

Dynamics of Social Change



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A READER IN MARXIST SOCIAL SCIENCE



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Selected and Edited by

HOWARD SELSAM • DAVID GOLDWAY • HARRY MARTEL

DYNAMICS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Nothing prevents us therefore from starting our criticism with criticism of politics, with taking sides in politics, hence with actual struggles, and identifying ourselves with them. Then we do not face the world in doctrinaire fashion with a new principle, declaring, Here is truth, kneel here! We develop new principles for the world out of the principles of the world. We do not tell the world, Cease your struggles, they are stupid; we want to give you the true watchword of the struggle. We merely show the world why it actually struggles; and the awareness of this is something which the world must acquire even if it does not want to.

—MARX, Letter to Arnold Ruge, September 1843

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DYNAMICS OF
SOCIAL CHANGE

A Reader in Marxist

Social Science

From the Writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin

SELECTED AND EDITED

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

by

HOWARD SELSAM, DAVID GOLDWAY
and HARRY MARTEL



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Prefatory Note


This volume presents, in their own words, the basic ideas of Marx, Engels and Lenin in the areas of sociology, history, politics and economics. The editors have selected the most representative statements from the vast body of their writings and have arranged them to enable the reader to grasp their essentials. Although this book is complete in itself, it is a sequel and companion to the *Reader in Marxist Philosophy* (1963), which presents the philosophical framework in which Marxist thought developed.

The materials are divided into five parts. In addition to a general introduction, the editors have supplied a separate introduction to each part.

The guiding principle in arranging the selections has been to show the logical development of Marxist historical, economic and social thought. Since, however, chronology is often significant, the year in which the work was completed—though not necessarily published—is given after each entry.

The Contents gives the source of all entries. For the convenience of the reader the source is again indicated at the end of each selection, together with page references. The list of sources at the end of the volume identifies the editions used. In general they are the editions most readily available in the United States today. They are also, for the most part, those which contain the most authentic translations.

—THE EDITORS



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Contents

| | |
|-----------------------------|----|
| <i>GENERAL INTRODUCTION</i> | 19 |
|-----------------------------|----|

PART ONE

FUNDAMENTALS OF HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

| | |
|---------------------|----|
| <i>INTRODUCTION</i> | 25 |
|---------------------|----|

1. TOWARD A NEW CONCEPTION OF HISTORY
 - A. The Law of Evolution in Human History, 30
Engels, "Speech at the Graveside of Karl Marx"
 - B. What Marx Discovered, 30
Marx, Letter to Weydemeyer
 - C. Technology and Social Evolution, 31
Marx, *Capital*, vol. I
 - D. "The Premises From Which We Begin," 32
Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*
 - E. The Marxist Theory of History, 32
Engels, "Karl Marx"
 - F. Production: Its Logic and Its History, 35
Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*
 - G. Existence and Consciousness, 37
Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*
 - H. Modern Historical Developments Made A Science of History Possible, 39
Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*
2. BOURGEOIS AND PROLETARIANS, 43
Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*
3. BASIC ROLE OF THE MODE OF PRODUCTION
 - A. Mode of Production Determines the Social, Political and Intellectual Life Processes, 52
Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*

- B. The Economic Foundation, the Superstructure, and Their Interaction, 53
Engels, Letter to Conrad Schmidt
- C. The Class Basis of Ideology, 56
Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*
- D. Dependence of Ideology on the Mode of Production, 58
Marx, *Capital*, vol. I
- E. "Juristic Socialism" 59
Engels, *Neue Zeit*
- 4. HISTORY AND THE INDIVIDUAL
 - A. The Driving Forces of History, 63
Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach*
 - B. "Men Make Their Own History," 66
Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire*
- 5. HISTORICAL MATERIALISM NOT AN ABSTRACT FORMULA
 - A. No Eternal Truths in Historical Science, 69
Engels, *Anti-Dühring*
 - B. On Concreteness in the Study of History, 70
Marx, Letter to editor of *Notes on the Fatherland*
 - C. Historical Materialism: "A Guide to Study, Not a Lever for Construction," 71
Engels, Letter to Conrad Schmidt
 - D. Form and Content in History: The Ideologist, 72
Engels, Letter to Franz Mehring
- 6. HISTORICAL MATERIALISM VERSUS ECONOMIC DETERMINISM
 - A. Technique; Base and Superstructure; Role of Accidents, 74
Engels, Letter to Heinz Starkenburg
 - B. Polemic Against Economic Determinism, 76
Engels, Letter to Joseph Bloch
 - C. Critique of "Survival of the Fittest," 79
Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*
 - D. Historical Necessity versus Freedom of Will, 81
Lenin, *What the 'Friends of the People' Are*

- E. Marx's "Idea of Materialism in Sociology," 82
 Lenin, *ibid.*

PART TWO

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

INTRODUCTION

88

1. FRANCE: 1848-1851
 - A. France: 1789 to 1848, 93
 Engels, "Introduction," *The Civil War in France*
 - B. The June Revolution, 95
 Marx, *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*
 - C. The Working Class and the Uprising of 1848, 99
 Marx, *The Class Struggles in France*
 - D. Phases of the French Revolution: 1848-1851, 100
 Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire*
 - E. The French Peasant and the Wine Tax, 105
 Marx, *The Class Struggles in France*
 - F. Louis Napoleon and the Peasantry, 106
 Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire*
 - G. Landed Property and Ideology, 108
 Marx, *ibid.*

2. FRANCE: 1870-1871—THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR AND THE PARIS COMMUNE
 - A. The Paris Revolution of September 4, 1870, 109
 Engels, "Introduction," *The Civil War in France*
 - B. Nature of the Paris Commune: Its Distinction From Older Forms, 114
 Marx, *The Civil War in France*
 - C. Political Makeup of the Paris Commune, 119
 Engels, "Introduction," *The Civil War in France*
 - D. On "Smashing" the State Machinery, 121
 Marx, Letter to Dr. Kugelmann

3. GERMANY

A. Petty-Bourgeois Character of German Development, 122

Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*

B. Why the German Bourgeoisie Is Reactionary, 125

Engels, *The Peasant War in Germany*

C. Bismarck, 127

Engels, *The Role of Force in History*

4. ENGLAND: Politics and the Working Class

A. The Industrial Revolution and the English Working Class, 129

Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*

B. Misery of the Working Masses, 132

Marx, "Inaugural Address of the International Working Men's Association"

5. ENGLAND'S COLONIAL EMPIRE

A. Ireland: Bulwark of the Landed Aristocracy, 135

Marx, Letter to Meyer and Vogt

B. Ireland and the English Working Class, 137

Marx, Letter to Dr. Kugelmann

C. The Future Results of British Rule in India, 138

Marx, *New York Tribune*

D. British Incomes in India, 143

Marx, *ibid.*

6. REVOLUTIONARY SPAIN, 146

Marx, *New York Tribune*

7. THE UNITED STATES: THE CIVIL WAR

A. John Brown: American Slaves and Russian Serfs, 149

Marx, Letter to Engels

B. Harpers Ferry, 149

Engels, Letter to Marx

C. Control of Washington: the Military Objective, 149

Engels, Letter to Marx

D. How the English Press Distorts the Slavery Issue, 152

Marx, *Die Presse*

- E. President Lincoln and General McClellan, 157
Marx, *ibid.*
- F. "The Secessionist Conspiracy," A War Without
Parallel, 157
Marx, *ibid.*
- G. From "Constitutional" to "Revolutionary" War, 159
Marx, *ibid.*
- H. A Historical Prediction, 160
Engels, Letter to Weydemeyer
- I. Letter to President Lincoln, 162
Marx, "Address of the International Working
Men's Association"
- J. Marx and Engels on President Johnson, 163
Marx, Letter to Engels; Engels, Letter to Marx
- 8. THE UNITED STATES: POLITICS AND THE LABOR
MOVEMENT
 - A. Close of the Civil War Brings a New Era, 164
Marx, "Address to the National Labor Union"
 - B. Political Parties in the United States, 166
Engels, "Introduction," *The Civil War in France*
 - C. Privileged Position of the Native-born Working
Class, 167
Engels, Letter to Schlüter
 - D. "The Americans Cannot Discount Their
Future," 167
Engels, Letter to Sorge
 - E. Dogmatic Marxism and the Henry George Boom,
169
Engels, Letter to Sorge
 - F. Development of the Working Class, 171
Engels, "Appendix," *The Condition of the Working
Class in England*
 - G. "The American Working Class Is Moving," 172
Engels, Letter to Mrs. Wischnewetzky
- 9. RUSSIA
 - A. On Maturing Revolutionary Conditions in
Russia, 173
Marx, Letter to Sorge

- B. Russia on the Eve of Revolution, 173
Engels, "On Social Conditions in Russia"
- C. The Developing Revolutionary Situation in
Russia, 174
Engels, Letter to Zasulich
- D. Russia, Germany, and World War, 176
Engels, Letter to Sorge
- E. Consequences of a World War, 177
Engels, "Preface," Borkheim's *In Memory of the
Supreme German Patriots*
- F. The "Mission" of Capitalism in Russia, 177
Lenin, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*
- G. The 1905 Revolution, 180
Lenin, "Lecture on the 1905 Revolution"
- H. Between the February and October Revolutions, 193
Lenin, "The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our
Revolution"
- I. Objective Conditions for the October Revolution, 200
Lenin, "Marxism and Insurrection"

PART THREE

PRE-CAPITALIST ECONOMIC FORMATIONS AND
EUROPE'S TRANSITION TO CAPITALISM

INTRODUCTION

203

1. ARCHAIC AND ANCIENT SOCIETIES

- A. Communal Property Relations, 208
Marx, *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*
- B. Stability of the Asiatic Mode of Production, 210
Marx, *Capital*, vol. I
- C. Slavery and Civilization, 212
Engels, *Anti-Dühring*
- D. Civilization and the Division of Labor, 214
Engels, *The Origin of the Family*
- E. Ancient Use of the Surplus Product, 216
Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value*

2. FEUDALISM

- A. Disintegration of Feudal Landed Property, 217
Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*
- B. Role of Usury in Slave and Feudal Societies, 219
Marx, *Capital*, vol. III
- C. The Peasant in Feudal Germany, 225
Engels, *The Peasant War in Germany*
- D. Class, Ideology and Heresy in Germany, 227
Engels, *ibid.*

3. THE RISE OF CAPITALISM

- A. Historical Prerequisites for the Emergence of Capitalism, 232
Marx, *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*
- B. Industry and Commerce in the Transition to Capitalism, 236
Marx, *Capital*, vol. III
- C. Prelude to the Bourgeois Revolution in England, 241
Marx, *ibid.*, vol. I
- D. From Feudal to Capitalist Commodity Production, 245
Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*
- E. Genesis of the Industrial Capitalist, 250
Marx, *Capital*, vol. I
- F. The Strife Between Workman and Machine, 252
Marx, *ibid.*
- G. Classes and Ideology in the Transition to Capitalism, 254
Engels, "Introduction to the English Edition,"
Socialism: Utopian and Scientific

PART FOUR

CAPITALISM: ITS DRIVING FORCES
AND CONTRADICTIONS

INTRODUCTION

259

1. LABOR AND THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION

- A. The Labor Process, 265
Marx, *Capital*, vol. I

- B. Climate, Geography and Labor Productivity, 267
Marx, *ibid.*
- C. The Role of Time in Production, 270
Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der Politischen
Ökonomie*
- 2. COMMODITY PRODUCTION
 - A. The Nature of Commodities, 270
Marx, *Capital*, vol. I
 - B. Man Uses Nature to Change It, 271
Marx, *ibid.*
 - C. Commodities: A Historical Category, 272
Marx, *ibid.*
 - D. Commodities and Money in History, 273
Marx, *ibid.*
 - E. The Greed for Gold, 274
Marx, *ibid.*
 - F. The Fetishism of Commodities, 276
Marx, *ibid.*
 - G. Fetishism and Bourgeois Political Economists, 277
Marx, *ibid.*
- 3. WHAT IS CAPITAL?
 - A. The Starting Point of Capitalist Production, 279
Marx, *Capital*, vol. I
 - B. Capitalist Commodity Production, 280
Marx, *ibid.*, vol. II
 - C. Capital A Social Relation, 282
Marx, *Wage-Labor and Capital*
 - D. Classical Political Economy and the Concept,
Value of Labor-Power, 282
Marx, *Capital*, vol. I
 - E. Machinery: The Technical Basis of Modern
Capitalism, 284
Marx, *ibid.*
 - F. Modern Industry and Agriculture, 285
Marx, *ibid.*
 - G. Revolutionary Character of Modern Technology, 286
Marx, *ibid.*

- H. The Capitalist Is "Personified Capital," 288
Marx, *ibid.*
- I. The Industrial Manager Under Capitalism, 290
Marx, *ibid.*, vol. III
4. THE WORKING CLASS AND CAPITALISM
- A. The Buying and Selling of Labor Power, 292
Marx, *Capital*, vol. I
- B. How the Value of Labor Power is Determined, 293
Marx, *ibid.*
- C. Competition and the Working Class, 294
Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*
- D. Machinery and the Prolongation of the
Working Day, 295
Marx, *Capital*, vol. I
- E. Working Class Legislation and the Contradictions
of Capitalism, 296
Marx, *ibid.*
- F. Alienation and Capitalist Accumulation, 297
Marx, *ibid.*
- G. Housing and the Working Class, 297
Engels, *The Housing Question*
5. CAPITALIST CRISIS
- A. "The Real Barrier of Capitalist Production is
Capital Itself," 302
Marx, *Capital*, vol. III
- B. Economic Crisis and Capitalist Contradictions, 303
Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*
- C. The Path Leading Toward Crisis, 305
Marx, *Capital*, vol. II
- D. What Is "Overproduction"?, 306
Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value*
- E. Crisis and "Underconsumption," 307
Marx, *Capital*, vol. II
- F. On the Apologetic Denial of Crisis, 307
Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value*

- G. Contradictions Arising from the Growth of Technology and the Concentration of Capital, 308
Marx, *Capital*, vol. III
- 6. MONOPOLY AND IMPERIALISM
 - A. The Development of Monopoly, 309
Engels, *Socialism: Utopianism and Scientific*
 - B. Early Form of Monopoly, 311
Marx, *Capital*, vol. III
 - C. The Place of Imperialism in History, 315
Lenin, *Imperialism*
- 7. CAPITALISM PREPARES THE CONDITIONS FOR COMMUNISM, 319
Marx, *Capital*, vol. I

PART FIVE
SOCIAL REVOLUTION: TOWARD A
SOCIALIST SOCIETY

INTRODUCTION

323

- 1. WHAT IS SOCIAL REVOLUTION?
 - A. Productive Forces and Social Revolutions, 328
Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*
 - B. The Nature of Socialist Revolution, 329
Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*
 - C. All Previous Revolutions Those of a Minority, 331
Engels, "Introduction," *The Class Struggles in France*
 - D. Working Class Liberation and Classless Society, 332
Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*
 - E. "Everything Seems Pregnant With Its Contrary," 333
Marx, A Speech in London (1856)
 - F. Revolutionary Theory the Condition for a Revolutionary Movement, 335
Lenin, *What Is to Be Done?*
- 2. THEORY OF THE STATE
 - A. Origins of the State, 337
Engels, *The Origin of the Family*

- B. The State: First Ideological Power Over Mankind, 341
Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach*
 - C. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat, 343
Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Program*
 - D. "The State Is a Special Organization of Force," 343
Lenin, *The State and Revolution*
 - E. The State and Democracy in the Transition from
Capitalism to Communism, 347
Lenin, *ibid.*
3. IMPERIALISM AND WAR
- A. The Marxist Position on War, 351
Lenin, *War and the Workers*
 - B. Just and Unjust Wars, 352
Lenin, "The Military Program of the Proletarian
Revolution"
4. TACTICS OF PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION
- A. Peaceful or Violent Social Transformation?, 355
Engels, "Principles of Communism"
 - B. The Role of Communists in the Class Struggle, 355
Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*
 - C. Marxists and Bourgeois Revolutions, 356
Lenin, *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy*
 - D. The Goals of the Working Class and the Petty
Bourgeoisie, 358
Marx and Engels, "Address to the Communist
League"
 - E. "The Fundamental Law of Revolution," 360
Lenin, "*Left-Wing*" *Communism*
 - F. Flexibility in Revolutionary Tactics, 362
Lenin, *ibid.*
 - G. Changes in Bourgeois Tactics, 362
Lenin, "Differences in the European Labor
Movement"
 - H. Difficulties of Socialist Revolution, 364
Lenin, "*Left-Wing*" *Communism*

- I. Forms of Revolutionary Struggle: Partisan Warfare, 366
 - Lenin, "Partisan Warfare"
5. LABOR OPPORTUNISM
 - A. Formation of the English Labor Aristocracy, 370
 - Engels, "Preface to the Second Edition" (1892),
The Condition of the Working Class in England
 - B. English Workers and Colonial Policy, 371
 - Engels, Letter to Kautsky
 - C. Imperialist Base of the English Labor Aristocracy, 371
 - Engels, Letter to Marx
 - D. Labor Opportunism in the Epoch of Imperialism, 371
 - Lenin, "Imperialism and the Split in the Socialist Movement"
6. THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT AND THE PROLETARIAT
 - A. The Marxist Position on the National Question, 375
 - Lenin, *The Right of Nations to Self-Determination*
 - B. Colonial Revolutions and the World Socialist Revolution, 379
 - Lenin, "Address of November 22, 1919"
7. THE BUILDING OF SOCIALISM
 - A. The Distribution of the Products of Labor under Socialism and under Communism, 382
 - B. Varying Paths to Socialism, 387
 - Lenin, "A Caricature of Marxism"
 - C. Why the Bolshevik Revolution Succeeded, 387
 - Lenin, "*Left-Wing*" Communism
 - D. The Russian Revolution and American Workers, 391
 - Lenin, *A Letter to American Workers*

Theory becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses.

—MARX, *Introduction to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

IT IS a century and a quarter since Marx and Engels, with their *Communist Manifesto*, challenged the capitalist premises of a Europe then in the midst of revolution. Their ideas and the movements they inspired have occupied a prominent place in world history ever since.

Marxism has been a potent force in the areas of the social sciences and the humanities as well as in politics and international affairs. Acknowledged or unacknowledged, it has made its impact on practically every seminal thinker in the fields of sociology, history, anthropology, political theory and economics. James Shotwell, one of our country's most eminent historians, expressed the view that "the whole science of dynamic sociology rests upon the postulate of Marx."* Joseph Schumpeter, distinguished economist of the past generation, while disagreeing sharply with Marx's economics, called his theory of history "one of the greatest individual achievements of sociology to this day."† Irving M. Zeitlin, in his *Ideology and the Development of Social Theory* (Englewood Cliffs, 1968), sees the history of sociology for the past hundred years as "the debate with Marx's ghost."

The background against which we read Marx and Engels in this last third of the 20th century must of necessity have two aspects. First, we must see the ideas of these two great 19th century philosophers and revolutionaries as a fundamental challenge to the old world. If they did nothing else, Marx and Engels threw down the gauntlet to the world of private ownership, free enterprise, rugged individualism and corporate wealth, along with the social, political and cultural institutions

**Encyclopedia Britannica*, 13th ed., XIII, 532.

†*Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (New York, 1962), p. 10.

which sustained that world. For over a hundred years capitalism has had to justify itself against the Marxist contention that it is outdated, moribund, ready for replacement by a new social order.

The second aspect of the background against which we must view Marxism is its contemporary significance. Marxist ideas are the dominant ideas in a whole number of states—from the Soviet Union to China, to eastern Europe, to North Vietnam, to North Korea, to Cuba. One looks quite naturally to see how the ideas of Marx “work” when they are applied. In doing so one must avoid the tendency to single out any particular application of Marxist ideas as the only correct one theoretically, irrespective of time, place and circumstances.

Marx did not provide a series of detailed answers to future problems, nor did he present a blueprint for socialism. Such an attempt would have been contrary to his entire method. The variations of development in socialist countries and the differing views among Marxists of these countries on problems of socialist development are clear evidence that there is no such blueprint. Further, it can readily be seen that the socialist states are not Utopias. Weaknesses and shortcomings of various kinds have been pointed out by opponents of Marxism (although at times in distorted or exaggerated terms), and they are discussed by Marxists themselves, often with considerable sharpness.

The point, however, is that socialism is a functioning, viable system in a large part of the globe, and whatever its deficiencies in one country or another, it has to its credit some of the most spectacular achievements of modern times. It enjoys the enthusiastic allegiance of millions who live under its system, and its appeal—both in the countries of the underdeveloped world and in advanced capitalist countries like Italy and France—remains one of the most obvious facts of contemporary politics. This, if nothing else, would be sufficient reason for everyone to know something of what Marxism actually teaches.

Marxism is a challenge. But at the same time it has another side which is of enormous importance. Marxism is a continuation of all that is forward-looking in the human tradition. It did not come into being simply out of the head of Marx. As a reading of this volume will show, it had its chief origins in the German philosophical school culminating in Hegel, in the

democratic ideas of the Enlightenment culminating in the French Revolution, and in the English political economy of Smith and Ricardo. It came into being as capitalism was reaching a high level of maturity in Great Britain, and it rooted itself in the new and rising modern class—the industrial proletariat.

This element of continuity is of special significance for students of the social sciences. Without it we neither can understand Marx, nor can we see the direction of development of contemporary social science. Just as Zeitlin saw sociological history as a debate with the ideas of Marx, so the history of almost every aspect of modern society can be understood only when put in terms of a confrontation with Marxism. C. Wright Mills pointed out: “Many of those who reject (or more accurately ignore) Marxist ways of thinking about human affairs are actually rejecting the classic traditions of their own disciplines.” One of the reasons why they do so, he indicated, is that “in the United States, the intellectual influences of Marxism are often hidden; many of those whose very categories of thought are influenced by Marx are often unaware of the source of their own methods and conceptions.”* At this juncture of history failure to take Marx into account is a myopia of bigotry.

Just as students of society need to know Marxism, so do political activists, trade unionists, black militants and campus radicals. History demonstrates that for more than a century Marxism has been a powerful instrument in the hands of fighters for freedom and justice. Wherever meaningful change has been achieved in the modern world, the leaders of the struggle have drawn at least part of their ideology from Marx. Contrariwise, where political movements have floundered and have gotten lost in ineffectual byways, the reason has often been lack of sound theory. As Socrates became famous for his “Know Thyself,” Marx and Engels should be credited with teaching us to “Know Thy Society.” For the large numbers who are today seeking to transform the growing political confrontations in our country into a genuine left movement, the need for sound revolutionary theory is indispensable.

The title of this work, *The Dynamics of Social Change*, suggests the pivotal idea of Marxism. All the writings of Marx, Engels

**The Marxists* (New York, 1962), p. 10, 11.

and Lenin are directed, in one way or another, to the question: how and why do societies change? They demonstrate that societies can be relatively stable for long periods of time, but change they must. The stability is relative, the change is absolute. And this change takes place on every level of man's social existence. Beginning with the productive processes whereby man lives, it involves the economic structure he erects, his ideas about himself and the world, his customs, institutions, culture, and psychological make-up.

But Marxism is not only a theory of how societies have changed in the past or how they are changing under our eyes. Its analyses are aimed at making it possible to control change, to direct it rationally. Its purpose is to guide change in accordance with human needs and ideals on the basis of a genuine understanding of what the actual possibilities are. Thus Marxist theory and practice are everywhere intertwined. This union of thought and action makes Marxism unique among all the world outlooks and social theories in human history.

