pre-war. The West-European capitalist powers, partly deliberately and partly unconsciously, did everything they could to throw us back, to utilise the elements of the Civil War in Russia in order to spread as much ruin in the country as possible. It was precisely this way out of the imperialist war that seemed to have many advantages. They argued somewhat as follows: "If we fail to overthrow the revolutionary system in Russia, we shall, at all events, hinder its progress towards socialism." And from their point of view they could argue in no other way. In the end, their problem was half-solved. They failed to overthrow the new system created by the revolution, but they did prevent it from at once taking the step forward that would have justified the forecasts of the socialists, that would have enabled the latter to develop the productive forces with enormous speed, to develop all the potentialities which, taken together, would have produced socialism; socialists would thus have proved to all and sundry that socialism contains within itself gigantic forces and that mankind had now entered into a new stage of development of extraordinarily brilliant prospects.

The system of international relationships which has now taken shape is one in which a European state, Germany, is enslaved by the victor countries. Furthermore, owing to their victory, a number of states, the oldest states in the West, are in a position to

make some insignificant concessions to their oppressed classes—concessions which, insignificant though they are, nevertheless retard the revolutionary movement in those countries and create some semblance of "class truce".

At the same time, as a result of the last imperialist war, a number of countries of the East, India, China, etc., have been completely jolted out of the rut. Their development has definitely shifted to general European capitalist lines .The general European ferment has begun to affect them, and it is now clear to the whole world that they have been drawn into a process of development that must lead to a crisis in the whole of world capitalism.

Thus, at the present time we are confronted with the question—shall we be able to hold on with our small and very small peasant production, and in our present state of ruin, until the West-European capitalist countries consummate their development towards socialism? But they are consummating it not as we formerly expected. They are not consummating it through the gradual "maturing" of socialism, but through the exploitation of some countries by others, through the exploitation of the first of the countries vanquished in the imperialist war combined with the exploitation of the whole of the East. On the other hand, precisely as a result of the first imperialist war, the East has been definitely drawn into the revolutionary movement, has been definitely drawn into the general maelstrom of the world revolutionary movement.

What tactics does this situation prescribe for our country? Obviously the following. We must display extreme caution so as to preserve our workers' government and to retain our small and very small peasantry under its leadership and authority. We have the advantage that the whole world is now passing to a movement that must give rise to a world socialist revolution. But we are labouring under the disadvantage that the imperialists have succeeded in splitting the world into two camps; and this split is made more complicated by the fact that it is extremely difficult for Germany, which is really a land of advanced, cultured, capitalist development, to rise to her feet. All the capitalist powers of what is called the West are pecking at her and preventing her from rising. On the other hand, the entire East, with its hundreds of millions of exploited working people, reduced to the last degree of human suffering, has been forced into a position where its

physical and material strength cannot possibly be compared with the physical, material and military strength of any of the much smaller West-European states.

Can we save ourselves from the impending conflict with these imperialist countries? May we hope that the internal antagonisms and conflicts between the thriving imperialist countries of the West and the thriving imperialist countries of the East will give us a second respite as they did the first time, when the campaign of the West-European counter-revolution in support of the Russian counter-revolution broke down owing to the antagonisms in the camp of the counter-revolutionaries of the West and the East, in the camp of the Eastern and Western exploiters, in the camp of Japan and the USA?

I think the reply to this question should be that the issue depends upon too many factors, and that the outcome of the struggle as a whole can be forecast only because in the long run capitalism itself is educating and training the vast majority of the population of the globe for the struggle.

In the last analysis, the outcome of the struggle will be determined by the fact that Russia, India, China, etc., account for the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe. And during the past few years it is this majority that has been drawn into the struggle for emancipation with extraordinary rapidity, so that in this respect there cannot be the slightest doubt what the final outcome of the world struggle will be. In this sense, the complete victory of socialism is fully and absolutely assured.

But what interests us is not the inevitability of this complete victory of socialism, but the tactics which we, the Russian Communist Party, we, the Russian Soviet Government, should pursue to prevent the West-European counter-revolutionary states from crushing us. To ensure our existence until the next military conflict between the counter-revolutionary imperialist West and the revolutionary and nationalist East, between the most civilised countries of the world and the Orientally backward countries which, however, comprise the majority, this majority must become civilised. We, too, lack enough civilisation to enable us to pass straight on to socialism, although we do have the political requisites for it. We should adopt the following tactics, or pursue the following policy, to save ourselves.

We must strive to build up a state in which the workers retain

the leadership of the peasants, in which they retain the confidence of the peasants, and by exercising the greatest economy remove every trace of extravagance from our social relations.

We must reduce our state apparatus to the utmost degree of economy. We must banish from it all traces of extravagance, of which so much has been left over from tsarist Russia, from its bureaucratic capitalist state machine.

Will not this be a reign of peasant limitations?

No. If we see to it that the working class retains its leadership over the peasantry, we shall be able, by exercising the greatest possible thrift in the economic life of our state, to use every saving we make to develop our large-scale machine industry, to develop electrification, the hydraulic extraction of peat, to complete the Volkhov Power Project,* etc.

In this, and in this alone, lies our hope. Only when we have done this shall we, speaking figuratively, be able to change horses, to change from the peasant, muzhik horse of poverty, from the horse of an economy designed for a ruined peasant country, to the horse which the proletariat is seeking and must seek—the horse of large-scale machine industry, of electrification, of the Volkhov Power Station, etc.

That is how I link up in my mind the general plan of our work, of our policy, of our tactics, of our strategy, with the functions of the reorganised Workers' and Peasants' Inspection. This is what, in my opinion, justifies the exceptional care, the exceptional attention that we must devote to the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection in raising it to an exceptionally high level, in giving it a leadership with Central Committee rights, etc., etc.

And this justification is that only by thoroughly purging our government machine, by reducing to the utmost everything that is not absolutely essential in it, shall we be certain of being able to keep going. Moreover, we shall be able to keep going not on the level of a small-peasant country, not on the level of universal limitation, but on a level steadily advancing to large-scale machine industry.

* *The Volkhov Power Project*—the construction of the first big electric power station in the Soviet Union on the River Volkhov. The construction began in 1918 but was expanded to the full only by 1921, after the end of the Civil War. In 1926 the Volkhov hydroelectric power station was put into operation.—*Ed.*

These are the lofty tasks that I dream of for our Workers' and Peasants' Inspection. That is why I am planning for it the amalgamation of the most authoritative Party body with an "ordinary" People's Commissariat.

March 2, 1923

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V. I. Lenin,
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