To understand Marxism there is no better way than to go to the original sources—to read what Marx, Engels and Lenin actually wrote. Lenin, along with Marx and Engels, is included as an “original source” because Lenin, preeminent among the followers of Marx in the 20th century, made important and original contributions to socialist theory and practice. He thoroughly mastered the principles and methods of Marx and Engels, and applied them to a later stage of capitalism. Among the developments associated with Lenin are his theory of imperialism, his elaboration of the two phases of the revolution (now of great importance to the anti-imperialist national revolutionary movements everywhere), his teachings on the role of the peasantry, and his contribution to the theory and practice of socialist revolution and construction. Significantly, every outstanding revolutionary leader after him has drawn his basic premises from Lenin, only indirectly from Marx and Engels.

Marx, Engels and Lenin wrote voluminously, and it is not always easy to know where to begin. Moreover, many of their writings consist of detailed economic and political analyses, often in the context of now unfamiliar events. Nevertheless, a knowledge of the principles of Marxism as formulated by its founders is essential for an understanding of its subsequent

development and its impact on the present-day world. Without such knowledge one cannot intelligently follow events in the socialist countries (some of them presenting new and complex features, not easily understood even by those who do know Marxism). Without it one cannot take meaningful part in the discussions and controversies so numerous in the American left today.

Because they were so intimately involved in the political events of their day, Marx, Engels and Lenin often wrote in a highly polemical style. Only occasionally did they employ expository forms that lend themselves to textbook presentation. In spite of these difficulties the editors have sought to place the most significant ideas of Marxism in a framework that is clear, logical and faithful to the totality of Marxist social thought.

We have begun with the most general notions of history and society and have concluded with the strategy and tactics of socialist revolution. In between are examples of Marxist writings on contemporary history that show the historical-materialist method employed in the analysis of day-to-day events. There is a section on the societies that preceded capitalism, with indications of their fundamental contradictions and explanations of their rise and fall. Part Four, consisting largely of non-technical selections from *Capital*, presents the heart of Marx's monumental study of the driving forces and contradictions of capitalism.

This volume makes clear that Marxism never was nor can be a dogmatic "system," although many have tried to make it such. There is nothing in it to be learned by heart, and it will never be finished. Everywhere in the world, in socialist, capitalist and neocolonial countries, the process of elaborating and bringing up to date, indeed of qualifying the basic method and enriching the content of Marxism is going on at an ever increasing rate. Marxism, like its subject matter, the world of nature and man, is in constant flux. Neither in theory nor in practice can anyone claim to have the last word, for there is no last word. No innovators in history were more firmly convinced than Marx and Engels that they were pioneers charting a new course. At the same time both were quite modest concerning the historical limitations of their accomplishments. Engels expressed this most strikingly when he wrote:

“But how young the whole of human history still is, and how ridiculous it would be to attempt to ascribe any absolute validity to our present views, is evident from the simple fact that all past history can be characterized as the history of the epoch from the practical discovery of the transformation of mechanical motion into heat up to that of the transformation of heat into mechanical motion.”*

Before a judgment can be made on the meaning of Marxism, one must know precisely what the founders of Marxism thought and said. The editors believe that the selections in this volume will provide a clear statement of the central ideas of Marx, Engels and Lenin. We hope that a reading of the book will be a stimulus to turn to the full texts of the materials here excerpted. Full mastery of Marxism is a lifelong task. We trust the reader will find a good beginning here.

May 1970

—THE EDITORS

**Anti-Dühring*, p. 131.

PART ONE

FUNDAMENTALS OF HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

Ideas can never lead beyond an old world system but only beyond the ideas of the old world system. Ideas cannot carry anything out at all. In order to carry out ideas men are needed who dispose of a certain practical force. . . .

—MARX AND ENGELS, *The Holy Family* (1844), p.160.

History does nothing, it “possesses no immense wealth,” it “wages no battles.” It is man, real living man, that does all that, that possesses and fights; “history” is not a person apart, using man as a means for its own particular aims; history is nothing but the activity of man pursuing his aims.

—*Ibid*, p. 125

Introduction

HISTORICAL MATERIALISM, or the materialist interpretation of history, is the keystone of Marxist social and economic theory. It sees man and nature as intertwined and man's historical development as a particular although unique phase of natural history.

To understand this central Marxist theory it is necessary, first of all, to reject the conventional notions about what materialism is. The philosophical concept *materialism* in no sense means the reduction of all human activity to crude matter, to atoms, to inanimate stuff. Nor does it refer to appeals to the "baser motives of men," to the animality of "dog eat dog," or to simple preoccupation with economic gain and material possessions. One need but read a few pages of Marx and Engels to realize the absurdity of such interpretations.

In the area of philosophy, materialism, according to Marx and Engels, means only that life and thinking matter have their origin in non-thinking matter, that under favorable conditions inorganic matter produces organic life. Applied to history, materialism means only that before men can have governments, religions or philosophies, they must have food, shelter and, on much of the earth, clothing—in other words, the *material* prerequisites of life.

By *historical* Marx and Engels mean that human existence can be understood only as a *process of social development*. Everything in our lives—our way of making a living, our tools and skills, the houses we live in and the clothes we wear, our social and political institutions, our knowledge, our ideas, our beliefs—all are part of a continuous pattern of social movement and social change. Thus there can be no adequate explanation of any question facing man unless that question is viewed *historically*.

Basing itself on these general propositions of historical materialism, Marxism asserts that human labor is fundamental in the evolution of man and his social environment. What men produce, how they produce it, and how they are related in production determine the basis and limits of their existence. Production and production relations are the foundation of our social and political institutions, as well as of our ideas about ourselves and the world around us. It is the mode of social existence that determines social consciousness.

In the course of history there develop new forces of production, new ways of controlling nature. As these forces of production advance, they come into conflict with the old production and property relations and the institutional forms based on them—the old politics, the old ideologies, etc. When this happens, it becomes necessary to change the old relations

of production and to discard the outmoded institutions, putting in their place new ones better suited to the new level of productive forces. This process, in all its complexity, is the basic explanation of the movement of history.

The Marxian theory of history has epochal significance. Marx frequently disclaimed credit for the discovery of many things, including the role of class struggle in history, but both he and Engels insisted on the decisive importance of their having been the first to develop the materialist interpretation of history. They believed that this theory is not only indispensable for an understanding of what happened in the past, but at the same time provides the key for explaining the present-day world and indicating the direction in which it is moving. Harold Laski sensed the momentousness of this discovery when he wrote:

“No serious observer supposes that the materialist conception of history is free from difficulties or that it solves all the problems of historical interpretation. But no serious observer either can doubt that it has done more in the last hundred years to provide a major clue to the causes of social change than any other hypothesis that has been put forward.”*

Whether or not they acknowledge it, historians and sociologists are indebted to Marx for another idea that flows from the fundamental approach of historical materialism. It is that no man lives outside history, outside the society and ideological climate in which he has developed and in which he thinks or acts. The pretense of pure objectivity is immediately dissolved. Writing whatever I am writing, whether on religion, philosophy, art, economics or politics, I am a creature of my time, molded by innumerable influences, of many (or most) of which I am not even conscious. Above all, that which conditions my perception of the reality surrounding me is the *class* (or the section of the class) to which I belong or with which I identify myself.

It can be objected that Marx and Engels themselves were also conditioned by their social and class identification. (They were of course not workers, but they identified themselves with the working class.) Their answer to such an objection is

*Introduction to *The Communist Manifesto* (New York, 1967), p. 72.

to admit their class bias. Their argument is that it is precisely this identification with the working class that enabled them to see things that even the greatest thinkers whose vantage point was bourgeois could not possibly understand. Identifying themselves with the capitalist class, such people could not see beyond the interests of that class. It took the working class economist, Marx, to fathom the real motive force of the capitalist system and to explain the source of surplus value, where such brilliant bourgeois economists as Adam Smith and Ricardo failed. For Marx, the way to historical and social truth lay not in being above classes—in our society an illusory impossibility—but in identifying oneself with the class whose interests require the sweeping away of outmoded myths and rationalizations and the creation of a new society leading to a classless world.

The most strident objections to the materialist interpretation of history center on its advocacy of social revolution. When Marx wrote in *The Holy Family*, “If conditions make the human being, we ought to make the conditions human,” he was not uttering a pious hope but was already employing the moral revolutionary imperative for social change. By the time of the *Communist Manifesto*, this idea led to a direct challenge to existing capitalist society through social revolution. To say that there *could be* a revolution against the capitalist state and that there *should be*, are two different things. The *ought* here is a genuine *categorical imperative*, an unconditional obligation to prepare for a situation when revolution becomes a *must*. Marx and Engels not only analyzed previous societies and the existing capitalist one, but advocated the revolutionary overthrow of this society and the establishment of socialism.

An interesting theoretical point arises here, and anti-Marxists are quick to seize upon it. How can Marxists claim scientific objectivity in their analysis of the past and their prediction of the future, when they engage actively in making the future conform to their predictions?

The assumption underlying this criticism is that one cannot be scientific in any matter involving advocacy of action. For Marxism this argument is baseless. To understand, to predict, to control—these are all parts of the same scientific process. Lenin led the 1917 Russian Socialist Revolution not

as a fulfillment of Marxist prophecy (in fact, he was opposed by some within his own party because according to the "books" a socialist revolution should not have occurred first in a backward country like Russia). Lenin's great achievement as a revolutionary leader was the result of his mastery of theory and practice and his grasp of the concrete aspects of a revolutionary situation in the specific conditions prevailing in the tsarist empire toward the end of World War I. He recognized that the old ruling class was politically bankrupt and that conditions were ripe for the working class to seize power. Lenin was far more scientific than his bourgeois contemporary political leaders, Lloyd George, Clemenceau and Wilson, who exhibited only panic and bewilderment in the face of the profound upheavals that rent their once fixed and immutable capitalist world.

One further confusion should be cleared up. As the selections from Marx and Engels amply demonstrate, historical materialism is not "economic determinism" in the sense that material *things* are the driving force of history. Indeed, there would be nothing wrong with the term "economic determinism" if the word economics were correctly understood. As Engels succinctly pointed out, "Economics does not deal with *things* but with relations between people and in the last instance between classes. These relations are however *always bound to things and appear as things.*" However, by long usage the term "economic determinism" has come to mean the mechanical determination of historical events by dehumanized economic forces. Many, like Charles Beard in his *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States.*, have sought to find a simple one-to-one relationship between economic status and the motivations of historical personages. Such interpretations are alien to Marxian historical materialism. Nevertheless, there are few misconceptions as widely held as the one which identifies the rich dialectics of Marx's materialist interpretation of history with the crude mechanism of "economic determinism." The reader will find in this section numerous statements by both Marx and Engels that should lay to rest this misinterpretation.

The materials in Part One cover a wide range of ideas. Yet they all bear on one question: *What makes history?* Is there a law

of evolution in human history? If so, what are its premises and how did a science of history become possible?

Additional materials caution against schematism in history and warn against *a priori* history-making which can be found in Spengler and Toynbee, but not in Marx. Other questions are dealt with, such as the role of the individual in history, the relation of individuals and classes, and the decisive part the mode of production plays in determining the type of political and ideological superstructure built upon it.

By itself historical materialism does not pretend to explain any specific event or situation. What it does is to provide the approach by which, through experience, practice and detailed investigation, sociohistorical events can be both understood and shaped.

[1]

TOWARD A NEW CONCEPTION OF HISTORY

A. THE LAW OF EVOLUTION IN HUMAN HISTORY

Just as Darwin discovered the law of development of organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of development of human history: the simple fact, hitherto concealed by an overgrowth of ideology, that mankind must first of all eat, drink, have shelter and clothing, before it can pursue politics, science, art, religion, etc.; that therefore the production of the immediate material means of subsistence and consequently the degree of economic development attained by a given people or during a given epoch form the foundation upon which the state institutions, the legal conceptions, art and even the ideas on religion of the people concerned have been evolved, and in the light of which they must therefore be explained, instead of *vice versa*, as had hitherto been the case.

—ENGELS, "Speech at the Graveside of Karl Marx" (1883), MARX and ENGELS, *Selected Works* (1968), p. 435.

B. WHAT MARX DISCOVERED

And now as to myself, no credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society nor yet the struggle

between them. Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle and bourgeois economists the economic anatomy of the classes.

What I did that was new was to prove: (1) that the *existence of classes* is only bound up with *particular, historic phases in the development of production*; (2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the *dictatorship of the proletariat*; (3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the *abolition of all classes* and to a *classless society*.

—MARX, Letter to Weydemeyer (1852), MARX and ENGELS *Selected Correspondence*, p. 57.

C. TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL EVOLUTION

A critical history of technology would show how little any of the inventions of the 18th century are the work of a single individual. Hitherto there is no such book. Darwin has interested us in the history of nature's technology, *i.e.*, in the formation of the organs of plants and animals, which organs serve as instruments of production for sustaining life. Does not the history of the productive organs of man, of organs that are the material basis of all social organization, deserve equal attention? And would not such a history be easier to compile, since, as Vico says, human history differs from natural history in this, that we have made the former, but not the latter? Technology discloses man's mode of dealing with nature, the process of production by which he sustains his life, and thereby also lays bare the mode of formation of his social relations, and of the mental conceptions that flow from them. Every history of religion even, that fails to take account of this material basis, is uncritical. It is, in reality, much easier to discover by analysis the earthly core of the misty creations of religion, than, conversely, it is, to develop from the actual relations of life the corresponding celestialized forms of those relations. The latter method is the only materialistic, and therefore the only scientific one. The weak points in the abstract materialism of natural science, a materialism that excludes history and its process, are at once evident from the abstract and ideological conceptions of its spokesmen, whenever they venture beyond the bounds of their own speciality.

—MARX, *Capital*, vol. I (1867), p. 372, note 3.

D. "THE PREMISES FROM WHICH WE BEGIN"

The premises from which we begin are not arbitrary ones, not dogmas, but real premises from which abstraction can only be made in the imagination. They are the real individuals, their activity and the material conditions under which they live, both those which they find already existing and those produced by their activity. These premises can thus be verified in a purely empirical way.

The first premise of all human history is, of course, the existence of living human individuals. Thus the first fact to be established is the physical organization of these individuals and their consequent relation to the rest of nature. Of course, we cannot here go either into the actual physical nature of man, or into the natural conditions in which man finds himself—geological, orohydrographical, climatic and so on. The writing of history must always set out from these natural bases and their modification in the course of history through the action of man.

Men can be distinguished from animals by consciousness, by religion or anything else you like. They themselves begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to *produce* their means of subsistence, a step which is conditioned by their physical organization. By producing their means of subsistence men are indirectly producing their actual material life.

The way in which men produce their means of subsistence depends first of all on the nature of the actual means they find in existence and have to reproduce. This mode of production must not be considered simply as being the reproduction of the physical existence of the individuals. Rather it is a definite form of activity of these individuals, a definite part. As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with *what* they produce and with *how* they produce. The nature of individuals thus depends on the material conditions determining their production.

—MARX and ENGELS, *The German Ideology* (1846), pp. 6f.

E. THE MARXIST THEORY OF HISTORY

The whole previous view of history was based on the conception that the ultimate causes for all historical changes are to be

looked for in the changing ideas of human beings, and that of all historical changes, political changes are the most important and are dominant in the whole of history. But the question was not asked as to whence the ideas come into men's minds and what the driving causes of the political changes are. Only upon the newer school of French, and partly also of English, historians had the conviction forced itself that, since the Middle Ages at least, the driving force in European history had been the struggle of the developing bourgeoisie with the feudal aristocracy for social and political domination. Now Marx has proved that the whole of previous history is a history of class struggles, that in all the manifold and complicated political struggles the only thing at issue has been the social and political rule of social classes, the maintenance of domination by older classes and the conquest of domination by newly arising classes. To what, however, do these classes owe their origin and their continued existence? They owe it to the particular material, physically sensible conditions in which society at a given period produces and exchanges its means of subsistence. The feudal rule of the Middle Ages rested on the self-sufficient economy of small peasant communities which themselves produced almost all their requirements, in which there was almost no exchange and which received from the arms-bearing nobility protection from without and national or at least political cohesion. When the towns arose and with them separate handicraft industry and trade intercourse, at first internal and later international, the urban bourgeoisie developed and even during the Middle Ages achieved, in struggle with the nobility, its inclusion in the feudal order as likewise a privileged estate. But with the discovery of the extra-European world, from the middle of the 15th century onwards, this bourgeoisie acquired a far more extensive sphere of trade and therewith a new spur for its industry; in the most important branches handicrafts were supplanted by manufacture, already on a factory scale, and this again was supplanted by large-scale industry, which became possible owing to the discoveries of the previous century, especially that of the steam engine. Large-scale industry, in its turn, reacted on trade by driving out the old manual labor in backward countries, and creating the present-day new means of communication, steam engines, railways, electric tele-

graphy, in the more developed ones. Thus the bourgeoisie came more and more to combine social wealth and social power in its hands, while it still for a long period remained excluded from political power, which remained in the hands of the nobility and the monarchy supported by the nobility. But at a certain stage — in France since the Great Revolution — it also conquered political power and from then on became a ruling class over the proletariat and small peasants. From this point of view all the historical phenomena are explicable in the simplest possible way — with sufficient knowledge of the particular economic condition of society, which it is true is totally lacking in our professional historians, and in the same way the conceptions and ideas of each historical period are most simply to be explained from the economic conditions of life and from the social and political relations of the period which are in turn determined by these economic conditions. History was for the first time placed on its real basis; the obvious but previously totally overlooked fact that men must first of all eat, drink, have clothing and shelter, therefore must *work*, before they can fight for domination, pursue politics, religion, philosophy, etc.—this palpable fact at last came into its historical rights.

This new conception of history, however, was of supreme significance for the socialist outlook. It showed that all previous history moved in class antagonisms and class struggles, that there have always existed ruling and ruled, exploiting and exploited classes, and that the great majority of mankind has always been condemned to arduous labor and little enjoyment. Why is this? Simply because in all earlier stages of development of mankind production was so little developed that the historical development could only proceed in this antagonistic form, that historical progress as a whole was dependent on the activity of a small privileged minority, while the great mass remained condemned to producing by their labor their own meager means of subsistence and also the increasingly rich means of the privileged. But the same investigation of history, which in this way provides a natural and reasonable explanation of the previous class rule, otherwise only explicable from the wickedness of man, also leads to the realization that, in consequence of the so tremendously increased productive forces of the present time, even the last pretext has vanished for a division of mankind into

rulers and ruled, exploiters and exploited, at least in the most advanced countries; that the ruling big bourgeoisie has fulfilled its historic mission, that it is no longer capable of the leadership of society and has even become a hindrance to the development of production, as the trade crises, and especially the last great collapse and the depressed condition of industry in all countries, has proved; that historical leadership has passed to the proletariat, a class which owing to its whole position in society can only free itself by abolishing altogether all exploitation; and that the social productive forces which have outgrown the control of the bourgeoisie are only waiting for the associated proletariat to take possession of them in order to bring about a state of things in which every member of society will be enabled to participate not only in production but also in the distribution and administration of social wealth, and which so increases the social productive forces and their yield by planned operation of the whole of production that the satisfaction of all reasonable needs will be assured to everyone in an ever increasing measure.

—ENGELS, "Karl Marx" (1877) (Biography written for *Volkskalender*), MARX and ENGELS, *Selected Works*, pp. 375-77.

F. PRODUCTION: ITS LOGIC AND ITS HISTORY

Man is in the most literal sense of the word a *zoon politikon*, not only a social animal, but an animal which can develop into an individual only in society. Production by isolated individuals outside of society—something which might happen as an exception to a civilized man who by accident got into the wilderness and already dynamically possessed within himself the forces of society—is as great an absurdity as the idea of the development of language without individuals living together and talking to one another. We need not dwell on this any longer. It would not be necessary to touch on this point at all, were not the vagary which had its justification and sense with the people of the 18th century transplanted in all earnest into the field of political economy by Bastiat, Carey, Proudhon and others. Proudhon and others naturally find it very pleasant, when they do not know the historical origin of a certain economic phenomenon, to give it a quasi historico-philosophical

explanation by going into mythology. Adam or Prometheus hit upon the scheme cut and dried, whereupon it was adopted, etc. Nothing is more tediously dry than the dreaming *locus communis*.

Whenever we speak, therefore, of production, we always have in mind production at a certain stage of social development, or production by social individuals. Hence it might seem that in order to speak of production at all, we must either trace the historical process of development through its various phases, or declare at the outset that we are dealing with a certain historical period, as, *e.g.*, with modern capitalist production which, as a matter of fact, constitutes the subject proper of this work. But all stages of production have certain landmarks in common, common purposes. *Production in general* is an abstraction, but it is a rational abstraction, in so far as it singles out and fixes the common features, thereby saving us repetition. Yet these general or common features discovered by comparison constitute something very complex, whose constituent elements have different destinations. Some of these elements belong to all epochs, others are common to a few. Some of them are common to the most modern as well as to the most ancient epochs. No production is conceivable without them; but while even the most completely developed languages have laws and conditions in common with the least developed ones, what is characteristic of their development are the points of departure from the general and common. The conditions which generally govern production must be differentiated in order that the essential points of difference be not lost sight of in view of the general uniformity which is due to the fact that the subject, mankind, and the object, nature, remain the same.

The failure to remember this one fact is the source of all the wisdom of modern economists who are trying to prove the eternal nature and harmony of existing social conditions. Thus they say, for example, that no production is possible without some instrument of production, let that instrument be only the hand; that none is possible without past accumulated labor, even if that labor consist of mere skill which has been accumulated and concentrated in the hand of the savage by repeated exercise. Capital is, among other things, also an instrument of production, also past impersonal labor. Hence capital is a univer-

sal, eternal natural phenomenon; which is true if we disregard specific properties which turn an "instrument of production" and "stored up labor" into capital.

—MARX, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859), pp. 268-70.

G. EXISTENCE AND CONSCIOUSNESS

The fact is, therefore, that definite individuals who are productively active in a definite way enter into these definite social and political relations. Empirical observation must in each separate instance bring out empirically, and without any mystification and speculation, the connection of the social and political structure with production. The social structure and the state are continually evolving out of the life process of definite individuals, but of individuals, not as they may appear in their own or other people's imagination, but as they really are; *i.e.* as they are effective, produce materially, and are active under definite material limits, presuppositions, and conditions independent of their will.

The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life. Conceiving, thinking, the mental intercourse of men, appear at this stage as the direct efflux of their material behavior. The same applies to mental production as expressed in the language of the politics, laws, morality, religion, metaphysics of a people. Men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc.—real, active men, as they are conditioned by a definite development of their productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to these, up to its furthest forms. Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of men is their actual life process. If in all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside down as in a *camera obscura*, this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life process.

In direct contrast to German philosophy which descends from heaven to earth, here we ascend from earth to heaven. That is to say, we do not set out from what men say, imagine, conceive, nor from men as narrated, thought of, imagined,

conceived, in order to arrive at men in the flesh. We set out from real, active men, and on the basis of their real life process we demonstrate the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process. The phantoms formed in the human brain are also, necessarily, sublimates of their material life process, which is empirically verifiable and bound to material premises. Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness, thus no longer retain the semblance of independence. They have no history, no development; but men, developing their material production and their material intercourse, alter, along with this their real existence, their thinking and the products of their thinking. Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life. In the first method of approach the starting point is consciousness taken as the living individual; in the second it is the real living individuals themselves, as they are in actual life, and consciousness is considered solely as *their* consciousness.

This method of approach is not devoid of premises. It starts out from the real premises and does not abandon them for a moment. Its premises are men, not in any fantastic isolation or abstract definition, but in their actual, empirically perceptible process of development under definite conditions. As soon as this active life process is described, history ceases to be a collection of dead facts as it is with the empiricists (themselves still abstract), or an imagined activity of imagined subjects, as with the idealists.

Where speculation ends—in real life—there real, positive science begins: the representation of the practical activity, of the practical process of development of men. Empty talk about consciousness ceases, and real knowledge has to take its place. When reality is depicted, philosophy as an independent branch of activity loses its medium of existence. At the best its place can only be taken by a summing-up of the most general results, abstractions which arise from the observation of the historical development of men. Viewed apart from real history, these abstractions have in themselves no value whatsoever. They can only serve to facilitate the arrangement of historical material, to indicate the sequence of its separate strata. But they by no means afford a recipe or schema, as does philosophy, for neatly

trimming the epochs of history. On the contrary, our difficulties begin only when we set about the observation and the arrangement—the real depiction—of our historical material, whether of a past epoch or of the present. The removal of these difficulties is governed by premises which it is quite impossible to state here, but which only the study of the actual life-process and the activity of the individuals of each epoch will make evident.

—MARX and ENGELS, *The German Ideology* (1846), pp. 13-16.

H. MODERN HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS MADE A SCIENCE OF HISTORY POSSIBLE

When we consider and reflect upon nature at large, or the history of mankind, or our own intellectual activity, at first we see the picture of an endless entanglement of relations and reactions, permutations and combinations, in which nothing remains what, where and as it was, but everything moves, changes, comes into being and passes away. We see, therefore, at first the picture as a whole, with its individual parts still more or less kept in the background; we observe the movements, transitions, connections, rather than the things that move, combine and are connected. This primitive, naïve, but intrinsically correct conception of the world is that of ancient Greek philosophy, and was first clearly formulated by Heraclitus: everything is and is not, for everything is fluid, is constantly changing, constantly coming into being and passing away.

But this conception, correctly as it expresses the general character of the picture of appearances as a whole, does not suffice to explain the details of which this picture is made up, and so long as we do not understand these, we have not a clear idea of the whole picture. In order to understand these details we must detach them from their natural or historical connection and examine each one separately, its nature, special causes, effects, etc. This is, primarily, the task of natural science and historical research—branches of science which the Greeks of classical times, on very good grounds, relegated to a subordinate position, because they had first of all to collect materials for these sciences to work upon. A certain amount of natural and historical material must be collected before there

can be any critical analysis, comparison and arrangement in classes, orders and species. . . .

An exact representation of the universe, of its evolution, of the development of mankind, and of the reflection of this evolution in the minds of men, can therefore only be obtained by the methods of dialectics, with its constant regard to the innumerable actions and reactions of life and death, of progressive or retrogressive changes. And in this spirit the new German philosophy has worked. Kant began his career by resolving the stable solar system of Newton and its eternal duration, after the famous initial impulse had once been given, into the result of a historic process, the formation of the sun and all the planets out of a rotating nebulous mass. From this he at the same time drew the conclusion that, given this origin of the solar system, its future death followed of necessity. His theory half a century later was established mathematically by Laplace, and half a century after that the spectroscope proved the existence in space of such incandescent masses of gas in various stages of condensation.

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

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

tional working-class movement, that of the English Chartists, reached its height. The class struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie came to the front in the history of the most advanced countries in Europe, in proportion to the development, upon the one hand, of modern industry, upon the other, of the newly-acquired political supremacy of the bourgeoisie. Facts more and more strenuously gave the lie to the teachings of bourgeois economy as to the identity of the interests of capital and labor, as to the universal harmony and universal prosperity that would be the consequence of unbridled competition. All these things could no longer be ignored, any more than the French and English socialism, which was their theoretical, though very imperfect, expression. But the old idealist conception of history, which was not yet dislodged, knew nothing of class struggles based upon economic interests, knew nothing of economic interests; production and all economic relations appeared in it only as incidental, subordinate elements in the "history of civilization."

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

From this time forward socialism was no longer an accidental discovery of this or that ingenious brain, but the necessary outcome of the struggle between two historically developed classes—the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Its task was no longer to manufacture a system of society as perfect as possible,

but to examine the historico-economic succession of events from which these classes and their antagonisms had of necessity sprung, and to discover in the economic conditions thus created the means of ending the conflict. But the socialism of earlier days was as incompatible with this materialistic conception as the conception of nature of the French materialists was with dialectics and modern natural science. The socialism of earlier days certainly criticized the existing capitalistic mode of production and its consequences. But it could not explain them, and, therefore, could not get the mastery of them. It could only simply reject them as bad. The more strongly this earlier socialism denounced the exploitation of the working class, inevitable under capitalism, the less able was it clearly to show in what this exploitation consisted and how it arose. But for this it was necessary—(1) to present the capitalistic method of production in its historical connection and its inevitableness during a particular historical period, and therefore, also, to present its inevitable downfall; and (2) to lay bare its essential character, which was still a secret. This was done by the discovery of *surplus value*. It was shown that the appropriation of unpaid labor is the basis of the capitalist mode of production and of the exploitation of the worker that occurs under it; that even if the capitalist buys the labor power of his laborer at its full value as a commodity on the market, he yet extracts more value from it than he paid for; and that in the ultimate analysis this surplus value forms those sums of value from which are heaped up the constantly increasing masses of capital in the hands of the possessing classes. The genesis of capitalist production and the production of capital were both explained.

These two great discoveries, the materialistic conception of history and the revelation of the secret of capitalistic production through surplus value, we owe to Marx. With these discoveries socialism became a science. The next thing was to work out all its details and relations.

—ENGELS, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (1880), pp. 45f; 48-52.

BOURGEOIS AND PROLETARIANS

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.

Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.

In the earlier epochs of history, we find almost everywhere a complicated arrangement of society into various orders, a manifold gradation of social rank. In ancient Rome we have patricians, knights, plebeians, slaves; in the Middle Ages, feudal lords, vassals, guild-masters, journeymen, apprentices, serfs; in almost all of these classes, again, subordinate gradations.

The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones.

Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other — bourgeoisie and proletariat.

From the serfs of the Middle Ages sprang the chartered burghers of the earliest towns. From these burghers the first elements of the bourgeoisie were developed.

The discovery of America, the rounding of the Cape, opened up fresh ground for the rising bourgeoisie. The East Indian and Chinese markets, the colonization of America, trade with the colonies, the increase in the means of exchange and in commodities generally, gave to commerce, to navigation, to industry, an impulse never before known, and thereby, to the revolutionary element in the tottering feudal society, a rapid development.

The feudal system of industry, in which industrial production was monopolized by closed guilds, now no longer sufficed for the growing wants of the new markets. The manufacturing system took its place. The guild-masters were pushed aside by the manufacturing middle class; division of labor between the different corporate guilds vanished in the face of division of labor in each single workshop.

Meantime the markets kept ever growing, the demand ever rising. Even manufacture no longer sufficed. Thereupon, steam and machinery revolutionized industrial production. The place of manufacture was taken by the giant, modern industry, the place of the industrial middle class by industrial millionaires, the leaders of whole industrial armies, the modern bourgeois.

Modern industry has established the world market, for which the discovery of America paved the way. This market has given an immense development to commerce, to navigation, to communication by land. This development has, in its turn, reacted on the extension of industry; and in proportion as industry, commerce, navigation, railways extended, in the same proportion the bourgeoisie developed, increased its capital, and pushed into the background every class handed down from the Middle Ages.

We see, therefore, how the modern bourgeoisie is itself the product of a long course of development, of a series of revolutions in the modes of production and of exchange.

Each step in the development of the bourgeoisie was accompanied by a corresponding political advance of that class. An oppressed class under the sway of the feudal nobility, an armed and self-governing association in the medieval commune; here independent urban republic (as in Italy and Germany), there taxable "third estate" of the monarchy (as in France); afterwards, in the period of manufacture proper, serving either the semi-feudal or the absolute monarchy as a counterpoise against the nobility, and, in fact, cornerstone of the great monarchies in general—the bourgeoisie has at last, since the establishment of modern industry and of the world market, conquered for itself, in the modern representative state, exclusive political sway. The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.

The bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary part.

The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his "natural superiors," and has left no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous "cash payment." It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervor, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom—Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.

The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honored and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage laborers.

The bourgeoisie has torn away from the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation to a mere money relation.

The bourgeoisie has disclosed how it came to pass that the brutal display of vigor in the Middle Ages, which reactionaries so much admire, found its fitting complement in the most slothful indolence. It has been the first to show what man's activity can bring about. It has accomplished wonders far surpassing Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts, and Gothic cathedrals; it has conducted expeditions that put in the shade all former exoduses of nations and crusades.

The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. Conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered form, was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes. Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated be-

fore they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life and his relations with his kind.

The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere.

The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. To the great chagrin of reactionaries, it has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground on which it stood. All old-established national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. They are dislodged by new industries, whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilized nations, by industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material, but raw material drawn from the remotest zones; industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe. In place of the old wants, satisfied by the production of the country, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant lands and climes. In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal interdependence of nations. And as in material, so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures there arises a world literature.

The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilization. The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls, with which it forces the barbarians' intensely obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitulate. It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, *i.e.*, to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image.

The bourgeois has subjected the country to the rule of the towns. It has created enormous cities, has greatly increased the urban population as compared with the rural, and has thus rescued a considerable part of the population from the idiocy of rural life. Just as it has made the country dependent on the towns, so it has made barbarian and semi-barbarian countries dependent on the civilized ones, nations of peasants on nations of bourgeois, the East on the West.

The bourgeoisie keeps more and more doing away with the scattered state of the population, of the means of production, and of property. It has agglomerated population, centralized means of production, and has concentrated property in a few hands. The necessary consequence of this was political centralization. Independent, or but loosely connected provinces, with separate interests, laws, governments and systems of taxation, became lumped together into one nation, with one government, one code of laws, one national class interest, one frontier and one customs tariff.

The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together. Subjection of nature's forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalization of rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground—what earlier century had even a presentiment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labor?

We see then: the means of production and of exchange, on whose foundation the bourgeoisie built itself up, were generated in feudal society. At a certain stage in the development of these means of production and of exchange, the conditions under which feudal society produced and exchanged, the feudal organization of agriculture and manufacturing industry, in one word, the feudal relations of property became no longer compatible with the already developed productive forces; they became so many fetters. They had to be burst asunder; they were burst asunder.

Into their place stepped free competition, accompanied by a social and political constitution adapted to it, and by the economic and political sway of the bourgeois class.

A similar movement is going on before our own eyes. Modern bourgeois society with its relations of production, of exchange and of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells. For many a decade past the history of industry and commerce is but the history of the revolt of modern productive forces against modern conditions of production, against the property relations that are the conditions for the existence of the bourgeoisie and of its rule. It is enough to mention the commercial crises that by their periodical return put the existence of the entire bourgeois society on its trial, each time more threateningly. In these crises a great part not only of the existing products, but also of the previously created productive forces, are periodically destroyed. In these crises there breaks out an epidemic that, in all earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity—the epidemic of overproduction. Society suddenly finds itself put back into a state of momentary barbarism; it appears as if a famine, a universal war of devastation had cut off the supply of every means of subsistence; industry and commerce seem to be destroyed. And why? Because there is too much civilization, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce. The productive forces at the disposal of society no longer tend to further the development of the conditions of bourgeois property; on the contrary, they have become too powerful for these conditions, by which they are fettered, and so soon as they overcome these fetters, they bring disorder into the whole of bourgeois society, endanger the existence of bourgeois property. The conditions of bourgeois society are too narrow to comprise the wealth created by them. And how does the bourgeoisie get over these crises? On the one hand, by enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces; on the other, by the conquest of new markets, and by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones. That is to say, by paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises, and by diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented.

The weapons with which the bourgeoisie felled feudalism to the ground are now turned against the bourgeoisie itself.

But not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men

who are to wield those weapons—the modern working class—the proletarians.

In proportion as the bourgeoisie, *i.e.*, capital, is developed, in the same proportion is the proletariat, the modern working class, developed—a class of laborers, who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labor increases capital. These laborers, who must sell themselves piecemeal, are a commodity, like every other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition, to all the fluctuations of the market.

Owing to the extensive use of machinery and to division of labor, the work of the proletarians has lost all individual character, and, consequently, all charm for the workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine, and it is only the most simple, most monotonous, and most easily acquired knack, that is required of him. Hence, the cost of production of a workman is restricted, almost entirely, to the means of subsistence that he requires for his maintenance, and for the propagation of his race. But the price of a commodity, and therefore also of labor, is equal to its cost of production. In proportion, therefore, as the repulsiveness of the work increases, the wage decreases. Nay more, in proportion as the use of machinery and division of labor increases, in the same proportion the burden of toil also increases, whether by prolongation of the working hours, by increase of the work exacted in a given time, or by increased speed of the machinery, etc.

Modern industry has converted the little workshop of the patriarchal master into the great factory of the industrial capitalist. Masses of laborers, crowded into the factory, are organized like soldiers. As privates of the industrial army they are placed under the command of a perfect hierarchy of officers and sergeants. Not only are they slaves of the bourgeois class, and of the bourgeois state; they are daily and hourly enslaved by the machine, by the overlooker, and, above all, by the individual bourgeois manufacturer himself. The more openly this despotism proclaims gain to be its end and aim, the more petty, the more hateful and the more embittering it is.

The less the skill and exertion of strength implied in manual labor, in other words, the more modern industry becomes developed, the more is the labor of men superseded by that of women. Differences of age and sex have no longer any distinc-

tive social validity for the working class. All are instruments of labor, more or less expensive to use, according to their age and sex.

No sooner is the exploitation of the laborer by the manufacturer, so far at an end, that he receives his wages in cash, than he is set upon by the other portions of the bourgeoisie, the landlord, the shopkeeper, the pawnbroker, etc.

The lower strata of the middle class—the small tradespeople, shopkeepers, and retired tradesmen generally, the handicraftsmen and peasants—all these sink gradually into the proletariat, partly because their diminutive capital does not suffice for the scale on which modern industry is carried on, and is swamped in the competition with the large capitalists, partly because their specialized skill is rendered worthless by new methods of production. Thus the proletariat is recruited from all classes of the population

All the preceding classes that got the upper hand, sought to fortify their already acquired status by subjecting society at large to their conditions of appropriation. The proletarians cannot become masters of the productive forces of society, except by abolishing their own previous mode of appropriation, and thereby also every other previous mode of appropriation. They have nothing of their own to secure and to fortify; their mission is to destroy all previous securities for, and insurances of, individual property.

All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interest of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority. The proletariat, the lowest stratum of our present society, cannot stir, cannot raise itself up, without the whole superincumbent strata of official society being sprung into the air.

Though not in substance, yet in form, the struggle of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie is at first a national struggle. The proletariat of each country must, of course, first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie.

In depicting the most general phases of the development of the proletariat, we traced the more or less veiled civil war, raging within existing society, up to the point where that war breaks out into open revolution, and where the violent over-

throw of the bourgeoisie lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat.

Hitherto, every form of society has been based, as we have already seen, on the antagonism of oppressing and oppressed classes. But in order to oppress a class, certain conditions must be assured to it under which it can, at least, continue its slavish existence. The serf, in the period of serfdom, raised himself to membership in the commune, just as the petty bourgeois, under the yoke of feudal absolutism, managed to develop into a bourgeois. The modern laborer, on the contrary, instead of rising with the progress of industry, sinks deeper and deeper below the conditions of existence of his own class. He becomes a pauper, and pauperism develops more rapidly than population and wealth. And here it becomes evident, that the bourgeoisie is unfit any longer to be the ruling class in society, and to impose its conditions of existence upon society as an overriding law. It is unfit to rule because it is incompetent to assure an existence to its slave within his slavery, because it cannot help letting him sink into such a state, that it has to feed him, instead of being fed by him. Society can no longer live under this bourgeoisie, in other words, its existence is no longer compatible with society.

The essential condition for the existence and for the sway of the bourgeois class, is the formation and augmentation of capital; the condition for capital is wage labor. Wage labor rests exclusively on competition between the laborers. The advance of industry, whose involuntary promoter is the bourgeoisie, replaces the isolation of the laborers, due to competition, by their revolutionary combination, due to association. The development of modern industry, therefore, cuts from under its feet the very foundation on which the bourgeoisie produces and appropriates products. What the bourgeoisie therefore produces, above all, are its own gravediggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable.

—MARX and ENGELS, *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), pp. 35-46.

[3]

BASIC ROLE OF THE MODE OF PRODUCTION

A. MODE OF PRODUCTION DETERMINES THE SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND INTELLECTUAL LIFE PROCESSES

In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or—what is but a legal expression for the same thing—with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations a distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic—in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself, so can we not judge of such a period of transformation by its own consciousness; on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained rather from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social productive forces and the relations of production. No social order ever perishes before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have developed; and new, higher relations

of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society itself. Therefore mankind always sets itself only such tasks as it can solve; since, looking at the matter more closely, it will always be found that the task itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution already exist or are at least in the process of formation. In broad outlines Asiatic, ancient, feudal, and modern bourgeois modes of production can be designated as progressive epochs in the economic formation of society. The bourgeois relations of production are the last antagonistic form of the social process of production—antagonistic not in the sense of individual antagonism, but of one arising from the social conditions of life of the individuals; at the same time the productive forces developing in the womb of bourgeois society create the material conditions for the solution of that antagonism. This social formation brings, therefore, the prehistory of human society to a close.

—MARX, "Preface," *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859), *Selected Works*, pp. 182f.

B. THE ECONOMIC FOUNDATION, THE SUPERSTRUCTURE, AND THEIR INTERACTION

... The thing is easiest to grasp from the point of view of the division of labor. Society gives rise to certain common functions which it cannot dispense with. The persons selected for these functions form a new branch of the division of labor *within society*. This gives them particular interests, distinct too from the interests of those who gave them their office; they make themselves independent of the latter and—the state is in being. And now the development is the same as it was with commodity trade and later with money trade; the new independent power, while having in the main to follow the movement of production, also, owing to its inward independence, the relative independence originally transferred to it and gradually further developed, reacts in its turn upon the conditions and course of production. It is the interaction of two unequal forces: on one hand the economic movement, on the other the new political power, which strives for as much independence as possible, and which, having once been established, is also endowed with a movement of its own. On the whole, the economic

movement gets its way, but it has also to suffer reactions from the political movement which it established and endowed with relative independence itself, from the movement of the state power on the one hand and of the opposition simultaneously engendered on the other. Just as the movement of the industrial market is, in the main and with the reservations already indicated, reflected in the money market and, of course, in inverted form, so the struggle between the classes already existing and already in conflict with one another is reflected in the struggle between government and opposition, but also in inverted form, no longer directly but indirectly, not as a class struggle but as a fight for political principles, and so distorted that it has taken us thousands of years to get behind it again.

The reaction of the state power upon economic development can be one of three kinds: it can run in the same direction, and then development is more rapid; it can oppose the line of development, in which case nowadays state power in every great nation will go to pieces in the long run; or it can cut off the economic development from certain paths, and impose on it certain others. This case ultimately reduces itself to one of the two previous ones. But it is obvious that in cases two and three the political power can do great damage to the economic development and result in the squandering of great masses of energy and material.

Then there is also the case of the conquest and brutal destruction of economic resources, by which, in certain circumstances, a whole local or national economic development could formerly be ruined. Nowadays such a case usually has the opposite effect, at least among great nations: in the long run the defeated power often gains more economically, politically and morally than the victor.

It is similar with law. As soon as the new division of labor which creates professional lawyers becomes necessary, another new and independent sphere is opened up which, for all its general dependence on production and trade, still has its own capacity for reacting upon these spheres as well. In a modern state, law must not only correspond to the general economic position and be its expression, but must also be an expression which is *consistent in itself*, and which does not, owing to inner contradictions, look glaringly inconsistent. And in order to

achieve this, the faithful reflection of economic conditions is more and more infringed upon. All the more so the more rarely it happens that a code of law is the blunt, unmitigated, unadulterated expression of the domination of a class—this in itself would already offend the “conception of justice.” Even in the *Code Napoléon* the pure logical conception of justice held by the revolutionary bourgeoisie of 1792-96 is already adulterated in many ways, and in so far as it is embodied there has daily to undergo all sorts of attenuation owing to the rising power of the proletariat. Which does not prevent the *Code Napoléon* from being the statute book which serves as a basis for every new code of law in every part of the world. Thus to a great extent the course of the “development of law” only consists: first in the attempt to do away with the contradictions arising from the direct translation of economic relations into legal principles, and to establish a harmonious system of law, and then in the repeated breaches made in this system by the influence and pressure of further economic development, which involves it in further contradictions (I am only speaking here of civil law for the moment).

The reflection of economic relations as legal principles is necessarily also a topsy-turvy one: it happens without the person who is acting being conscious of it; the jurist imagines he is operating with *a priori* principles, whereas they are really only economic reflexes; so everything is upside down. And it seems to me obvious that this inversion, which, so long as it remains unrecognized, forms what we call *ideological conception*, reacts in its turn upon the economic basis and may, within certain limits, modify it. The basis of the law of inheritance—assuming that the stages reached in the development of the family are equal—is an economic one. But it would be difficult to prove, for instance, that the absolute liberty of the testator in England and the severe restrictions imposed upon him in France are only due in every detail to economic causes. Both react back, however, on the economic sphere to a very considerable extent, because they influence the division of property.

As to the realms of ideology which soar still higher in the air, religion, philosophy, etc., these have a prehistoric stock, found already in existence and taken over in the historic period, of what we should today call bunk. These various false concep-

tions of nature, of man's own being, of spirits, magic forces, etc., have for the most part only a negative economic basis; but the low economic development of the prehistoric period is supplemented and also partially conditioned and even caused by the false conceptions of nature. And even though economic necessity was the main driving force of the progressive knowledge of nature and becomes ever more so, it would surely be pedantic to try and find economic causes for all this primitive nonsense. The history of science is the history of the gradual clearing away of this nonsense or of its replacement by fresh but already less absurd nonsense. The people who deal with this belong in their turn to special spheres in the division of labor and appear to themselves to be working in an independent field. And in so far as they form an independent group within the social division of labor, in so far do their productions, including their errors, react back as an influence upon the whole development of society, even on its economic development. But all the same they remain under the dominating influence of economic development.

—ENGELS, Letter to Conrad Schmidt (1890), MARX and ENGELS, *Selected Correspondence*, pp. 480-83.

C. THE CLASS BASIS OF IDEOLOGY.

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: *i.e.*, the class, which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas; hence of the relationships which make the one class the ruling one, therefore the ideas of its dominance. The individuals composing the ruling class possess among other things consciousness, and therefore think. In so far, therefore, as they rule as a class and determine the extent and compass of an epoch, it is self-evident that they do this in their whole range, hence among other things rule also as thinkers, as producers of ideas, and regulate the production and distri-

bution of the ideas of their age: thus their ideas are the ruling ideas of the epoch. For instance, in an age and in a country where royal power, aristocracy and bourgeoisie are contending for mastery and where, therefore, mastery is shared, the doctrine of the separation of powers proves to be the dominant idea and is expressed as an "eternal law." The division of labor, which we saw above as one of the chief forces of history up till now, manifests itself also in the ruling class as the division of mental and material labor, so that inside this class one part appears as the thinkers of the class (its active, conceptive ideologists, who make the perfecting of the illusion of the class about itself their chief source of livelihood), while the others' attitude to these ideas and illusions is more passive and receptive, because they are in reality the active members of this class and have less time to make up illusions and ideas about themselves. Within this class this cleavage can even develop into a certain opposition and hostility between the two parts, which, however, in the case of a practical collision, in which the class itself is endangered, automatically comes to nothing, in which case there also vanishes the semblance that the ruling ideas were not the ideas of the ruling class and had a power distinct from the power of this class. The existence of revolutionary ideas in a particular period presupposes the existence of a revolutionary class. . . .

If now in considering the course of history we detach the ideas of the ruling class from the ruling class itself and attribute to them an independent existence, if we confine ourselves to saying that these or those ideas were dominant, without bothering ourselves about the conditions of production and the producers of these ideas, if we then ignore the individuals and world conditions which are the source of the ideas, we can say, for instance, that during the time that the aristocracy was dominant, the concepts honor, loyalty, etc., were dominant, during the dominance of the bourgeoisie the concepts freedom, equality, etc. The ruling class itself on the whole imagines this to be so. This conception of history, which is common to all historians, particularly since the 18th century, will necessarily come up against the phenomenon that increasingly abstract ideas hold sway, *i.e.*, ideas which increasingly take on the form of universality. For each new class which puts itself in the place

of one ruling before it, is compelled, merely in order to carry through its aim, to represent its interest as the common interest of all the members of society, put in an ideal form; it will give its ideas the form of universality, and represent them as the only rational, universally valid ones. The class making a revolution appears from the very start, merely because it is opposed to a *class*, not as a class but as the representative of the whole of society; it appears as the whole mass of society confronting the one ruling class. It can do this because, to start with, its interest really is more connected with the common interest of all other non-ruling classes, because under the pressure of conditions its interest has not yet been able to develop as the particular interest of a particular class. Its victory, therefore, benefits also many individuals of the other classes which are not winning a dominant position, but only in so far as it now puts these individuals in a position to raise themselves into the ruling class. When the French bourgeoisie overthrew the power of the aristocracy, it thereby made it possible for many proletarians to raise themselves above the proletariat, but only in so far as they became bourgeois. Every new class, therefore, achieves its hegemony only on a broader basis than that of the class ruling previously, in return for which the opposition of the non-ruling class against the new ruling class later develops all the more sharply and profoundly. Both these things determine the fact that the struggle to be waged against this new ruling class, in its turn, aims at a more decided and radical negation of the previous conditions of society than could all previous classes which sought to rule.

This whole semblance, that the rule of a certain class is only the rule of certain ideas, comes to a natural end, of course, as soon as society ceases at last to be organized in the form of class rule, that is to say as soon as it is no longer necessary to represent a particular interest as general or "the general interest" as ruling.

— MARX and ENGELS, *The German Ideology* (1846), pp. 39-41.

D. DEPENDENCE OF IDEOLOGY ON THE MODE OF PRODUCTION

I seize this opportunity of shortly answering an objection taken by a German paper in America, to my work, *A Contri-*

bution to the Critique of Political Economy, 1859. In the estimation of that paper, my view that each special mode of production and the social relations corresponding to it, in short, that the economic structure of society is the real basis on which the juridical and political superstructure is raised, and to which definite social forms of thought correspond; that the mode of production determines the character of the social, political and intellectual life generally, all this is very true for our own times, in which material interests preponderate, but not for the Middle Ages, in which Catholicism, nor for Athens and Rome, where politics, reigned supreme. In the first place it strikes one as an odd thing for any one to suppose that these well-worn phrases about the Middle Ages and the ancient world are unknown to anyone else. This much, however, is clear, that the Middle Ages could not live on Catholicism, nor the ancient world on politics. On the contrary, it is the mode in which they gained a livelihood that explains why here politics, and there Catholicism, played the chief part. For the rest, it requires but a slight acquaintance with the history of the Roman republic, for example, to be aware that its secret history is the history of its landed property. On the other hand, Don Quixote long ago paid the penalty for wrongly imagining that knight errantry was compatible with all economical forms of society.

—MARX, *Capital*, vol. I. (1867), p. 82, note.

E. "JURISTIC SOCIALISM"

The world outlook of the Middle Ages was substantially theological. The unity of the European world which actually did not exist internally, was established externally, against the common Saracen foe, by Christianity.

The unity of the West-European world, which consisted of a group of nations developing in continual intercourse, was welded in Catholicism. This theological welding was not only in ideas, it existed in reality, not only in the pope, its monarchistic center, but above all in the feudally and hierarchically organized Church, which, owning about a third of the land in every country, occupied a position of tremendous power in the feudal organization. The Church with its feudal landownership was the real link between the different countries; the feudal organization of the Church gave a religious consecration to the secular

feudal state system. Besides, the clergy was the only educated class. It was therefore natural that Church dogma was the starting-point and basis of all thought. Jurisprudence, natural science, philosophy, everything was dealt with according to whether its content agreed or disagreed with the doctrines of the Church.

But in the womb of feudalism the power of the bourgeoisie was developing. A new class appeared in opposition to the big landowners. The city burghers were first and foremost and exclusively producers of and traders in commodities, while the feudal mode of production was based substantially on self-consumption of the product within a limited circle, partly by the producers and partly by the feudal lord. The Catholic world outlook, fashioned on the pattern of feudalism, was no longer adequate for this new class and its conditions of production and exchange. Nevertheless, this new class remained for a long time a captive in the bonds of almighty theology. From the 13th to the 17th century all the reformations and the struggles carried out under religious slogans that were connected with them were, on the theoretical side, nothing but repeated attempts of the burghers and plebeians in the towns and the peasants who had become rebellious by contact with both the latter to adapt the old theological world outlook to the changed economic conditions and the condition of life of the new class. But that could not be done. The flag of religion waved for the last time in England in the 17th century, and hardly fifty years later appeared undisguised in France the new world outlook which was to become the classical outlook of the bourgeoisie, the *juristic world outlook*.

It was a secularization of the theological outlook. Human right took the place of dogma, of divine right, the state took the place of the church. The economic and social conditions, which had formerly been imagined to have been created by the Church and dogma because they were sanctioned by the Church, were now considered as founded on right and created by the state. Because commodity exchange on a social scale and in its full development, particularly through advance and credit, produces complicated mutual contract relations and therefore demands generally applicable rules that can be given only by the community—state-determined standards of right—it was

imagined that these standards of right arose not from the economic facts but from formal establishment by the state. And because competition, the basic form of trade of free commodity producers, is the greatest equalizer, equality before the law became the main battle cry of the bourgeoisie. The fact that this newly aspiring class's struggle against the feudal lords and the absolute monarchy then protecting them, like every class struggle, had to be a political struggle, a struggle for the mastery of the state, and had to be fought on *juridical demands* contributed to strengthen the juristic outlook.

But the bourgeoisie produced its negative double, the proletariat, and with it a new class struggle which broke out before the bourgeoisie had completed the conquest of political power. As the bourgeoisie in its time had by force of tradition dragged the theological outlook with it for a while in its fight against the nobility, so, too, the proletariat at first took over the juristic outlook from its opponent and sought in it weapons against the bourgeoisie. The first elements of the proletarian party as their theoretical representatives remained wholly on the juristic "ground of right," the only distinction being that they built up for themselves a different ground of "right" from that of the bourgeoisie. On one side the demand for equality was extended so that equality in right would be completed by social equality; on the other, from Adam Smith's proposition that labor is the source of all wealth but that the product of labor must be shared with the landowner and the capitalist the conclusion was drawn that this sharing was unjust and must be either abolished or modified in favor of the worker. But the feeling that to leave this question on the mere juristic "ground of right" in no way made possible the abolition of the evil conditions created by the bourgeois-capitalistic mode the production, i.e., the mode of production based on large-scale industry, already then led the major minds among the earlier socialists — Saint-Simon, Fourier and Owen — to abandon entirely the juristic-political field and to declare all political struggle fruitless.

Both these views were equally unsatisfactory to express adequately and embrace completely the working class's desire for emancipation created by economic conditions. The demand for the full product of labor and just as much the demand for

equality lost themselves in unsolvable contradictions as soon as they were formulated juristically in detail and left the core of the question—the transformation of the mode of production—more or less untouched. The rejection of the political struggle by the great utopians was at the same time the rejection of the class struggle, *i.e.*, of the only form of activity of the class whose interests they represented. Both outlooks made abstraction of the historical background to which they owed their existence; both appealed to feeling: some to the feeling of justice, others to the feeling of humanity. Both attired their demands in the form of pious wishes of which one could not say why they had to be fulfilled at that very time and not a thousand years earlier or later.

The working class, who by the changing of the feudal mode of production into the capitalist mode was deprived of all ownership of the means of production and by the mechanism of the capitalist mode of production is continually engendered anew in that hereditary state of propertylessness, cannot find an exhaustive expression of its living condition in the juristic illusion of the bourgeoisie. It can only know that condition of life fully itself if it looks at things in their reality without juristically colored glasses. But Marx helped it to do that with his materialist conception of history, by providing the proof that all man's juristic, political, philosophical, religious and other ideas are derived in the last resort from his economic conditions of life, from his mode of production and of exchanging the product. Thus he provided the world outlook corresponding to the conditions of the life and struggle of the proletariat; only lack of illusions in the heads of the workers could correspond to their lack of property. And this proletarian world outlook is now spreading over the world.

—ENGELS, "Juristic Socialism" (1887), MARX and ENGELS, *On Religion*, pp. 240-43.

HISTORY AND THE INDIVIDUAL

A. THE DRIVING FORCES OF HISTORY

But what is true of nature, which is hereby recognized also as a historical process of development, is also true of the history of society in all its branches and of the totality of all sciences which occupy themselves with things human (and divine). Here, too, the philosophy of history, of law, of religion, etc., has consisted in the substitution of an interconnection fabricated in the mind of the philosopher for the actual interconnection to be demonstrated in the events; and in the comprehension of history as a whole as well as in its separate parts, as the gradual realization of ideas—and, indeed, naturally always the pet ideas of the philosopher himself. According to this, history worked unconsciously but with necessity towards a certain predetermined, ideal goal—as, for example, according to Hegel, towards the realization of his absolute idea—and the unalterable trend towards this absolute idea formed the inner interconnection in the events of history. A new mysterious providence—unconscious or gradually coming into consciousness—was thus put in the place of the real, still unknown interconnection. Here, therefore, just as in the realm of nature, it was necessary to do away with these fabricated, artificial interconnections by the discovery of the real ones; a task which ultimately amounts to the discovery of the general laws of motion which assert themselves as the ruling ones in the history of human society.

In one point, however, the history of the development of society proves to be essentially different from that of nature. In nature—in so far as we ignore man's reactions upon nature—there are only blind unconscious agencies acting upon one another and out of whose interplay the general law comes into operation. Nothing of all that happens—whether in the innumerable apparent accidents observable upon the surface of things, or in the ultimate results which confirm the regularity underlying these accidents—is attained as a consciously desired aim. In the history of society, on the other hand, the actors are all endowed with consciousness, are men acting with

deliberation or passion, working towards definite goals; nothing happens without a conscious purpose, without an intended aim. But this distinction, important as it is for historical investigation, particularly of single epochs and events, cannot alter the fact, that the course of history is governed by inner general laws. For here, also, on the whole in spite of the consciously desired aims of all individuals, accident apparently reigns on the surface. That which is willed happens but rarely; in the majority of instances the numerous desired ends cross and conflict with one another, or these ends themselves are from the outset incapable of realization or the means of attaining them are insufficient. Thus the conflict of innumerable individual wills and individual actions in the domain of history produces a state of affairs entirely analogous to that in the realm of unconscious nature. The ends of the actions are intended, but the results which actually follow from these actions are not intended; or when they do seem to correspond to the end intended, they ultimately have consequences quite other than those intended. Historical events thus appear on the whole to be likewise governed by chance. But where on the surface accident holds sway, there actually it is always governed by inner, hidden laws and it is only a matter of discovering these laws.

Men make their own history, whatever its outcome may be, in that each person follows his own consciously desired end, and it is precisely the resultant of these many wills operating in different directions and of their manifold effects upon the outer world that constitutes history. Thus it is also a question of what the many individuals desire. The will is determined by passion or deliberation. But the levers which immediately determine passion or deliberation are of very different kinds. Partly they may be external objects, partly ideal motives, ambition, "enthusiasm for truth and justice," personal hatred or even purely individual whims of all kinds. But, on the one hand, we have seen that the many individual wills active in history for the most part produce results quite other than those they intended—often quite the opposite; their motives therefore in relation to the total result are likewise of only secondary significance. On the other hand, the further question arises: what driving forces in turn stand behind these motives? What

are the historical causes which transform themselves into these motives in the brains of the actors?

The old materialism never put this question to itself. Its conception of history, in so far as it has one at all, is therefore essentially pragmatic; it judges everything according to the motives of the action; it divides men in their historical activity into noble and ignoble and then finds that as a rule the noble are defrauded and the ignoble are victorious. Hence it follows for the old materialism that nothing very edifying is to be got from the study of history, and for us that in the realm of history the old materialism becomes untrue to itself because it takes the ideal driving forces which operate there as ultimate causes, instead of investigating what is behind them, what are the driving forces of these driving forces. The inconsistency does not lie in the fact that *ideal* driving forces are recognized, but in the investigation not being carried further back behind these into their motive causes. On the other hand, the philosophy of history, particularly as represented by Hegel, recognizes that the ostensible and also the really operating motives of men who figure in history are by no means the ultimate causes of historical events; that behind these motives are other motive forces, which have to be discovered. But it does not seek these forces in history itself, it imports them rather from outside, from out of philosophical ideology, into history. Hegel, for example, instead of explaining the history of ancient Greece out of its own inner interconnections, simply maintains that it is nothing more than the working out of "types of beautiful individuality," the realization of a "work of art" as such. He says much in this connection about the old Greeks that is fine and profound but that does not prevent us today from refusing to be put off with such an explanation, which is a mere manner of speech.

When, therefore, it is a question of investigating the driving forces which—consciously or unconsciously, and indeed very often unconsciously—lie behind the motives of men in their historical actions and which constitute the real ultimate driving forces of history, then it is not a question so much of the motives of single individuals, however eminent, as of those motives which set in motion great masses, whole peoples, and again whole classes of the people in each people; and here, too, not

the transient flaring up of a straw fire which quickly dies down, but a lasting action resulting in a great historical transformation. To ascertain the driving causes which here in the minds of acting masses and their leaders—the so-called great men—are reflected as conscious motives, clearly or unclearly, directly or in ideological, even glorified form—that is the only path which can put us on the track of the laws holding sway both in history as a whole, and at particular periods and in particular lands. Everything which sets men in motion must go through their minds; but what form it will take in the mind will depend very much upon the circumstances. The workers have by no means become reconciled to capitalist machine industry, even though they no longer simply break the machines to pieces as they still did in 1848 on the Rhine.

But while in all earlier periods the investigation of these driving causes of history was almost impossible—on account of the complicated and concealed interconnections between them and their effects—our present period has so far simplified these interconnections that the riddle could be solved. Since the establishment of large-scale industry, *i.e.*, at least since the peace of Europe in 1815, it has been no longer a secret to any man in England that the whole political struggle there has turned on the claims to supremacy of two classes: the landed aristocracy and the middle class. In France, with the return of the Bourbons, the same fact was perceived; the historians of the Restoration period, from Thierry to Guizot, Mignet and Thiers, speak of it everywhere as the key to the understanding of all French history since the Middle Ages. And since 1830 the working class, the proletariat, has been recognized in both countries as a third competitor for power. Conditions had become so simplified that one would have had to close one's eyes deliberately not to see in the fight of these three great classes and in the conflict of their interests the driving force of modern history—at least in the two most advanced countries.

—ENGELS, *Ludwig Feuerbach* (1888), pp. 47-51.

B. "MEN MAKE THEIR OWN HISTORY"

Hegel remarks somewhere that all facts and personages of great importance in world history occur, as it were, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce . . .

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they seem engaged in revolutionizing themselves and things, in creating something that has never yet existed, precisely in such periods of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle cries and costumes, in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honored disguise and this borrowed language. Thus Luther donned the mask of the Apostle Paul, the Revolution of 1789 to 1814 draped itself alternately as the Roman republic and the Roman empire, and the Revolution of 1848 knew nothing better to do than to parody, now 1789, now the revolutionary tradition of 1793 to 1795. In like manner a beginner who has learnt a new language always translates it back into his mother tongue, but he has assimilated the spirit of the new language and can freely express himself in it only when he finds his way in it without recalling the old and forgets his native tongue in the use of the new.

Consideration of this conjuring up of the dead of world history reveals at once a salient difference. Camille Desmoulins, Danton, Robespierre, Saint-Just, Napoleon, the heroes as well as the parties and the masses of the old French Revolution, performed the task of their time in Roman costume and with Roman phrases, the task of unchaining and setting up modern *bourgeois* society. The first ones knocked the feudal basis to pieces and mowed off the feudal heads which had grown on it. The other created inside France the conditions under which alone free competition could be developed, parcelled landed property exploited, and the unchained industrial productive power of the nation employed; and beyond the French borders he everywhere swept the feudal institutions away, so far as was necessary to furnish bourgeois society in France with a suitable up-to-date environment on the European continent. The new social formation once established, the antediluvian Colossi disappeared and with them resurrected Romanity—the Brutuses, Gracchi, Publicolas, the tribunes, the senators, and Caesar himself. Bourgeois society in its sober reality has begotten its true

interpreters and mouthpieces in the Says, Cousins, Royer-Collards, Benjamin Constants and Guizots; its real military leaders sat behind the office desks, and the hog-headed Louis XVIII was its political chief. Wholly absorbed in the production of wealth and in peaceful competitive struggle, it no longer comprehended that ghosts from the days of Rome had watched over its cradle. But unheroic as bourgeois society is, it nevertheless took heroism, sacrifice, terror, civil war and battles of peoples to bring it into being. And in the classically austere traditions of the Roman republic its gladiators found the ideals and the art forms, the self-deceptions that they needed in order to conceal from themselves the bourgeois limitations of the content of their struggles and to keep their enthusiasm on the high plane of the great historical tragedy. Similarly, at another stage of development, a century earlier, Cromwell and the English people had borrowed speech, passions and illusions from the Old Testament for their bourgeois revolution. When the real aim had been achieved, when the bourgeois transformation of English society had been accomplished, Locke supplanted Habakkuk.

Thus the awakening of the dead in those revolutions served the purpose of glorifying the new struggles, not of parodying the old; of magnifying the given task in imagination, not of fleeing from its solution in reality; of finding once more the spirit of revolution, not of making its ghost walk about again.

The social revolution of the 19th century cannot draw its poetry from the past, but only from the future. It cannot begin with itself before it has stripped off all superstition in regard to the past. Earlier revolutions required recollections of past world history in order to drug themselves concerning their own content. In order to arrive at its own content, the revolution of the 19th century must let the dead bury their dead. There the phrase went beyond the content; here the content goes beyond the phrase . . .

Bourgeois revolutions, like those of the 18th century, storm swiftly from success to success; their dramatic effects outdo each other; men and things seem set in sparkling brilliants; ecstasy is the everyday spirit; but they are short-lived; soon they have attained their zenith, and a long crapulent depression lays hold of society before it learns soberly to assimilate the

results of its storm-and-stress period. On the other hand, proletarian revolutions, like those of the 19th century, criticize themselves constantly, interrupt themselves continually in their own course, come back to the apparently accomplished in order to begin it afresh, deride with unmerciful thoroughness the inadequacies, weaknesses and paltrinesses of their first attempts, seem to throw down their adversary only in order that he may draw new strength from the earth and rise again, more gigantic, before them, recoil ever and anon from the indefinite prodigiousness of their own aims, until a situation has been created which makes all turning back impossible. . . .

—MARX, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852), pp. 15-19.

[5]

HISTORICAL MATERIALISM NOT AN
ABSTRACT FORMULA

A. NO ETERNAL TRUTHS IN HISTORICAL SCIENCE

Eternal truths are in an even worse plight in the third, the historical group of sciences.* The subjects investigated by these in their historical sequence and in their present forms are the conditions of human life, social relationships, forms of law and government, with their ideal superstructure, of philosophy, religion, art, etc. In organic nature we are at least dealing with a succession of phenomena which, so far as our immediate observation is concerned, are recurring with fair regularity between very wide limits. Organic species have on the whole remained unchanged since the time of Aristotle. In social history, however, the repetition of conditions is the exception and not the rule, once we pass beyond the primitive stage of man, the so-called Stone Age; and when such repetitions occur, they never arise under exactly similar conditions—

*Engels has been discussing the impossibility of “pure and immutable truths” in the physical and biological sciences.—*Ed.*

as for example the existence of an original common ownership of the land among all civilized peoples, and the way in which this came to an end.

In the sphere of human history our knowledge is therefore even more backward than in the realm of biology. Furthermore, when by way of exception the inner connection between the social and political forms in an epoch comes to be recognized, this as a rule only occurs when these forms are already out of date and are nearing extinction. Therefore, knowledge is here essentially relative, inasmuch as it is limited to the perception of relationships and consequences of certain social and state forms which exist only at a particular epoch and among particular people and are of their very nature transitory. Anyone therefore who sets out in this field to hunt down final and ultimate truths, truths which are pure or absolutely immutable, will bring home but little, apart from platitudes and commonplaces of the sorriest kind

—ENGELS, *Anti-Dühring* (1878), pp. 99f.

B. ON CONCRETENESS IN THE STUDY OF HISTORY

[My critic] feels himself obliged to metamorphose my historical sketch of the genesis of capitalism in Western Europe into a historico-philosophic theory of the *marche générale* [general path] imposed by fate upon every people, whatever the historic circumstances in which it finds itself, in order that it may ultimately arrive at the form of economy which will ensure, together with the greatest expansion of the productive powers of social labor, the most complete development of man. But I beg his pardon. (He is both honoring and shaming me too much.) Let us take an example.

In several parts of *Capital* I allude to the fate which overtook the plebeians of ancient Rome. They were originally free peasants, each cultivating his own piece of land on his own account. In the course of Roman history they were expropriated. The same movement which divorced them from their means of production and subsistence involved the formation not only of big landed property but also of big money capital. And so one fine morning there were to be found on the one hand free men, stripped of everything except their labor power, and on the other, in order to exploit this labor; those who held

all the acquired wealth in possession. What happened? The Roman proletarians became, not wage laborers but a *mob* of do-nothings more abject than the former "poor whites" in the southern part of the United States, and alongside of them there developed a mode of production which was not capitalist but dependent upon slavery. Thus events strikingly analogous but taking place in different historic surroundings led to totally different results. By studying each of these forms of evolution separately and then comparing them one can easily find the clue to this phenomenon, but one will never arrive there by the universal passport of a general historico-philosophical theory, the supreme virtue of which consists in being super-historical.

—MARX, Letter to the Editor of *Otyecestvenniye Zapisky* (*Notes on the Fatherland*) (end of 1877), *Selected Correspondence*, pp. 353-355.

C. HISTORICAL MATERIALISM: "A GUIDE TO STUDY, NOT A LEVER FOR CONSTRUCTION"

. . . The materialist conception of history also has a lot of friends nowadays to whom it serves as an excuse for *not* studying history. Just as Marx used to say about the French "Marxists" of the late 70s: "All I know is that I am not a Marxist."

In general the word *materialistic* serves many of the younger writers in Germany as a mere phrase with which anything and everything is labelled without further study; they stick on this label and then think the question disposed of. But our conception of history is above all a guide to study, not a lever for construction after the manner of the Hegelians. All history must be studied afresh, the conditions of existence of the different formations of society must be individually examined before the attempt is made to deduce from them the political, civil-legal, esthetic, philosophic, religious, etc., notions corresponding to them. Only a little has been done here up to now because only a few people have got down to it seriously. In this field we can utilize masses of help, it is immensely big and anyone who will work seriously can achieve a lot and distinguish himself. But instead of this only too many of the younger Germans simply make use of the phrase, historical materialism (and *everything* can be turned into a phrase), in order to get

their own relatively scanty historical knowledge (for economic history is still in its cradle!) fitted together into a neat system as quickly as possible, and they then think themselves something very tremendous. And after that a Barth can come along and attack the thing itself, which in his circles has indeed been degraded into a mere phrase.

—ENGELS, Letter to Conrad Schmidt (1890), MARX and ENGELS, *Selected Correspondence*, pp. 472-75.

D. FORM AND CONTENT IN HISTORY: THE IDEOLOGIST

There is only one other point lacking, which, however, Marx and I always failed to stress enough in our writings and in regard to which we are all equally guilty. We all, that is to say, laid and were bound to lay the main emphasis at first on the derivation of political, juridical and other ideological notions, and of the actions arising through the medium of these notions, from basic economic facts. But in so doing we neglected the formal side—the way in which these notions come about—for the sake of the content. This has given our adversaries a welcome opportunity for misunderstandings, of which Paul Barth is a striking example.

Ideology is a process accomplished by the so-called thinker consciously, indeed, but with a false consciousness. The real motives impelling him remain unknown to him, otherwise it would not be an ideological process at all. Hence he imagines false or apparent motives. Because it is a process of thought he derives both its form and its content from pure thought, either his own or that of his predecessors. He works with mere thought material which he accepts without examination as the product of thought, he does not investigate further for a more remote process independent of thought; indeed its origin seems obvious to him, because as all action is produced through the medium of thought it also appears to him to be ultimately based upon thought. The ideologist who deals with history (history is here simply meant to comprise all the spheres—political, juridical, philosophical, theological—belonging to society and not only to nature), the ideologist dealing with history then, possesses in every sphere of science material which has formed itself independently out of the thought of previous generations and has gone through an independent series of developments in

the brains of these successive generations. True, external facts belonging to its own or other spheres may have exercised a codetermining influence on this development, but the tacit presupposition is that these facts themselves are also only the fruits of a process of thought, and so we still remain within that realm of pure thought which has successfully digested the hardest facts.

It is above all this appearance of an independent history of state constitutions, of systems of law, of ideological conceptions in every separate domain, which dazzles most people. If Luther and Calvin "overcome" the official Catholic religion, or Hegel "overcomes" Fichte and Kant, or if the constitutional Montesquieu is indirectly "overcome" by Rousseau with his "Social Contract," each of these events remains within the sphere of theology, philosophy or political science, represents a stage in the history of these particular spheres of thought and never passes outside the sphere of thought. And since the bourgeois illusion of the eternity and the finality of capitalist production has been added as well, even the victory of the physiocrats and Adam Smith over the mercantilists is accounted as a sheer victory of thought; not as the reflection in thought of changed economic facts but as the finally achieved correct understanding of actual conditions subsisting always and everywhere—in fact if Richard Coeur de Lion and Philip Augustus had introduced free trade instead of getting mixed up in the crusades we should have been spared five hundred years of misery and stupidity.

This side of the matter, which I can only indicate here, we have all, I think, neglected more than it deserves. It is the old story: form is always neglected at first for content. As I say, I have done that too, and the mistake has always only struck me later. So I am not only far from reproaching you with this in any way, but as the older of the guilty parties I have no right to do so, on the contrary; but I would like all the same to draw your attention to this point for the future. Hanging together with this too is the fatuous notion of the ideologists that because we deny an independent historical development to the various ideological spheres which play a part in history we also deny them any effect upon history. The basis of this is the common undialectical conception of cause and effect as rigidly

opposite poles, the total disregarding of interaction; these gentlemen often almost deliberately forget that once a historic element has been brought into the world by other elements, ultimately by economic facts, it also reacts in its turn and may react on its environment and even on its own causes.

—ENGELS, Letter to Franz Mehring (1893), MARX and ENGELS, *Selected Correspondence*, pp. 510-12.

[6]

HISTORICAL MATERIALISM VERSUS ECONOMIC DETERMINISM

A. TECHNIQUE: BASE AND SUPERSTRUCTURE; ROLE OF ACCIDENTS

1. What we understand by the economic conditions which we regard as the determining basis of the history of society are the methods by which human beings in a given society produce their means of subsistence and exchange the products among themselves (in so far as division of labor exists). Thus the *entire technique* of production and transport is here included. According to our conception this technique also determines the method of exchange and, further, the division of products and with it, after the dissolution of tribal society, the division into classes also and hence the relations of lordship and servitude and with them the state, politics, law, etc. Under economic conditions are further included the geographical basis in which they operate and those remnants of earlier stages of economic development which have actually been transmitted and have survived—often only through tradition or the force of inertia; also of course the external milieu which surrounds this form of society.

If, as you say, technique largely depends on the state of science, science depends far more still on the *state* and the *requirements* of technique. If society has a technical need, that helps science forward more than ten universities. The whole of hydrostatics (Torricelli, etc.) was called forth by the necessity for regulating the mountain streams of Italy in the 16th and

17th centuries. We have only known anything reasonable about electricity since its technical applicability was discovered. But unfortunately it has become the custom in Germany to write the history of the sciences as if they had fallen from the skies.

2. We regard economic conditions as the factor which ultimately determines historical development. But race is itself an economic factor. Here, however, two points must not be overlooked:

(a) Political, juridical, philosophical, religious, literary, artistic, etc., development is based on economic development. But all these react upon one another and also upon the economic base. It is not that the economic position is the *cause and alone active*, while everything else only has a passive effect. There is, rather, interaction on the basis of the economic necessity, which *ultimately* always asserts itself. The state, for instance, exercises an influence by tariffs, free trade, good or bad fiscal system; and even the deadly inanition and impotence of the German petty bourgeois, arising from the miserable economic position of Germany from 1648 to 1830 and expressing itself at first in Pietism, then the sentimentality and cringing servility to princes and nobles, was not without economic effect. It was one of the greatest hindrances to recovery and was not shaken until the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars made the chronic misery an acute one. So it is not, as people try here and there conveniently to imagine, that the economic position produces an automatic effect. Men make their history themselves, only in given surroundings which condition it and on the basis of actual relations already existing, among which the economic relations, however much they may be influenced by the other political and ideological ones, are still ultimately the decisive ones, forming the red thread which runs through them and alone leads to understanding.

(b) Men make their history themselves, but not as yet with a collective will or according to a collective plan or even in a definitely defined, given society. Their efforts clash, and for that very reason all such societies are governed by *necessity*, which is supplemented by and appears under the forms of *accident*. The necessity which here asserts itself amidst all accident is again ultimately economic necessity. This is where

the so-called great men come in for treatment. That such and such a man and precisely that man arises at that particular time in that given country is of course pure accident. But cut him out and there will be a demand for a substitute, and this substitute will be found, good or bad, but in the long run he will be found. That Napoleon, just that particular Corsican, should have been the military dictator whom the French Republic, exhausted by its own war, had rendered necessary, was an accident; but that, if a Napoleon had been lacking, another would have filled the place, is proved by the fact that the man has always been found as soon as he became necessary: Caesar, Augustus, Cromwell, etc. While Marx discovered the materialist conception of history, Thierry, Mignet, Guizot, and all the English historians up to 1850 are the proof that it was being striven for, and the discovery of the same conception by Morgan proves that the time was ripe for it and that indeed it *had* to be discovered.

So with all the other accidents, and apparent accidents, of history. The further the particular sphere which we are investigating is removed from the economic sphere and approaches that of pure abstract ideology, the more shall we find it exhibiting accidents in its development, the more will its curve run in a zigzag. But if you plot the average axis of the curve, you will find that the axis of this curve will approach more and more nearly parallel to the axis of the curve of economic development the longer the period considered and the wider the field dealt with.

—ENGELS, Letter to Heinz Starkenburg (1894), MARX and ENGELS, *Selected Correspondence*, pp. 516-19.

B. POLEMIC AGAINST ECONOMIC DETERMINISM

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

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

We make our own history, but in the first place under very definite presuppositions and conditions. Among these the economic ones are finally decisive. But the political, etc., ones, and indeed even the traditions which haunt human minds also play a part, although not the decisive one. The Prussian state arose and developed from historical, ultimately from economic causes. But it could scarcely be maintained without pedantry that among the many small states of North Germany, Brandenburg was specifically determined by economic necessity to become the great power embodying the economic, linguistic and, after the Reformation, also the religious difference between north and south and not by other elements as well (above all by its entanglement with Poland, owing to the possession of Prussia, and hence with international, political relations—which were indeed also decisive in the formation of the Austrian dynastic power). Without making oneself ridiculous it would be difficult to succeed in explaining in terms of economics the existence of every small state in Germany, past and present, or the origin of the High German consonant mutations, which the geographical wall of partition formed by the mountains from the Sudetic range to the Taunus extended to a regular division throughout Germany.

In the second place, however, history makes itself in such a way that the final result always arises from conflicts between many individual wills, of which each again has been made what

it is by a host of particular conditions of life. Thus there are innumerable intersecting forces, an infinite series of parallelograms of forces which give rise to one resultant—the historical event. This again may itself be viewed as the product of a power which, taken as a whole, works *unconsciously* and without volition. For what each individual wills is obstructed by everyone else, and what emerges is something that no one willed. Thus past history proceeds in the manner of a natural process and is also essentially subject to the same laws of movement. But from the fact that individual wills—of which each desires what he is impelled to by his physical constitution and external, in the last resort economic, circumstances (either his own personal circumstances or those of society in general)—do not attain what they want, but are merged into a collective mean, a common resultant, it must not be concluded that their value=0. On the contrary, each contributes to the resultant and is to this degree involved in it.

I would ask you to study this theory further from its original sources and not at secondhand, it is really much easier. Marx hardly wrote anything in which it did not play a part. But especially *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* is a most excellent example of its application. There are also many allusions in *Capital*. Then I may also direct you to my writings: *Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science* and *Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy*, in which I have given the most detailed account of historical materialism which, so far as I know, exists.

Marx and I are ourselves partly to blame for the fact that younger writers sometimes lay more stress on the economic side than is due to it. We had to emphasize this main principle in opposition to our adversaries, who denied it, and we had not always the time, the place or the opportunity to allow the other elements involved in the interaction to come into their rights. But when it was a case of presenting a section of history, that is, of a practical application, the thing was different and there no error was possible. Unfortunately, however, it happens only too often that people think they have fully understood a theory and can apply it without more ado from the moment they have mastered its main principles, and those even not always correctly. And I cannot exempt many of the more recent "Marxists"

from this reproach, for the most wonderful rubbish has been produced from this quarter too.

—ENGELS, Letter to Joseph Bloch (1890), MARX and ENGELS, *Selected Correspondence*, pp. 475-77.

C. CRITIQUE OF "SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST"

With men we enter *history*. Animals also have a history, that of their derivation 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 or 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 own history 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 bestiality to humanity and which forms the material foundation of all their other activities, namely, the production of their requirements of life, which is today 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 and, 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 organization 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 men in their aspect as species. Historical evolution makes such an organization 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 especially natural science, will experience an advance that will put everything preceding it in the deepest shade.

The Struggle for Existence.—Until Darwin, what was stressed by his present adherents was precisely the harmonious cooperative working of organic nature, how the plant kingdom supplies animals with nourishment and oxygen, and animals supply plants with manure, ammonia, and carbonic acid. Hardly was Darwin recognized before these same people saw everywhere nothing but *struggle*. Both views are justified within narrow limits, but both are equally one-sided and prejudiced. The interaction of dead natural bodies includes both harmony and collisions, that of living bodies conscious and unconscious cooperation equally with conscious and unconscious struggle. Hence, even in regard to nature, it is not permissible one-sidedly to inscribe only “struggle” on one’s banners. But it is absolutely childish to desire to sum up the whole manifold wealth of historical evolution and complexity in the meager and one-sided phrase “struggle for existence.” That says less than nothing.

The whole Darwinian theory of the struggle for existence is simply the transference from society to organic nature of Hobbes’s theory of *bellum omnium contra omnes*, and of the bourgeois economic theory of competition, as well as the Malthusian theory of population. When once this feat has been accomplished (the unconditional justification for which, especially as regards the Malthusian theory, is still very questionable), it is very easy to transfer these theories back again from natural history to the history of society, and altogether too naïve to maintain that thereby these assertions have been proved as eternal natural laws of society.

Let us accept for a moment the phrase "struggle for existence" for argument's sake. The most that the animal can achieve is to *collect*; man *produces*, he prepares the means of life in the widest sense of the words, which, without him, nature would not have produced. This makes impossible any immediate transference of the laws of life in animal societies to human ones. Production soon brings it about that the so-called struggle for existence no longer turns on pure means of existence, but on means for enjoyment and development. Here—where the means of development are socially produced—the categories taken from the animal kingdom are already totally inapplicable. Finally, under the capitalist mode of production, production reaches such a height that society can no longer consume the means of life, enjoyment, and development that have been produced, because for the great mass of producers access to these means is artificially and forcibly barred; and therefore every ten years a crisis restores the equilibrium by destroying not only the means of life, enjoyment, and development that have been produced, but also a great part of the productive forces themselves. Hence the so-called struggle for existence assumes the form: to *protect* the products and productive forces produced by bourgeois capitalist society against the destructive, ravaging effect of this capitalist social order, by taking control of social production and distribution out of the hands of the ruling capitalist class, which has become incapable of this function, and transferring it to the producing masses—and that is the socialist revolution.

Even by itself the conception of history as a series of class struggles is much richer in content and deeper than merely reducing it to weakly distinguished phases of the struggle for existence.

—ENGELS, *Dialectics of Nature* (1872-1882), pp. 18-20, 208-10.

D. HISTORICAL NECESSITY versus FREEDOM OF WILL

The idea of determinism, which establishes the necessity of human acts and rejects the absurd fable of freedom of will, in no way destroys man's reason or conscience, or the judgment of his actions. Quite the contrary, the determinist view alone makes a strict and correct judgment possible, instead of attribut-

ing everything one fancies to freedom of will. Similarly, the idea of historical necessity in no way undermines the role of the individual in history: all history is made up of the actions of individuals, who are undoubtedly active figures. The real question that arises in judging the social activity of an individual is: what conditions ensure the success of this activity, what guarantee is there that this activity will not remain an isolated act lost in a welter of contrary acts?

—LENIN, “What the ‘Friends of the People’ Are” (1894),
Selected Works, vol. XI, p. 439.

E. MARX’S “IDEA OF MATERIALISM IN SOCIOLOGY”

[Lenin quotes from the preface to the first edition *Capital* wherein Marx declares that the “evolution of the economic formation of society is viewed as a process of natural history.”]

In what, in fact, does the concept *economic formation of society* consist, and in what sense must the development of this formation be regarded as a process of natural history?—such are the questions that confront us. I have already pointed out that from the standpoint of the old economists and sociologists (not old for Russia), the concept economic formation of society is entirely superfluous: they talk of society in general, they argue with Spencer and his like about the nature of society in general, about the aims and essence of society in general, and so forth. In their reasonings, these subjective sociologists rely on such arguments as that the aim of society is to benefit all its members, that therefore justice demands such and such an organization, and that a system that does not correspond with this ideal organization (“Sociology must start from some utopia”—these words of one of the authors of the subjective method, Mr. Mikhailovsky, are eminently characteristic of the very essence of their methods) is abnormal and should be set aside.

“The essential task of sociology,” Mr. Mikhailovsky, for instance, argues, “is to ascertain the social conditions under which any particular requirement of human nature is satisfied.” As you see, this sociologist is interested only in a society that satisfies human nature, and is not at all interested in social formations—social formations, moreover; that may be

based on phenomena that do not correspond with "human nature," such as the enslavement of the majority by the minority. You also see that from the standpoint of this sociologist there can even be no question of regarding the development of society as a process of natural history. ("Having recognized something to be desirable or undesirable, the sociologist must discover the conditions whereby the desirable can be realized or the undesirable eliminated"—"whereby such and such ideals can be realized"—this same Mr. Mikhailovsky reasons.) Not only so, but there can even be no question of development, but only of deviations from the "desirable," of "defects" that may have occurred in history—as a result of the fact that people were not clever enough, did not properly understand what human nature demands, were unable to discover the conditions required for the realization of such a rational system. It is obvious that Marx's basic idea that the development of the economic formation of society is a process of natural history cuts the ground from under this childish morality which lays claim to the title of sociology. By what method did Marx arrive at this basic idea? He arrived at it by selecting from all social relations the "production relations," as being the basic and prime relations that determine all other relations. . . .

This idea of materialism in sociology was in itself a piece of genius. Naturally, "*for the time being*" it was only a hypothesis, but it was the first hypothesis to create the possibility of a strictly scientific approach to historical and social problems. Hitherto, being unable to descend to such simple and primary relations as the relations of production, the sociologists proceeded directly to investigate and study the political and legal forms. They stumbled on the fact that these forms arise out of certain ideas held by men in the period in question—and there they stopped. It appeared as if social relations were established by man consciously. But this deduction, which was fully expressed in the idea of the *Contrat Social* (traces of which are very noticeable in all systems of utopian socialism), was in complete contradiction to all historical observations. Never has it been the case, nor is it the case now, that the members of society are aware of the sum total of the social relations in which they live as something definite, integral, as something pervaded by some principle. On the contrary, the mass of people adapt

themselves to these relations unconsciously, and are unaware of them as specific historical social relations; so much so, in fact, that the explanation, for instance, of the relations of exchange, under which people have lived for centuries, was discovered only in very recent times.

Materialism has removed this contradiction by carrying the analysis deeper, to the very origin of these social ideas of man; and its conclusion that the course of ideas depends on the course of things is the only deduction compatible with scientific psychology. Moreover, this hypothesis was the first to elevate sociology to the level of a science from yet another aspect. Hitherto, sociologists had found difficulty in distinguishing in the complex network of social phenomena which phenomena were important and which unimportant (that is the root of subjectivism in sociology) and had been unable to discover any objective criterion for such a distinction.

Materialism provided an absolutely objective criterion by singling out the "relations of production" as the structure of society, and by making it possible to apply to these relations that general scientific criterion of repetition whose applicability to sociology the subjectivists denied. . . .

It was this generalization that alone made it possible to proceed from the description of social phenomena (and their evaluation from the standpoint of an ideal) to their strictly scientific analysis, which, let us say by way of example, selects "what" distinguishes one capitalist country from another and investigates "what" is common to all of them.

Finally, another reason why this hypothesis was the first to make a "scientific" sociology possible was that the reduction of social relations to relations of production, and the latter to the level of forces of production, provided a firm basis for the conception that the development of the formations of society is a process of natural history. And it goes without saying that without such a view there can be no social science. (For instance, the subjectivists, although they admitted that historical phenomena conform to law, were incapable of regarding the evolution of historical phenomena as a process of natural history precisely because they confined themselves to the social ideas and aims of man and were unable to reduce these ideas and aims to material social relations.)

Marx, having expressed this hypothesis in the 'forties, set out to study the factual (*nota bene*) material. He took one of the economic formations of society—the system of commodity production—and on the basis of a vast mass of data (which he studied for no less than twenty-five years) gave a most detailed analysis of the laws governing the functioning of this formation and its development. This analysis is strictly confined to the relations of production between the members of society without ever resorting to factors other than relations of production to explain the matter. Marx makes it possible to discern how the commodity organization of social economy develops, how it becomes transformed into capitalist economy, creating the antagonistic (within the bounds now of relations of production) classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, how it develops the productivity of social labor, and how it thereby introduces an element which comes into irreconcilable contradiction to the very foundations of this capitalist organization itself. . . .

Just as Darwin put an end to the view that the species of animals and plants are unconnected among themselves, fortuitous, "created by God," and immutable, and was the first to put biology on an absolutely scientific basis by establishing the mutability and succession of species, so Marx put an end to the view that society is a mechanical aggregation of individuals, which will tolerate any kind of modification at the will of the powers that be (or, what amounts to the same thing, at the will of society and the government) and which arises and changes in a fortuitous way, and was the first to put sociology on a scientific footing by establishing the concept of the economic formation of society as the sum total of the given relations of production and by establishing the fact that the development of these formations is a process of natural history.

Now—since the appearance of *Capital*—the materialist conception of history is no longer a hypothesis, but a scientifically demonstrated proposition. And as long as no other attempt is made to give a scientific explanation of the functioning and development of any social formation—social formation, and not the customs and habits of any country or people, or even class, etc.—an attempt which would be just as capable as materialism of introducing order into the "pertinent facts" and of presenting a living picture of a given formation and at the same time

of explaining it in a strictly scientific way, until then the materialist conception of history will be synonymous with social science. Materialism is not "primarily a scientific conception of history," as Mr. Mikhailovsky thinks, but the only scientific conception of history.

And now, can anyone imagine anything funnier than that people having read *Capital* are unable to discover materialism in it! Where is it?—asks Mr. Mikhailovsky in sincere perplexity.

He read *The Communist Manifesto* and failed to notice that the explanation it gives of modern systems—legal, political, family, religious and philosophical—is a materialist one, and that even the criticism of the Socialist and Communist theories seeks for and finds their roots in definite relations of production.

He read *The Poverty of Philosophy* and failed to notice that its examination of Proudhon's sociology is made from a materialist point of view, that its criticism of the solution of the various historical problems propounded by Proudhon is based on the principles of materialism, and that the indications given by the author himself as to where the data for the solution of these problems are to be sought all amount to references to relations of production.

He read *Capital* and failed to notice that what he had before him was a model scientific analysis, in accordance with the materialist method, of one—the most complex—of the social formations, a model recognized by all and surpassed by none. And here he sits and exercises his mighty brain over the profound question: "In which of his works did Marx set forth his materialist conception of history?"

Anybody acquainted with Marx would answer this question by another: in which of his works did Marx not set forth his materialist conception of history? But Mr. Mikhailovsky will most likely learn of Marx's materialist investigations only when they are classified and suitably indexed in some historico-sophistical work under the heading "Economic Materialism." Mr. Mikhailovsky accuses Marx of not having "examined (*sic*) all the known theories of the historical process." That is funny indeed. Of what did nine-tenths of these theories consist? Of purely a priori, dogmatic, abstract constructions, such as: what is society? what is progress? and so on. (I purposely take examples which are dear to the heart and mind of Mr. Mi-

khailovsky.) Why, these theories are useless . . . because of their basic methods, because of their utter and unrelieved metaphysics.

To begin by asking what is society and what is progress is to begin from the very end. Whence are you to get your concept of society and progress in general when you have not studied a single social formation in particular, when you have been unable even to establish this concept, when you have been unable even to undertake a serious factual investigation, an objective analysis of social relations of any kind? That is the most obvious earmark of metaphysics, with which every science began: as long as people were unable to make a study of the facts, they always invented a priori general theories, which were always sterile. The metaphysical chemist who was still unable to investigate real chemical processes would invent a theory about the force of chemical affinity. The metaphysical biologist would talk about the nature of life and the vital force. The metaphysical psychologist would reason about the nature of the soul . . .

Capital is also not the "corresponding" work for a metaphysical sociologist who does not observe the sterility of a priori discussions about the nature of society and who does not understand that such methods serve to foist on the concept society either the bourgeois ideas of a British shopkeeper or the philistine Socialist ideals of a Russian democrat . . . and nothing more. That is why all these philosophico-historical theories arose and burst like soap bubbles, being at best but a symptom of the social ideas and relations of their time, and not advancing one iota man's "understanding" of even a few, but real, social relations, (and not such as correspond to "human nature"). The gigantic forward stride which Marx made in this respect consisted precisely in the fact that he discarded all these discussions about society and progress in general and gave a "scientific" analysis of "one" society and of "one" progress — capitalist society and capitalist progress. And Mr. Mikhailovsky condemns him for having begun from the beginning and not from the end, for having begun with an analysis of the acts and not with final conclusions, with a study of partial, historically determined social relations and not with general theories about the nature of social relations in general!

—LENIN, "What the 'Friends of the People' Are" (1894),
Selected Works, vol. XI, pp. 419-25.

PART TWO

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

“History” is not a person apart, using man as a means for its own particular aims; history is nothing but the activity of man pursuing his aims.

—MARX and ENGELS, *The Holy Family* (1844), p. 125

Introduction

MARX AND Engels, the creators of a new theory of history, were active participants in the making of history. Marx was blacklisted from university employment and tangled with Prussian censorship as editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung* in 1843. In 1847 Marx and Engels joined the Communist League and wrote its famous *Communist Manifesto*. From June 1848 to May 1849, during the German revolution of those years, Marx was editor of, and Engels a leading contributor to, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, a daily journal. From 1864 to 1872 they were the leading spirits of the International Working Men’s Association (the First International). In later years, by correspondence and personal contact, they unceasingly counseled hundreds of labor and revolutionary leaders from all over Europe and America.

While participating in the making of history, Marx and Engels wrote copiously about the current events of their time. Part of this writing took the form of correspondence — to each other and to friends. Part of it was in speeches, pamphlets, and even books. But a very considerable part was in the form of journalism. During the 1850s Marx was forced to accept such employ-

ment in order to enable his family to live while he was working on *Capital* in the British Museum. From August 1851 to March 1862 he wrote regularly for Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune* at the behest of its managing editor, Charles A. Dana. By the eve of the American Civil War the *Tribune* had attained unrivaled national influence. Because of Marx's limitations in English, Engels at first wrote the articles (after a briefing) and Marx signed them. Later Marx wrote most of them himself, with Engels doing the articles on military affairs. The materials in the articles ranged widely—China, India, Russia, the Crimean War, revolutionary events in Spain, political problems in Germany, France, England, Poland, Italy. The revolutionary struggles and national liberation movements of Europe and Asia received detailed analysis, as did the economic crisis of 1857. The analytical comments on the American Civil War in the *Tribune* and elsewhere are particularly pertinent, showing the profound and detailed grasp Marx had of American history and politics.

Frequently the articles of Marx (and Engels) in the *Tribune* were printed without Marx's signature—sometimes in the form of editorials. Naturally, their accounts of contemporary events—buried as they often were in anonymity—enhanced the prestige of the *Tribune*, but as to the authors themselves, it appears that very few knew that they were the same men who had written the *Communist Manifesto*.

Although the *Tribune* pieces form only a fraction of Marx and Engels' writings on contemporary history, they typify the whole. Many of them are not only penetrating expositions of historical events, but examples of journalistic writing at its best. A recent writer has said of them: "If a preoccupation with the sociological and economic background of politics and a determination to uncover the real motives that lie behind the words of politicians and governments are the hallmarks of modern political journalism, Karl Marx may properly be said to be its father."*

Perhaps the finest example of Marx's "political journalism" is the series of three works he wrote on France—*The Class Struggles in France, 1848-1850* (the July Revolution of 1848 and its aftermath), *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (the

*Charles Blitzer, Introduction to *The American Journalism of Marx and Engels*, Ed. by H. M. Christman (New York, 1966), p. xxvii.

coup d'état of 1851), and *The Civil War in France* (the Paris Commune of 1871). Writing in the white heat of contemporaneity, Marx cut through the slogans, the demagoguery, the confusions of parties and personalities, and revealed the underlying currents of French politics.

In dealing with the events of 1848 Marx analyzed the complex pattern of class forces in the first bourgeois-democratic revolution in which the working class appears as an independent force. He showed why the bourgeoisie was led to betray its own revolution, why the petty bourgeoisie supported the big bourgeoisie, and why at this stage it was impossible for the French working class to exercise decisive leadership. Marx thus gave the world an object lesson in explaining contemporary history in terms of classes, class forces and class issues.

The Eighteenth Brumaire continues the analysis through the tragical-farcical events of the Bonapartist seizure of power in 1851. Here we see how Louis Napoleon rose to power through the cynical manipulation of the landholding peasants, whose support enabled the wily charlatan to hold conflicting class forces in momentary equilibrium and carry through his coup. But Marx showed that Louis Bonaparte, in trying to play one class off against another, would end up by having them all turn against him (as indeed they did). Edmund Wilson comments on this analysis:

“Never, after we have read *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, can the language, the conventions, the combinations, the pretensions, of parliamentary bodies, if we have had any illusions about them, seem the same to us again. . . . Nowhere perhaps in the history of thought is the reader so made to feel the excitement of a new intellectual discovery. Marx is here at his most vivid and most vigorous—in the closeness and the exactitude of political observation; in the energy of the faculty that combines, articulating at the same time that it compresses; in the wit and the metaphorical phantasmagoria that transfigures the prosaic phenomena of politics, and in the pulse of the tragic invective—we have heard its echo in Bernard Shaw—which can turn the collapse of an incompetent parliament, divided between contradictory tendencies, into the downfall of a damned soul of Shakespeare.”*

*Edmund Wilson, *To the Finland Station* (Garden City, 1953), p. 201.

The Civil War in France deals with the period after the fall of Louis Bonaparte and the defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian War. It explains the class forces that led to the seizure of power by the Paris Commune, and the class nature of that power. While giving full support to the heroic and embattled Communards, Marx was acutely conscious of the narrow base on which their power rested and the deficiencies of their program. After the Commune fell, he wrote a masterly analysis of this first episode of working class seizure of power, using the experience of the Commune to formulate a new and revolutionary theory of the state.

The journalistic and historical writings of Marx and Engels exemplify historical materialism at work. Principles that may at first seem abstract are made vividly concrete when they are used to explain current events. They are not abstractions derived *a priori* from Hegel or some other philosopher. Rather, historical materialism emerges out of the interaction of broad philosophical ideas and concrete realities—in particular, the turbulent class struggles of the mid-19th century. Thus while the general theoretical statements on historical materialism provide the skeleton, these exercises in contemporary political analysis clothe the skeleton with flesh and sinew.

History lives in these pages. One follows Sherman on his march through Georgia; one lives in barns and gets drunk with the Irish immigrants in England; one sits in Parliament while the Sepoys mutiny. It is a kaleidoscope that should forever lay to rest the notion that Marxism *reduces* history to economics or anything else. It does not reduce it at all: it raises it to new and higher levels—to those of men in action; of individuals, classes, nations, races. All are in motion, seeking the most varied goals and using the most varied means. In the center of the stage are the masses, the working people, who more than anyone else make history—and who more than anyone else are neglected by historians. One thing is clear throughout—these actors in the pageant of history are not puppets; neither are they exercising “free will,” independent of the historical conditions of their lives. Nor are the end results of their struggles predetermined. These are the people we know and see around us, whether they be ghetto-dwellers, artists and intellectuals, or cabinet officers. Historical materialism is revealed as an art as well as a scientific

approach to history. Were all the works of Marx and Engels except those on contemporary events forever lost, one could reconstruct the major framework of the materialist conception of history from these writings on history in the making.

Every term in the whole Marxist vocabulary is here. But the words now carry nuances they could not have had if the form were purely expository. There could be a sign for this historical writing, reading "Men Thinking." It would warn us that this is not finished history and that the principles employed are fluid, not fixed. Marx and Engels are certain of one thing: so long as there is class society, all political upheavals, social controversies, riots or rebellions, are in the last analysis expressions of class conflicts. But they are equally certain that the path of class struggle is no simple one-way street; rather it is a complex of crossroads in which, from time to time, things start moving in opposite directions. Anyone reading these passages will see how foolish is the charge that Marxism is a narrow, rigid, mechanical, "economic determinist" theory of history. On the contrary, it recognizes, illuminates and clarifies the complexities of historical movement.

Much otherwise valuable material has had to be eliminated from this section simply because the events and names referred to are today known only to specialists. The notes necessary to explain the references would take up more space than the original texts themselves.

In the historical writings of Marx and Engels are to be found many of the sources of Lenin's thinking on the tactics and strategy of the revolutionary movement. Theoretical ideas associated with Lenin—such as the alliance between the working class and the peasantry, the growing over of the bourgeois-democratic into the socialist revolution, the working class state as the dictatorship of the proletariat, and others—are indicated, at least in germinal form, in the 19th century analyses of Marx and Engels.

Lenin, like Marx and Engels, was a penetrating analyst of contemporary events. Living as he did in the period of great upheavals in the imperialist world, playing a leading role in the international socialist movement, and participating in the unsuccessful Russian revolution of 1905 as well as the successful one of October 1917, he had occasion to write about some of the

most epoch-making events of modern history. His comments and analyses, in the form of reports, speeches, articles and books, represent a rich and original extension of living historical materialism. From the voluminous body of this material we present a few typical passages on the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917.

[1]

FRANCE:1848-1851

A. FRANCE:1789-1848

Thanks to the economic and political development of France since 1789, for 50 years the position in Paris has been such that no revolution could break out there without assuming a proletarian character, that is to say, without the proletariat, which had brought victory with its blood, advancing its own demands after victory. These demands were more or less unclear and even confused, corresponding to the state of evolution reached by the workers of Paris at the particular period, but in the last resort they all amounted to the abolition of the class antagonism between capitalists and workers. It is true that no one knew how this was to be brought about. But the demand itself, however indefinite it still was in its formulation, contained a threat to the existing order of society; the workers who put it forward were still armed; therefore the disarming of the workers was the first commandment for the bourgeois at the helm of the state. Hence, after every revolution won by the workers, a new struggle, ending with the defeat of the workers.

This happened for the first time in 1848. The liberal bourgeoisie of the parliamentary opposition held banquets for securing reform of the franchise, which was to ensure supremacy for their party. Forced more and more, in their struggle with the government, to appeal to the people, they had to allow the radical and republican strata of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie gradually to take the lead. But behind these stood the revolutionary workers, and since 1830 these had acquired far more political independence than the bourgeoisie, and even the

republicans, suspected. At the moment of the crisis between the government and the opposition, the workers opened battle on the streets; Louis Philippe vanished, and with him the franchise reform; and in its place arose the republic, and indeed one which the victorious workers themselves designated as a "social" republic. No one, however, was clear as to what this social republic was to imply; not even the workers themselves. But they now had arms in their hands, and were a power in the state. Therefore, as soon as the bourgeois republicans in control felt something like firm ground under their feet, their first aim was to disarm the workers. This took place by driving them into the insurrection of June 1848 by direct breach of faith, by open defiance and the attempt to banish the unemployed to a distant province. The government had taken care to have an overwhelming superiority of force. After five days' heroic struggle, the workers were defeated. And then followed a blood-bath of the defenseless prisoners, the like of which has not been seen since the days of the civil wars which ushered in the downfall of the Roman republic. It was the first time that the bourgeoisie showed to what insane cruelties of revenge they will be goaded the moment the proletariat dares to take its stand against them as a separate class, with its own interests and demands. And yet 1848 was only child's play compared with their frenzy in 1871.

Punishment followed hard at heel. If the proletariat was not yet able to rule France, the bourgeoisie could no longer do so. At least not at that period, when the greater part of it was still monarchically inclined, and it was divided into three dynastic parties and a fourth republican party. Its internal dissensions allowed the adventurer Louis Bonaparte to take possession of all the commanding points—army, police, administrative machinery—and, on December 2, 1851, to explode the last stronghold of the bourgeoisie, the National Assembly. The Second Empire opened the exploitation of France by a gang of political and financial adventurers, but at the same time also an industrial development such as had never been possible under the narrow-minded and timorous system of Louis Philippe, with its exclusive domination by only a small section of the big bourgeoisie. Louis Bonaparte took the political power from the capitalists under the pretext of protecting them, the bourgeoisie, from the workers, and on the other hand the workers from them; but in return his rule encouraged speculation and industrial activity—in a word the rise

and enrichment of the whole bourgeoisie to an extent hitherto unknown. To an even greater extent, it is true, corruption and mass robbery developed, clustering around the imperial court, and drawing their heavy percentages from this enrichment.

—ENGELS, "Introduction," *The Civil War in France* (1891), pp. 10-12.

B. THE JUNE REVOLUTION

The Parisian workers have been *overwhelmed* by superior force; they have not been subjugated. They have been *defeated* but their opponents have been *conquered*. The temporary triumph of brutal force was bought at a price—the destruction of all illusions and imaginings of the February Revolution; the dissolution of the entire old republican party, the cleavage of the French nation into two nations, the nation of the possessors and the nation of the workers. The tricolor republic now carries one more color, the color of the defeated, the color of blood. It has become the red republic.

No republican notable—either from the *National* or from the *Reforme*—on the side of the people! Without any leaders, without any means of struggle other than the uprising itself, the people resisted the united bourgeoisie and its soldiery longer than any French dynasty disposing of a vast military apparatus had been able to resist a section of the bourgeoisie united with the people. But to do away with their last illusion, to break completely with the past, the people had to see the accustomed poetic trimmings of the French revolt, the enthusiastic bourgeois youth, the students at the *école polytechnique*, the three-cornered hats (*dreikram-pige Hüte*) ranged on the side of the oppressors. They had to see the students at the medical faculties refuse the help of science to the wounded plebeians.

Science does not exist for the plebeians who committed the unspeakable, the immense crime of having thrown themselves into battle for their own existence instead of for that of Louis Philippe or M. Marrast.

The last official residue of the February revolution, the executive commission,* faded away like a misty apparition, through

*The administration of the French Republic, which existed from May 10, 1848 to June 24, 1848 (the beginning of the military dictatorship of Cavaignac).

the seriousness of the events. Lamartine's fireballs were transformed into Cavaignac's fire rockets.

The *fraternité*, the brotherhood of the opposed classes, one of which exploits the other, this *fraternité*, proclaimed in February, and written in capital letters on the forehead of Paris, on every prison, on all barracks, has its true, unadulterated, prosaic expression—*civil war*, civil war in its most frightful aspect, the war of labor and capital. This brotherliness flamed in all the windows of Paris on the evening of June 25 when the Paris of the bourgeoisie was illuminated while the Paris of the proletariat was burning, running with blood, groaning.

The brotherliness lasted only so long as the interests of the bourgeoisie coincided with the interests of the proletariat. Pedants of the old revolutionary tradition of 1793; socialist system-makers who begged the bourgeoisie for alms for the people and were allowed to deliver long speeches and to compromise themselves as long as the proletarian lion had to be lulled to sleep; Republicans who demanded the entire old bourgeois regime without the crowned head; dynastic oppositionists for whom chance had substituted the fall of a dynasty for a ministerial shift; Legitimists who did not discard their livery but merely wanted to change its cut—these were the allies with whom the people had made their February. What the people instinctively hated in Louis Philippe was not Louis Philippe, but the crowned rule of a class, Capital on the throne. But the people—as always, magnanimous—thought they had destroyed their enemy by destroying the enemy of their enemy, that is, the common enemy.

The *February Revolution* was the *beautiful* revolution, the revolution of universal sympathy, because the oppositions which were hurled against the kingdom were *undeveloped*, slumbering peaceably side by side, because the social struggle which constituted its background had only won an airy existence, the existence of the Phrase, of the Word. The *June Revolution* is the *ugly* revolution, the repulsive revolution because in the place of the Phrase, the Fact has stepped in, because the Republic uncovered the head of the monster as it struck off its protecting and concealing crown.

Order! was the battle cry of Guizot. *Order!* cried Sebastiani, the Guizotine, as Warsaw became Russian. *Order!* cries Cavaignac,

the brutal echo of the French National Assembly and the republican bourgeoisie.

Order! thundered his grapeshot as it tore through the body of the proletariat.

None of the countless revolutions of the French bourgeoisie since 1789 was an attack on *Order*; all of them left intact the rule of the class, the slavery of the workers, the *bourgeois order* however often the political form of this rule and of this slavery may have changed. But June had attacked this *order*. Woe then to June!

Under the provisional government it was proper, indeed it was *necessary* to preach to the generous-hearted workers in thousands of official posters that they should be ready to place three months of misery at the disposal of the Republic; it was politics and at the same time romantic enthusiasm to preach to the workers that the February Revolution was carried out in *their own interest* and that the overriding issue in the February Revolution was the *interests of the workers*. But with the opening of the National Assembly one became prosaic. The issue now became only this, in the words of Minister Trélat, to reduce labor to its previous conditions. That is, the workers had fought in February in order to be plunged into an industrial crisis.

The business of the National Assembly consists in this, to make of February an unhappening, at least for the workers, and to plunge them back into the old relationships. But even this did not take place, for an assembly no more than a king has the power to proclaim to a crisis of universal character: So far and no farther! The National Assembly, in its brutal zeal to do away once and for all with the vexatious February modes of speech, did not even resort to the measures that were possible on the basis of the old relationships. The Parisian workers of 18 to 25 were either drafted into the army or were fired; the foreign workers were banished from Paris to the marshy Sologne region without even getting the money that their passports entitled them to; the more mature Parisians were provisionally given relief in workshops organized on military lines, under the condition that they cease to take part in any people's gathering, that is, that they cease to be Republicans. Did your riff-raff make the February Revolution *for you or for us?* The bourgeoisie placed the question so that it had to be answered in June—with grapeshot and barricades.

Nevertheless, as a people's representative declared on June 25, a stupor has seized hold of the entire National Assembly. It is bewildered as both question and answer are drowned in blood on the pavements of Paris. Some representatives are bewildered because their illusions have gone up in the smoke of powder, others because they cannot comprehend how the people can dare to represent their most *specific interests* in an *independent* way. *Russian gold, English gold, the Bonaparte eagle, the fleur de lis* — amulets of all kinds were used to reconcile their thinking with this peculiar event. *Both sides* in the Assembly however feel that an immeasurable gulf separates them from the people. No one dares raise his voice for the people.

As soon as the stupor ceases, rage breaks out. And the majority is right in hissing down those miserable utopians and hypocrites who commit the anachronism of still mouthing the phrase *fraternité*, brotherliness. Now must one get rid of this phrase and of the illusions that ambiguously lie in its bosom. As Larochejaquelin, the Legitimist, the knightly enthusiast, declaimed passionately against the infamy with which one called out "*Vae victis!*" *Woe to the conquered!* the majority of the assembly fell into a St. Vitus dance as if they had been pricked by a tarantula. They cried "Woe" over the workers in order to hide the fact that the "conquered" were none other than themselves. Either they had to go down to defeat, or the Republic. And thus they howled convulsively, Long live the Republic!

Should the deep abyss that has opened before us confuse the democrats, should it make us believe that the struggles for a state form are without content, illusory, nothing?

Only weak, cowardly minds can put the question thus. The collisions that spring out of the conditions of bourgeois society itself must be fought out; they cannot be fantasied out of existence. The best state form is one in which the social oppositions are not wiped away violently, that is, only artificially, only seemingly held in check. The best state form is one in which the opposing forces can do battle freely and thus arrive at solutions.

One may ask us, do we have no tears, no sigh, no word for the victims who fell before the rage of the people, for the National Guard, the Mobile Guard, the Republican Guard?

The state will take care of its widows and orphans; decrees will honor them, ceremonial funeral processions will lay their remains in the earth; the official press will hail them as immortal; European reaction from east to west will praise them.

But the plebeians, lacerated by hunger, insulted by the press, left in the lurch by the doctors, labeled by "honest society" as thieves, arsonists, galley slaves; their wives and children hurled into boundless misery; their best survivors deported overseas—to place a laurel crown on their menacing dark forehead is the *privilege, the right of the democratic press.*

—MARX, "The June Revolution," *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* (No. 29, June 29, 1848) in Marx and Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 5, p. 133-137, Dietz Verlag, Berlin 1959. (Translated by Harry Martel.)

C. THE WORKING CLASS AND THE UPRISING OF 1848

The workers were left no choice: they had to starve or start to fight. They answered on June 22, with the tremendous insurrection in which the first great battle was joined between the two classes that split modern society. It was a fight for the preservation or annihilation of the bourgeois order. The veil that shrouded the republic was torn to pieces.

It is well known how the workers, with unexampled bravery and talent, without chiefs, without a common plan, without means and, for the most part, lacking weapons, held in check for five days the army, the Mobile Guard, the Parisian National Guard, and the National Guard that streamed in from the provinces. It is well known how the bourgeoisie compensated itself for the mortal anguish it underwent by unheard-of brutality, and massacred over 3,000 prisoners.

The official representatives of French democracy were steeped in republican ideology to such an extent that it was only some weeks later that they began to have an inkling of the meaning of the June fight. They were stupefied by the gunpowder smoke in which their fantastic republic dissolved. . . .

The Paris proletariat was forced into the June insurrection by the bourgeoisie. In this lay its doom. Neither its immediate,

admitted needs drove it to want to win the forcible overthrow of the bourgeoisie, nor was it equal to this task. The *Moniteur* had to inform it officially that the time was past when the republic saw any occasion to do honor to its illusions, and its defeat first convinced it of the truth that the slightest improvement in its position remains a utopia within the bourgeois republic, a utopia that becomes a crime as soon as it wants to realize it. In place of its demands, exuberant in form, but petty and even still bourgeois in content, the concession of which it wanted to wring from the February republic, there appeared the bold slogan of revolutionary struggle: Overthrow of the bourgeoisie! Dictatorship of the working class!

By making its burial place the birthplace of the bourgeois republic the proletariat compelled the latter to come out forthwith in its pure form as the state whose admitted object is to perpetuate the rule of capital, the slavery of labor. With constant regard to the scarred, irreconcilable, unconquerable enemy — unconquerable because its existence is the condition of its own life — bourgeois rule, freed from all fetters, was bound to turn immediately into bourgeois terrorism. With the proletariat removed for the time being from the stage and bourgeois dictatorship recognized officially, the middle sections, in the mass, had more and more to side with the proletariat as their position became more unbearable and their antagonism to the bourgeoisie became more acute. Just as earlier in its upsurge, so now they had to find in its defeat the cause of their misery.

— MARX, *The Class Struggles in France, 1848-1850* (1850), pp. 56f, 58f.

D. PHASES OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION: 1848-1851

Let us recapitulate in general outline the phases that the French Revolution went through from February 24, 1848, to December 1851.

Three main periods are unmistakable: *the February period*; May 4, 1848, to May 28, 1849: *the period of the constitution of the republic, or of the Constituent National Assembly*; May 28, 1849, to December 2, 1851: *the period of the constitutional republic or of the Legislative National Assembly*.

The *first period*, from February 24, or the overthrow of Louis Philippe, to May 4, 1848, the meeting of the Constituent Assem-

bly, the *February period* proper, may be described as the *prologue* to the revolution. Its character was officially expressed in the fact that the government improvised by it itself declared that it was *provisional* and, like the government, everything that was mooted, attempted or enunciated during this period proclaimed itself to be only *provisional*. Nothing and nobody ventured to lay claim to the right of existence and of real action. All the elements that had prepared or determined the revolution, the dynastic opposition, the republican bourgeoisie, the democratic-republican petty bourgeoisie and the social-democratic workers, provisionally found their place in the February *government*.

It could not be otherwise. The February days originally intended an electoral reform, by which the circle of the politically privileged among the possessing class itself was to be widened and the exclusive domination of the aristocracy of finance overthrown. When it came to the actual conflict, however, when the people mounted the barricades, the National Guard maintained a passive attitude, the army offered no serious resistance and the monarchy ran away, the republic appeared to be a matter of course. Every party construed it in its own way. Having secured it arms in hand, the proletariat impressed its stamp upon it and proclaimed it to be a *social republic*. There was thus indicated the general content of the modern revolution, a content which was in most singular contradiction to everything that, with the material available, with the degree of education attained by the masses, under the given circumstances and relations, could be immediately realized in practice. On the other hand, the claims of all the remaining elements that had collaborated in the February Revolution were recognized by the lion's share that they obtained in the government. In no period do we, therefore, find a more confused mixture of high-flown phrases and actual uncertainty and clumsiness, of more enthusiastic striving for innovation and more deeply rooted domination of the old routine, of more apparent harmony of the whole of society and more profound estrangement of its elements. While the Paris proletariat still revelled in the vision of the wide prospects that had opened before it and indulged in seriously meant discussions on social problems, the old powers of society had grouped themselves, assembled, reflected and found unexpected support in the mass of the nation, the peasants and petty bourgeois, who all at once

stormed on to the political stage, after the barriers of the July monarchy had fallen.

The *second period*, from May 4, 1848, to the end of May 1849, is the period of the *constitution*, the *foundation*, of the *bourgeois republic*. Directly after the February days not only had the dynastic opposition been surprised by the republicans and the republicans by the Socialists, but all France by Paris. The National Assembly, which met on May 4, 1848, had emerged from the national elections and represented the nation. It was a living protest against the pretensions of the February days and was to reduce the results of the revolution to the bourgeois scale. In vain the Paris proletariat, which immediately grasped the character of this National Assembly, attempted on May 15, a few days after it met, forcibly to negate its existence, to dissolve it, to disintegrate again into its constituent parts the organic form in which the proletariat was threatened by the reacting spirit of the nation. As is known, May 15 had no other result save that of removing Blanqui and his comrades, that is, the real leaders of the proletarian party, from the public stage for the entire duration of the cycle we are considering.

The *bourgeois monarchy* of Louis Philippe can be followed only by a *bourgeois republic*, that is to say, whereas a limited section of the bourgeoisie ruled in the name of the king, the whole of the bourgeoisie will now rule on behalf of the people. The demands of the Paris proletariat are utopian nonsense, to which an end must be put. To this declaration of the Constituent National Assembly the Paris proletariat replied with the *June Insurrection*, the most colossal event in the history of European civil wars. The bourgeois republic triumphed. On its side stood the aristocracy of finance, the industrial bourgeoisie, the middle class, the petty bourgeois, the army, the *lumpenproletariat* organized as the Mobile Guard, the intellectual lights, the clergy and the rural population. On the side of the Paris proletariat stood none but itself. More than 3,000 insurgents were butchered after the victory, and 15,000 were transported without trial. With this defeat the proletariat passes into the *background* of the revolutionary stage. It attempts to press forward again on every occasion, as soon as the movement appears to make a fresh start, but with ever decreased expenditure of strength and always slighter results. As soon as one of the social strata situated above

it gets into revolutionary ferment, the proletariat enters into an alliance with it and so shares all the defeats that the different parties suffer, one after another. But these subsequent blows become the weaker, the greater the surface of society over which they are distributed. The more important leaders of the proletariat in the Assembly and in the press successively fall victims to the courts, and ever more equivocal figures come to head it. In part it throws itself into *doctrinaire experiments, exchange banks and workers' associations, hence into a movement in which it renounces the revolutionizing of the old world by means of the latter's own great, combined resources, and seeks, rather, to achieve its salvation behind society's back, in private fashion, within its limited conditions of existence, and hence necessarily suffers shipwreck.* It seems to be unable either to rediscover revolutionary greatness in itself or to win new energy from the connections newly entered into, until *all classes* with which it contended in June themselves lie prostrate beside it. But at least it succumbs with the honors of the great, world-historic struggle; not only France, but all Europe trembles at the June earthquake, while the ensuing defeats of the upper classes are so cheaply bought that they require barefaced exaggeration by the victorious party to be able to pass for events at all, and become the more ignominious the further the defeated party is removed from the proletarian party.

The defeat of the June insurgents, to be sure, had now prepared, had levelled the ground on which the bourgeois republic could be founded and built up, but it had shown at the same time that in Europe the questions at issue are other than that of "republic or monarchy." It had revealed that here *bourgeois republic* signifies the unlimited despotism of one class over other classes. It had proved that in countries with an old civilization, with a developed formation of classes, with modern conditions of production and with an intellectual consciousness in which all traditional ideas have been dissolved by the work of centuries, the republic signifies *in general only the political form of revolution of bourgeois society and not its conservative form of life*, as, for example, in the United States of North America, where, though classes already exist, they have not yet become fixed, but continually change and interchange their elements in constant flux, where the modern means of production, instead of coinciding with a stagnant surplus population, rather compensate for the relative

deficiency of heads and hands, and where, finally, the feverish, youthful movement of material production, which has to make a new world its own, has left neither time nor opportunity for abolishing the old spirit world.

During the June days all classes and parties had united in the *party of Order* against the proletarian class as the *party of Anarchy*, of socialism, of communism. They had "saved" society from "*the enemies of society.*" They had given out the watchwords of the old society, "*property, family, religion, order,*" to their army as passwords and had proclaimed to the counter-revolutionary crusaders: "In this sign thou shalt conquer!" From that moment, as soon as one of the numerous parties which had gathered under this sign against the June insurgents seeks to hold the revolutionary battlefield in its own class interest, it goes down before the cry: "Property, family, religion, order." Society is saved just as often as the circle of its rulers contracts, as a more exclusive interest is maintained against a wider one. Every demand of the simplest bourgeois financial reform, of the most ordinary liberalism, of the most formal republicanism, of the most shallow democracy, is simultaneously castigated as an "attempt on society" and stigmatized as "socialism." And, finally, the high priests of "the religion of order" themselves are driven with kicks from their Pythian tripods, hauled out of their beds in the darkness of night, put in prison vans, thrown into dungeons or sent into exile; their temple is razed to the ground, their mouths are sealed, their pens broken, their law torn to pieces in the name of religion, of property, of the family, of order. Bourgeois fanatics for order are shot down on their balconies by mobs of drunken soldiers, their domestic sanctuaries profaned, their houses bombarded for amusement—in the name of property, of the family, of religion and of order. Finally, the scum of bourgeois society forms the *holy phalanx of order* and the hero Crapulinski* installs himself in the Tuileries as the "*savior of society.*"

—MARX, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852), pp. 21-26.

**Crapulinski*: The hero of Heine's poem, *Two Knights*. In this character, Heine ridicules the spendthrift Polish nobleman ("Crapulinski" comes from the French word *crapule*—base scoundrel). Here Marx alludes to Louis Bonaparte.

E. THE FRENCH PEASANT AND THE WINE TAX

The French peasant, when he paints the devil on the wall, paints him in the guise of the tax collector. From the moment when Montalembert elevated taxation to a god, the peasant became godless, atheist, and threw himself into the arms of the devil, socialism. The religion of order had lost him; the Jesuits had lost him; Bonaparte had lost him. December 20, 1849, had irrevocably compromised December 20, 1848. The "nephew of his uncle" was not the first of his family whom the wine tax defeated, this tax which, in the expression of Montalembert, heralds the revolutionary storm. The real, the great Napoleon declared at St. Helena that the reintroduction of the wine tax had contributed more to his downfall than all else, since it had alienated from him the peasants of southern France. Already the favorite object of the people's hate under Louis XIV, abolished by the first revolution, it was reintroduced by Napoleon in a modified form in 1808. When the restoration entered France, there trotted before it not only the Cossacks, but also the promises to abolish the wine tax. The *gentilhommerie* [nobility] naturally did not need to keep its word to the *gens taillable à merci et miséricorde*. [People deprived of rights]. The year 1830 promised the abolition of the wine tax. It was not its way to do what it said or say what it did. 1848 promised the abolition of the wine tax as it promised everything. Finally, the Constituent Assembly, which promised nothing, made, as mentioned, a testamentary provision whereby the wine tax was to disappear on January 1, 1850. And just ten days before January 1, 1850, the Legislative Assembly introduced it once more, so that the French people perpetually pursued it and when it had thrown it out the door, saw it come in again through the window.

The popular hatred of the wine tax is explained by the fact that it unites in itself all the hatefulness of the French system of taxation. The mode of its collection is hateful, the mode of its distribution aristocratic, for the rates of taxation are the same for the most common as for the costliest wines; it increases therefore, in geometrical progression as the wealth of the consumers decreases, an inverted progressive tax. It is accordingly a direct provocation to the poisoning of the working classes as a premium on adulterated and spurious wines. It lessens con-

sumption, since it sets up *octrois* [customs offices] before the gates of all towns of over 4,000 inhabitants and transforms each town into a foreign country with protective duties against French wine. The big wine merchants, but still more the small ones, the *marchands de vins*, the keepers of wine shops, whose living directly depends on the consumption of wine, are so many declared enemies of the wine tax. And finally by lessening the consumption the wine tax cuts away the market from production. While it renders the urban workers incapable of paying for wines, it renders the wine growers incapable of selling it. And France has a wine-growing population of about 12 million. One can therefore, understand the hate of the people in general, one can, in particular, understand the fanaticism of the peasants against the wine tax. And, in addition, they saw in its restoration no isolated, more or less accidental event. The peasants have a kind of historical tradition of their own, which is handed down from father to son, and in this historical school it is muttered that every government, as long as it wants to dupe the peasants, promises the abolition of the wine tax, and as soon as it has duped the peasants, retains or reintroduces the wine tax. In the wine tax the peasant tests the bouquet of the government, its tendency. The restoration of the wine tax on December 20 meant: Louis Bonaparte is like the others; but he was not like the others; he was a peasant discovery, and in the petitions carrying millions of signatures against the wine tax they took back the votes that they had given a year before to the "nephew of his uncle."

—MARX, *The Class Struggles in France; 1848-1850* (1850), pp. 115-17.

F. LOUIS NAPOLEON AND THE PEASANTRY

The small-holding peasants form a vast mass, the members of which live in similar conditions but without entering into manifold relations with one another. Their mode of production isolates them from one another instead of bringing them into mutual intercourse. The isolation is increased by France's bad means of communication and by the poverty of the peasants. Their field of production, the small holding, admits of no division of labor in its cultivation, no application of science and, therefore, no diversity of development, no variety of talent, no wealth of social relationships. Each individual peasant family is

almost self-sufficient; it itself directly produces the major part of its consumption and thus acquires its means of life more through exchange with nature than in intercourse with society. A small holding, a peasant and his family; alongside them another small holding, another peasant and another family. A few score of these make up a village, and a few score of villages make up a department. In this way, the great mass of the French nation is formed by simple addition of homologous magnitudes, much as potatoes in a sack form a sack of potatoes. In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests and their culture from those of the other classes, and put them in hostile opposition to the latter, they form a class. In so far as there is merely a local inter-connection among these small-holding peasants, and the identity of their interests begets no community, no national bond and no political organization among them, they do not form a class. They are consequently incapable of enforcing their class interests in their own name, whether through a parliament or through a convention. They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented. Their representative must at the same time appear as their master, as an authority over them, as an unlimited governmental power that protects them against the other classes and sends them rain and sunshine from above. The political influence of the small-holding peasants, therefore, finds its final expression in the executive power subordinating society to itself.

Historical tradition gave rise to the belief of the French peasants in the miracle that a man named Napoleon would bring all the glory back to them. And an individual turned up who gives himself out as the man because he bears the name of Napoleon, in consequence of the *Code Napoléon* which lays down that *la recherche de la paternité est interdite* [inquiry into paternity is forbidden]. After a vagabondage of 20 years and after a series of grotesque adventures, the legend finds fulfillment and the man becomes Emperor of the French. The fixed idea of the Nephew was realized, because it coincided with the fixed idea of the most numerous class of the French people.

But, it may be objected, what about the peasant risings in half of France, the raids on the peasants by the army, the mass incarceration and transportation of peasants?

Since Louis XIV, France has experienced no similar persecution of the peasants "on account of demagogic practices."

But let there be no misunderstanding. The Bonaparte dynasty represents not the revolutionary, but the conservative peasant; not the peasant that strikes out beyond the condition of his social existence, the small holding, but rather the peasant who wants to consolidate this holding, not the country folk who, linked up with the towns, want to overthrow the old order through their own energies, but on the contrary those who, in stupefied seclusion within this old order, want to see themselves and their small holdings saved and favored by the ghost of the empire. It represents not the enlightenment, but the superstition of the peasant; not his judgment, but his prejudice; not his future, but his past

—MARX, *The Eighteenth Brumaire* (1852). pp. 171-73.

G. LANDED PROPERTY AND IDEOLOGY

Under the Bourbons, *big landed property* had governed, with it priests and lackeys; under the Orleans, high finance, large-scale industry, large-scale trade, that is, *capital*, with its retinue of lawyers, professors and smooth-tongued orators. The Legitimate Monarchy was merely the political expression of the hereditary rule of the lords of the soil, as the July Monarchy was only the political expression of the usurped rule of the bourgeois *parvenus*. What kept the two factions apart, therefore, was not any so-called principles, it was their material conditions of existence, two different kinds of property, it was the old contrast between town and country, the rivalry between capital and landed property. That at the same time old memories, personal enmities, fears and hopes, prejudices and illusions, sympathies and antipathies, convictions, articles of faith and principles bound them to one or the other royal house, who denies this? Upon the different forms of property, upon the social conditions of existence, rises an entire superstructure of distinct and peculiarly formed sentiments, illusions, modes of thought and views of life. The entire class creates and forms them out of its material foundations and out of the corresponding social relations. The single individual, who derives them through tradition and upbringing, may imagine that they form the real motives and the starting point of his activity. While Orleanists and Legitimists,

while each faction sought to make itself and the other believe that it was loyalty to their two royal houses which separated them, facts later proved that it was rather their divided interests which forbade the uniting of the two royal houses. And as in private life one differentiates between what a man thinks and says of himself and what he really is and does, so in historical struggles one must distinguish still more the phrases and fancies of parties from their real organism and their real interests, their conception of themselves, from their reality. Orleanists and Legitimists found themselves side by side in the republic, with equal claims. If each side wished to effect the *restoration* of its *own* royal house against the other, that merely signified that each of the *two great interests* into which the *bourgeoisie* is split—landed property and capital—sought to restore its own supremacy and the subordination of the other. We speak of two interests of the bourgeoisie, for large landed property, despite its feudal coquetry and pride of race, has been rendered thoroughly bourgeois by the development of modern society. Thus the Tories in England long imagined that they were enthusiastic about monarchy, the church and the beauties of the old English Constitution, until the day of danger wrung from them the confession that they are enthusiastic only about *ground rent*.

—MARX, *The Eighteenth Brumaire* (1852), pp. 47f.

[2]

FRANCE: 1870-1871 — THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR AND THE PARIS COMMUNE

A. THE PARIS REVOLUTION OF SEPTEMBER 4, 1870

The Second Empire was the appeal to French chauvinism, the demand for the restoration of the frontiers of the First Empire, which had been lost in 1814, or at least those of the First Republic. A French empire within the frontiers of the old monarchy and, in fact, within the even more amputated frontiers of 1815—such a thing was impossible for any long duration of time. Hence the necessity for brief wars and extension of frontiers. But no

extension of frontiers was so dazzling to the imagination of the French chauvinists as the extension to the German left bank of the Rhine. One square mile on the Rhine was more to them than ten in the Alps or anywhere else. Given the Second Empire, the demand for the restoration to France of the left bank of the Rhine, either all at once or piecemeal, was merely a question of time. The time came with the Austro-Prussian War of 1866; cheated of the anticipated "territorial compensation" by Bismarck and by his own over-cunning, hesitating policy, there was now nothing left for Napoleon but war, which broke out in 1870 and drove him first to Sedan, and thence to Wilhelmshöhe.

The inevitable result was the Paris Revolution of September 4, 1870. The empire collapsed like a house of cards, and the republic was again proclaimed. But the enemy was standing at the gates; the armies of the empire were either hopelessly beleaguered in Metz or held captive in Germany. In this emergency the people allowed the Paris deputies to the former legislative body to constitute themselves into a "Government of National Defense." This was the more readily conceded, since, for the purposes of defense, all Parisians capable of bearing arms had enrolled in the National Guard and were armed, so that now the workers constituted a great majority. But almost at once the antagonism between the almost completely bourgeois government and the armed proletariat broke into open conflict. On October 31, workers' battalions stormed the town hall, and captured some members of the government. Treachery, the government's direct breach of its undertakings, and the intervention of some petty-bourgeois battalions set them free again, and in order not to occasion the outbreak of civil war inside a city which was already beleaguered by a foreign power, the former government was left in office.

At last, on January 8, 1871, Paris, almost starving, capitulated but with honors unprecedented in the history of war. The forts were surrendered, the outer wall disarmed, the weapons of the regiments of the line and of the Mobile Guard were handed over, and they themselves considered prisoners of war. But the National Guard kept its weapons and guns, and only entered into an armistice with the victors, who themselves did not dare enter Paris in triumph. They only dared to occupy a tiny corner of Paris, which, into the bargain, consisted partly of public parks,

and even this they only occupied for a few days! And during this time they, who had maintained their encirclement of Paris for 131 days, were themselves encircled by the armed workers of Paris, who kept a sharp watch that no "Prussian" should overstep the narrow bounds of the corner ceded to the foreign conquerors. Such was the respect which the Paris workers inspired in the army before which all the armies of the empire had laid down their arms; and the Prussian *Junkers*, who had come to take revenge at the very center of the revolution, were compelled to stand by respectfully, and salute just precisely this armed revolution!

During the war the Paris workers had confined themselves to demanding the vigorous prosecution of the fight. But now, when peace had come after the capitulation of Paris, now, Thiers, the new head of the government, was compelled to realize that the supremacy of the propertied classes—large landowners and capitalists—was in constant danger so long as the workers of Paris had arms in their hands. His first action was to attempt to disarm them. On March 18, he sent troops of the line with orders to rob the National Guard of the artillery belonging to it, which had been constructed during the siege of Paris and had been paid for by subscription. The attempt failed; Paris mobilized as one man in defense of the guns, and war between Paris and the French government sitting at Versailles was declared. On March 26 the Paris Commune was elected and on March 28, it was proclaimed. The Central Committee of the National Guard, which up to then had carried on the government, handed in its resignation to the National Guard, after it had first decreed the abolition of the scandalous Paris "Morality Police." On March 30, the Commune abolished conscription and the standing army, and declared that the National Guard, in which all citizens capable of bearing arms were to be enrolled, was to be the sole armed force. It remitted all payments of rent for dwelling houses from October 1870 until April, the amounts already paid to be reckoned to a future rental period, and stopped all sales of articles pledged in the municipal pawnshops. On the same day the foreigners elected to the Commune were confirmed in office, because "the flag of the Commune is the flag of the World Republic."

On April 1, it was decided that the highest salary received by

any employee of the Commune, and therefore also by its members themselves, might not exceed 6,000 francs. On the following day the Commune decreed the separation of the Church from the State, and the abolition of all state payments for religious purposes as well as the transformation of all Church property into national property; as a result of which, on April 8, a decree excluding from the schools all religious symbols, pictures, dogmas, prayers—in a word, “all that belongs to the sphere of the individual’s conscience”—was ordered to be excluded from the schools, and this decree was gradually applied. On the 5th, in reply to the shooting, day after day, of the Commune’s fighters captured by the Versailles troops, a decree was issued for imprisonment of hostages, but it was never carried into effect. On the 6th, the guillotine was brought out by the 137th battalion of the National Guard, and publicly burnt, amid great popular rejoicing. On the 12th, the Commune decided that the Victory Column on the Place Vendôme, which had been cast from guns captured by Napoleon after the war of 1809, should be demolished as a symbol of chauvinism and incitement to national hatred. This decree was carried out on May 16. On April 16, the Commune ordered a statistical tabulation of factories which had been closed down by the manufacturers, and the working out of plans for the carrying on of these factories by workers formerly employed in them, who were to be organized in cooperative societies, and also plans for the organization of these cooperatives in one great union. On the 20th, the Commune abolished night work for bakers, and also the workers’ registration cards, which since the Second Empire had been run as a monopoly by police nominees—exploiters of the first rank; the issuing of these registration cards was transferred to the mayors of the 20 *arrondissements* of Paris. On April 30, the Commune ordered the closing of the pawnshops, on the ground that they were a private exploitation of labor, and were in contradiction with the right of the workers to their instruments of labor and to credit. On May 5, it ordered the demolition of the Chapel of Atonement, which had been built in expiation of the execution of Louis XVI.

Thus, from March 18 onwards the class character of the Paris movement, which had previously been pushed into the background by the fight against the foreign invaders, emerged

sharply and clearly. As almost without exception, workers, or recognized representatives of the workers, sat in the Commune, its decisions bore a decidedly proletarian character. Either they decreed reforms which the republican bourgeoisie had failed to pass solely out of cowardice, but which provided a necessary basis for the free activity of the working class—such as the realization of the principle that *in relation to the state*, religion is a purely private matter—or they promulgated decrees which were in the direct interests of the working class and to some extent cut deeply into the old order of society. In a beleaguered city, however, it was possible at most to make a start in the realization of all these measures. And from the beginning of May onwards all their energies were taken up by the fight against the ever-growing armies assembled by the Versailles government.

On April 7, the Versailles troops had captured the Seine crossing at Neuilly, on the western front of Paris; on the other hand, in an attack on the southern front on the 11th they were repulsed with heavy losses by General Eudes. Paris was continually bombarded and, moreover, by the very people who had stigmatized as a sacrilege the bombardment of the same city by the Prussians. These same people now begged the Prussian government for the hasty return of the French soldiers taken prisoner at Sedan and Metz, in order that they might recapture Paris for them. From the beginning of May the gradual arrival of these troops gave the Versailles forces a decided ascendancy. This already became evident when, on April 23, Thiers broke off the negotiations for the exchange, proposed by the Commune, of the Archbishop of Paris and a whole number of other priests held as hostages in Paris, for only one man, Blanqui, who had twice been elected to the Commune but was a prisoner in Clairvaux. And even more in the changed language of Thiers; previously procrastinating and equivocal, he now suddenly became insolent, threatening, brutal. The Versailles forces took the redoubt of Moulin Saquet on the southern front, on May 3; on the 9th, Fort Issy, which had been completely reduced to ruins by gunfire; and on the 14th, Fort Vanves. On the western front they advanced gradually, capturing the numerous villages and buildings which extended up to the city wall, until they reached the main wall itself; on the 21st, thanks to treachery and the carelessness of the National Guards stationed there, they succeeded

in forcing their way into the city. The Prussians who held the northern and eastern forts allowed the Versailles troops to advance across the land north of the city, which was forbidden ground to them under the armistice, and thus to march forward and attack on a long front, which the Parisians naturally thought covered by the armistice, and therefore held only with weak forces. As a result of this, only a weak resistance was put up in the western half of Paris, in the luxury city proper; it grew stronger and more tenacious the nearer the incoming troops approached the eastern half, the real working-class city.

It was only after eight days' fighting that the last defenders of the Commune were overwhelmed on the heights of Belleville and Menilmontant; and then the massacre of defenseless men, women and children, which had been raging all through the week on an increasing scale, reached its zenith. The breech-loaders could no longer kill fast enough; the vanquished workers were shot down in hundreds by mitrailleuse fire. The "Wall of the Federals" at the Père Lachaise cemetery, where the final mass murder was consummated, is still standing today, a mute but eloquent testimony to the savagery of which the ruling class is capable as soon as the working class dares to come out for its rights. Then came the mass arrests; when the slaughter of them proved to be impossible, the shooting of victims arbitrarily selected from the prisoners' ranks, and the removal of the rest to great camps where they awaited trial by courts-martial. The Prussian troops surrounding the northern half of Paris had orders not to allow any fugitives to pass; but the officers often shut their eyes when the soldiers paid more obedience to the dictates of humanity than to those of the General Staff; particularly, honor is due to the Saxon army corps, which behaved very humanely and let through many workers who were obviously fighters for the Commune.

— ENGELS, "Introduction," Marx's *The Civil War in France* (1891), pp. 12-17.

B. NATURE OF THE PARIS COMMUNE: ITS DISTINCTION FROM OLDER FORMS

It is generally the fate of completely new historical creations to be mistaken for the counterpart of older and even defunct forms of social life, to which they may bear a certain likeness.

Thus, this new Commune, which breaks the modern state power, has been mistaken for a reproduction of the medieval communes, which first preceded, and afterwards became the substratum of, that very state power.—The Communal Constitution has been mistaken for an attempt to break up into a federation of small states, as dreamt of by Montesquieu and the Girondins, that unity of great nations which, if originally brought about by political force, has now become a powerful coefficient of social production.—The antagonism of the Commune against the state power has been mistaken for an exaggerated form of the ancient struggle against over-centralization. Peculiar historical circumstances may have prevented the classical development, as in France, of the bourgeois form of government, and may have allowed, as in England, to complete the great central state organs by corrupt vestries, jobbing councillors, and ferocious poor-law guardians in the towns, and virtually hereditary magistrates in the counties. The Communal Constitution would have restored to the social body all the forces hitherto absorbed by the state parasite feeding upon, and clogging the free movement of, society. By this one act it would have initiated the regeneration of France. The provincial French middle class saw in the Commune an attempt to restore the sway their order had held over the country under Louis Philippe, and which, under Louis Napoleon, was supplanted by the pretended rule of the country over the towns. In reality, the Communal Constitution brought the rural producers under the intellectual lead of the central towns of their districts, and there secured to them, in the working men, the natural trustees of their interests. The very existence of the Commune involved, as a matter of course, local municipal liberty, but no longer as a check upon the now superseded state power. It could only enter into the head of a Bismarck, who, when not engaged on his intrigues of blood and iron, always likes to resume his old trade, so befitting his mental caliber, of contributor to *Kladderadatsch* (the Berlin *Punch*), it could only enter into such a head to ascribe to the Paris Commune aspirations after that caricature of the old French municipal organization of 1791, the Prussian municipal constitution which degrades the town governments to mere secondary wheels in the police machinery of the Prussian state. The Commune made that catchword of bourgeois revolu-

tions, cheap government, a reality by destroying the two greatest sources of expenditure—the standing army and state functionalism. Its very existence presupposed the nonexistence of monarchy, which, in Europe at least, is the normal incumbrance and indispensable cloak of class rule. It supplied the republic with the basis of really democratic institutions. But neither cheap government nor the “true republic” was its ultimate aim; they were its mere concomitants.

The multiplicity of interpretations to which the Commune has been subjected, and the multiplicity of interests which construed it in their favor, show that it was a thoroughly expansive political form, while all previous forms of government had been emphatically repressive. Its true secret was this. It was essentially a working-class government, the product of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class, the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economical emancipation of labor.

Except on this last condition, the Communal Constitution would have been an impossibility and a delusion. The political rule of the producer cannot coexist with the perpetuation of his social slavery. The Commune was therefore to serve as a lever for uprooting the economical foundations upon which rests the existence of classes, and therefore of class rule. With labor emancipated, every man becomes a workingman, and productive labor ceases to be a class attribute.

It is a strange fact. In spite of all the tall talk and all the immense literature, for the last 60 years, about emancipation of labor, no sooner do the workingmen anywhere take the subject into their own hands with a will, than uprises at once all the apologetic phraseology of the mouthpieces of present society with its two poles of capital and wage slavery (the landlord now is the sleeping partner of the capitalist), as if capitalist society was still in its purest state of virgin innocence, with its antagonisms still undeveloped, with its delusions still unexploded, with its prostitute realities not yet laid bare. The Commune, they exclaim, intends to abolish property, the basis of all civilization! Yes, gentlemen, the Commune intended to abolish that class property which makes the labor of the many the wealth of the few. It aimed at the expropriation of the expropriators. It wanted to make individual property a truth by transforming the means of

production, land and capital, now chiefly the means of enslaving and exploiting labor, into mere instruments of free and associated labor. But this is communism, "impossible" communism! Why, those members of the ruling classes who are intelligent enough to perceive the impossibility of continuing the present system—and they are many—have become the obtrusive and full-mouthed apostles of cooperative production. If cooperative production is not to remain a sham and a snare; if it is to supersede the capitalist system; if united cooperative societies are to regulate national production upon a common plan, thus taking it under their own control, and putting an end to the constant anarchy and periodical convulsions which are the fatality of capitalist production—what else, gentlemen, would it be but communism, "possible" communism?

The working class did not expect miracles from the Commune. They have no ready-made utopias to introduce *par décret du peuple*. They know that in order to work out their own emancipation, and along with it that higher form to which present society is irresistibly tending by its own economical agencies, they will have to pass through long struggles, through a series of historic processes, transforming circumstances and men. They have no ideals to realize, but to set free the elements of the new society with which old collapsing bourgeois society itself is pregnant. In the full consciousness of their historic mission, and with the heroic resolve to act up to it, the working class can afford to smile at the coarse invective of the gentlemen's gentlemen with the pen and inkhorn, and at the didactic patronage of well-wishing bourgeois-doctrinaires, pouring forth their ignorant platitudes and sectarian crotchets in the oracular tone of scientific infallibility.

When the Paris Commune took the management of the revolution in its own hands; when plain workingmen for the first time dared to infringe upon the governmental privilege of their "natural superiors," and, under circumstances of unexampled difficulty, performed their work modestly, conscientiously, and efficiently—performed it at salaries the highest of which barely amounted to one-fifth of what according to high scientific authority is the minimum required for a secretary to a certain metropolitan school board—the old world writhed in convulsions of rage at the sight of the Red Flag, the symbol of the Republic of Labor, floating over the Hôtel de Ville.

And yet, this was the first revolution in which the working class was openly acknowledged as the only class capable of social initiative, even by the great bulk of the Paris middle class—shopkeepers, tradesmen, merchants—the wealthy capitalist alone excepted. The Commune had saved them by a sagacious settlement of that ever-recurring cause of dispute among the middle class themselves—the debtor and creditor accounts. The same portion of the middle class, after they had assisted in putting down the workingmen's insurrection of June 1848, had been at once unceremoniously sacrificed to their creditors by the then Constituent Assembly. But this was not their only motive for rallying round the working class. They felt there was but one alternative—the Commune, or the empire—under whatever name it might reappear. The empire had ruined them economically by the havoc it made of public wealth, by the wholesale financial swindling it fostered, by the props it lent to the artificially accelerated centralization of capital, and the concomitant expropriation of their own ranks. It had suppressed them politically, it had shocked them morally by its orgies, it had insulted their Voltairianism by handing over the education of their children to the *frères Ignorantins*, it had revolted their national feeling as Frenchmen by precipitating them headlong into a war which left only one equivalent for the ruins it made—the disappearance of the empire. In fact, after the exodus from Paris of the high Bonapartist and capitalist *bôhème*, the true middle class Party of Order came out in the shape of the "*Union Républicaine*," enrolling themselves under the colors of the Commune and defending it against the wilful misconstruction of Thiers. Whether the gratitude of this great body of the middle class will stand the present severe trial, time must show.

The Commune was perfectly right in telling the peasants that "its victory was their only hope." Of all the lies hatched at Versailles and reechoed by the glorious European penny-a-liner, one of the most tremendous was that the Rurals represented the French peasantry. Think only of the love of the French peasant for the men to whom, after 1815, he had to pay the milliard of indemnity! In the eyes of the French peasant, the very existence of a great landed proprietor is in itself an encroachment on his conquests of 1789. The bourgeois, in 1848, had burdened his

but then he did so in the name of the revolution; while now he had fomented a civil war against the revolution, to shift on to the peasant's shoulders the chief load of the five milliards of indemnity to be paid to the Prussian. The Commune, on the other hand, in one of its first proclamations, declared that the true originators of the war would be made to pay its cost. The Commune would have delivered the peasant of the blood tax — would have given him a cheap government — transformed his present bloodsuckers, the notary, advocate, executor, and other judicial vampires, into salaried communal agents, elected by, and responsible to, himself. It would have freed him of the tyranny of the *garde champêtre*, the gendarme, and the prefect; would have put enlightenment by the schoolmaster in the place of stultification by the priest. And the French peasant is, above all, a man of reckoning. He would find it extremely reasonable that the pay of the priest, instead of being extorted by the tax-gatherer, should only depend upon the spontaneous action of the parishioners' religious instincts. Such were the great immediate boons which the rule of the Commune — and that rule alone — held out to the French peasantry. It is, therefore, quite superfluous here to expatiate upon the more complicated but vital problems which the Commune alone was able, and at the same time compelled to solve in favor of the peasant, *viz.*, the hypothecary debt, lying like an incubus upon his parcel of soil, the *prolétariat foncier* (the rural proletariat), daily growing upon it, and his expropriation from it enforced, at a more and more rapid rate, by the very development of modern agriculture and the competition of capitalist farming.

— MARX, *The Civil War in France* (1871), pp. 59-64.

C. POLITICAL MAKEUP OF THE PARIS COMMUNE

The members of the Commune were divided into a majority, the Blanquists, who had also been predominant in the Central Committee of the National Guard; and a minority, members of the International Working Men's Association, chiefly consisting of adherents of the Proudhon school of socialism. The great majority of the Blanquists at that time were socialists only by revolutionary and proletarian instinct; only a few had attained greater clarity on the essential principles, through Vaillant, who was familiar with German scientific socialism. It is therefore compre-

hensible that in the economic sphere much was left undone which, according to our view today, the Commune ought to have done. The hardest thing to understand is certainly the holy awe with which they remained standing respectfully outside the gates of the Bank of France. This was also a serious political mistake. The bank in the hands of the Commune — this would have been worth more than ten thousand hostages. It would have meant the pressure of the whole of the French bourgeoisie on the Versailles government in favor of peace with the Commune. But what is still more wonderful is the correctness of so much that was actually done by the Commune, composed as it was of Blanquists and Proudhonists. Naturally, the Proudhonists were chiefly responsible for the economic decrees of the Commune, both for their praiseworthy and their unpraiseworthy aspects; as the Blanquists were for its political actions and omissions. And in both cases the irony of history willed — as is usual when doctrinaires come to the helm — that both did the opposite of what the doctrines of their school prescribed.

Proudhon, the Socialist of the small peasant and master craftsman, regarded association with positive hatred. He said of it that there was more bad than good in it; that it was by nature sterile, even harmful, because it was a fetter on the freedom of the workers; that it was a pure dogma, unproductive and burdensome, in conflict as much with the freedom of the workers as with economy of labor; that its disadvantages multiplied more swiftly than its advantages; that, as compared with it, competition, division of labor, and private property were economic forces. Only for the exceptional cases — as Proudhon called them — of large-scale industry and large industrial units, such as railways was there any place for the association of workers.

By 1871, even in Paris, the center of handicrafts, large-scale industry had already so much ceased to be an exceptional case that by far the most important decree of the Commune instituted an organization of large-scale industry and even of manufacture which was not based only on the association of workers in each factory, but also aimed at combining all these associations in one great union; in short an organization which, as Marx quite rightly says in *The Civil War*, must necessarily have led in the end to communism, that is to say, the direct antithesis of

the Proudhon doctrine. And, therefore, the Commune was also the grave of the Proudhon school of socialism. Today this school has vanished from French working-class circles; among them now, among the Possibilists no less than among the "Marxists," Marx's theory rules unchallenged. Only among the "radical" bourgeoisie are there still Proudhonists.

The Blanquists fared no better. Brought up in the school of conspiracy, and held together by the strict discipline which went with it, they started out from the viewpoint that a relatively small number of resolute, well-organized men would be able, at a given favorable moment, not only to seize the helm of state, but also by energetic and relentless action, to keep power until they succeeded in drawing the mass of the people into the revolution and ranging them round the small band of leaders. This conception involved, above all, the strictest dictatorship, and centralization of all power in the hands of the new revolutionary government. And what did the Commune, with its majority of these same Blanquists, actually do? In all its proclamations to the French in the provinces, it proposed to them a free federation of all French Communes with Paris, a national organization, which for the first time was really to be created by the nation itself. It was precisely the oppressing power of the former centralized government, army, political police and bureaucracy, which Napoleon had created in 1798 and since then had been taken over by every new government as a welcome instrument and used against its opponents, it was precisely this power which was to fall everywhere, just as it had already fallen in Paris.

—ENGELS, Introduction, Marx's *The Civil War in France* (1891), pp. 18-20.

D. ON "SMASHING" THE STATE MACHINERY

. . . If you look at the last chapter of my *18th Brumaire* you will find that I say that the next attempt of the French revolution will be no longer, as before, to transfer the bureaucratic-military machine from one hand to another, but to *smash* it, and this is essential for every real people's revolution on the Continent. And this is what our heroic Party comrades in Paris are attempting. What elasticity, what historical initiative, what a capacity for sacrifice in these Parisians! After six months of hunger and ruin, caused rather by internal treachery than by the external enemy, they

rise, beneath Prussian bayonets, as if there had never been a war between France and Germany and the enemy were not at the gates of Paris. History has no like examples of a like greatness. If they are defeated only their "good nature" will be to blame. They should have marched at once on Versailles, after first Vinoy and then the reactionary section of the Paris National Guard had themselves retreated. The right moment was missed because of conscientious scruples. They did not want to *start the civil war*, as if that mischievous *abortion* Thiers had not already started the civil war with his attempt to disarm Paris. Second mistake: The Central Committee surrendered its power too soon, to make way for the Commune. Again from a too "honorable" scrupulosity! However that may be the present rising in Paris—even if it be crushed by the wolves, swine and vile curs of the old society—is the most glorious deed of our Party since the June insurrection in Paris. Compare these Parisians, storming heaven, with the slaves to heaven of the German-Prussian Holy Roman Empire, with its posthumous masquerades reeking of the barracks, the Church, cabbage-*junkerdom* and above all, of the philistine.

—MARX, Letter to Dr. Kugelmann (1871), *The Civil War in France*, p. 86.

[3]

GERMANY

A. PETTY BOURGEOIS CHARACTER OF GERMAN DEVELOPMENT

In general, from the time of the Reformation, German development has borne a completely petty-bourgeois character. The old feudal aristocracy was, for the most part, annihilated in the peasant wars; what remained of it were either imperial petty princes who gradually achieved a certain independence for themselves and aped the absolute monarchy on a minute, small-town scale, or lesser landowners who, after squandering their little bit of property at the tiny courts, gained their livelihood from petty positions in the toy armies and government offices—or, finally, Junkers from the backwoods, who lived a life of which

even the most modest English squire or French *gentilhomme de province* would have been ashamed. Agriculture was carried on by a method which was neither parcellation nor large-scale production, and which, despite the preservation of feudal dependence and *corvées*, never drove the peasants to seek emancipation, both because this very method of farming did not allow the emergence of any active revolutionary class and because of the absence of the revolutionary bourgeoisie corresponding to such a peasant class.

As regards the burghers, we can only emphasize here a few characteristic factors. It is characteristic that linen manufacture, an industry based on handspinning and the handweaving loom, came to be of some importance in Germany at the very time when in England those cumbersome tools were already being ousted by machines. Most characteristic of all is the position of the German burghers in relation to *Holland*. Holland, the only part of the Hanseatic League that became of commercial importance, tore itself free, cut Germany off from world trade except for two ports (Hamburg and Bremen) and since then dominated the whole of German trade. The German burghers were too impotent to set limits to exploitation by the Dutch. The bourgeoisie of little Holland, with its well-developed class interests, was more powerful than the numerically far greater German burghers with their indifference and their divided petty interests. Corresponding to the splitting up of interests, political organization was also split up into the small principalities and the free imperial cities. How could *political* concentration arise in a country which lacked all the *economic* conditions for it? The impotence of each separate sphere of life (one cannot speak here of estates or classes, but at most only of former estates and classes not yet born) did not allow any one of them to gain exclusive domination. The inevitable consequence was that during the epoch of absolute monarchy, which was seen here in its most stunted, semi-patriarchal form, the special sphere which, owing to division of labor, was responsible for the work of administration of public interests acquired an abnormal independence, which became still greater in the bureaucracy of modern times. Thus, the state built itself up into an apparently independent force, and this position, which in other countries was only transitory — a transition stage — it has maintained in Germany until the

present day. It is this position of the state which explains both the honest character of the civil servant that is found nowhere else, and all the illusions about the state which are current in Germany, as well as the apparent independence of German theoreticians in relation to the burghers—the seeming contradiction between the form in which these theoreticians express the interests of the burghers and these interests themselves.

We find in Kant the characteristic form which French liberalism, based on real class interests, assumed in Germany. Neither he, nor the German burghers, whose whitewashing spokesman he was, noticed that these theoretical ideas of the bourgeoisie had as their basis material interests and a *will* that was conditioned and determined by the material relations of production. Kant, therefore, separated this theoretical expression from the interests which it expressed; he made the materially motivated determinations of the will of the French bourgeois into *pure* self-determinations of “*free will*,” of the will in and for itself, of the human will, and so converted it into purely ideological conceptual determinations and moral postulates. Hence the German petty bourgeois recoiled in horror from the practice of this energetic bourgeois liberalism as soon as this practice showed itself, both in the Reign of Terror and in shameless bourgeois profit-making.

Under the rule of Napoleon, the German burghers pursued to an even greater degree their petty trade and their great illusions. . . . The German burghers, who cursed Napoleon for compelling them to drink chicory and for disturbing their peace with military billeting and recruiting of conscripts, reserved all their moral indignation for Napoleon and all their admiration for England; yet Napoleon rendered them the greatest services by cleaning out Germany's Augean stables and establishing civilized means of communication, whereas England only waited for the opportunity to exploit them *à tort et à travers* [at random, recklessly.] In the same petty-bourgeois spirit the German princes imagined they were fighting for the principle of legitimacy and against revolution, whereas they were only the paid mercenaries of the English bourgeoisie. In the atmosphere of these universal illusions it was quite in the order of things that the estates privileged to cherish illusions—ideologists, schoolmasters students, members of the *Tugendbund**—should talk big

*League of Virtue, a patriotic secret society, 1808-1815.

and give a suitable high-flown expression to the universal mood of fantasy and indifference.

The July revolution—we mention only a few main points and therefore omit the intermediary stage—imposed on the Germans from outside the political forms corresponding to a developed bourgeoisie. Since German economic relations had by no means reached the level of development to which these political forms corresponded, the burghers accepted them merely as abstract ideas, principles valid in and for themselves, pious wishes and phrases, Kantian self-determinations of the will and of the people, such as they ought to be. Their attitude, therefore, to these forms was far more moral and disinterested than that of other nations, i.e., they exhibited a highly peculiar narrow-mindedness and remained unsuccessful in all their endeavors.

Finally the ever more powerful development of foreign competition and world intercourse—from which it became less and less possible for Germany to stand aside—forced the scattered local interests of the Germans to unite into some sort of harmony. Particularly since 1840, the German burghers began to think about safeguarding these common interests; their attitude became national and liberal and they demanded protective tariffs and constitutions. Thus they have now got almost as far as the French bourgeoisie in 1789.

—MARX and ENGELS, *The German Ideology* (1846), Part II, pp. 206-11.

B. WHY THE GERMAN BOURGEOISIE IS REACTIONARY

In the social conditions of Germany, the year 1866 has changed almost nothing. A few bourgeois reforms: uniform measures and weights, freedom of movement, freedom of trade, etc.,—all within limits befitting bureaucracy, do not even come up to that of which other western European countries have been in possession for a long while, and leaves the main evil, the system of bureaucratic concessions, unshaken. As to the proletariat, the freedom of movement, and of citizenship, the abolition of passports, and other such legislation is made illusory by the current police practice.

What is much more important than the grand maneuvers of the State in 1866 is the growth of German industry and commerce, of the railways, the telegraph, and ocean steamship

navigation since 1848. This progress may be lagging behind that of England or even France, but it is unheard-of for Germany, and has done more in twenty years than would have been previously possible in a century. Germany has been drawn, earnestly and irrevocably, into world commerce. Capital invested in industry has multiplied rapidly. The position of the bourgeoisie has improved accordingly. The surest sign of industrial prosperity—speculation—has blossomed richly, princes and dukes being chained to its triumphal chariot. German capital is now constructing Russian and Rumanian railways, whereas, only fifteen years ago, the German railways went a-begging to English entrepreneurs. How, then, is it possible that the bourgeoisie has not conquered political power, that it behaves in so cowardly a manner toward the government?

It is the misfortune of the German bourgeoisie to have come too late,—quite in accordance with the beloved German tradition. The period of its ascendancy coincides with the time when the bourgeoisie of the other western European countries is politically on the downward path. In England, the bourgeoisie could place its real representative, Bright, into the government only by extending the franchise which in the long run is bound to put an end to its very domination. In France, the bourgeoisie, which for two years only, 1849-50, had held power as a class under the republican régime, was able to continue its social existence only by transferring its power to Louis Bonaparte and the army. Under present conditions of enormously increased interdependence of the three most progressive European countries, it is no longer possible for the German bourgeoisie extensively to utilize its political power while the same class has outlived itself in England and France. It is a peculiarity of the bourgeoisie, distinguishing it from all other classes, that a point is being reached in its development after which every increase in its power, that is, every enlargement of its capital only tends to make it more and more incapable of retaining political dominance. "*Behind the big bourgeoisie stand the proletarians.*" In the degree as the bourgeoisie develops its industry, its commerce, and its means of communication, it also produces the proletariat. At a certain point, which must not necessarily appear simultaneously and on the same stage of development everywhere, it begins to note that this, its second self, has outgrown it. From then on, it loses the

power for exclusive political dominance. It looks for allies with whom to share its authority, or to whom to cede all power, as circumstances may demand.

In Germany, this turning point came for the bourgeoisie as early as 1848. The bourgeois became frightened, not so much by the German, as by the French proletariat. The battle of June 1848, in Paris, showed the bourgeoisie what could be expected. The German proletariat was restless enough to prove to the bourgeoisie that the seed of revolution had been sown also in German soil. From that day, the edge of bourgeois political action was broken. The bourgeoisie looked around for allies. It sold itself to them regardless of price, and there it remains.

These allies are all of a reactionary turn. It is the king's power, with his army and his bureaucracy; it is the big feudal nobility; it is the smaller Junker; it is even the clergy. The bourgeoisie has made so many compacts and unions with all of them to save its dear skin, that now it has nothing more to barter. And the more the proletariat developed, the more it began to feel as a class and to act as one, the feebler became the bourgeoisie. When the astonishingly bad strategy of the Prussians triumphed over the astonishingly worse strategy of the Austrians at Sadowa, it was difficult to say who gave a deeper sigh of relief, the Prussian bourgeois who was a partner to the defeat at Sadowa, or his Austrian colleague.

Our upper middle class of 1870 acted in the same fashion as did the moderate middle class of 1525. As to the small bourgeoisie, the master artisans and merchants, they remain unchanged. They hope to climb up to the big bourgeoisie, and they are fearful lest they be pushed down into the ranks of the proletariat. Between fear and hope, they will in times of struggle seek to save their precious skin and to join the victors when the struggle is over. Such is their nature.

—ENGELS, *The Peasant War in Germany* (1874), Preface to Second Edition, pp. 15-18.

C. BISMARCK

Bismarck is Louis Napoleon translated from the French adventurer Pretender to the Throne into the Prussian Junker Squire (*Krautjunker*) and German officer-cadet. Like Louis Napoleon, Bismarck was a man of great practical understanding and im-

mense cunning, a born, crafty businessman, who in other circumstances would have rivaled the Vanderbilts and Jay Goulds on the New York Stock Exchange, and indeed he most effectively steered his private ship into port. But this heightened grasp of practical affairs is often linked with a corresponding limitation of vision, and it was in this respect that Bismarck was "superior" to his French predecessor. For the latter, after all, had his "Napoleonic ideas" which he had worked out for himself during his days of vagabondage (they looked like it), while, as we shall see, Bismarck never exhibited even the ghost of an original political idea and was only good at picking up and using for his own purposes other people's finished ideas. But this narrowness was his good fortune. Without it he would never have been able to view the whole of history from an exclusively Prussian standpoint, and had there been any chink in his Prussian outlook, through which the light of day might have penetrated, he would have failed in his whole mission and there would have been an end to his glory. To be sure, once he had fulfilled in his own way the special mission prescribed for him by forces outside himself, he was at his wits' end. We shall see what somersaults he was driven to perform as a result of his absolute lack of rational ideas and his inability to grasp the historical situation which he himself had created.

If Louis Napoleon had learned from his own shady past not to be too scrupulous in his choice of means, Bismarck learned to be less scrupulous from the history of Prussian policy, especially from the history of the so-called Great Elector (Frederick William) and of Frederick II, and could be so with the reassuring consciousness that he was being true to the tradition of the fatherland. His business acumen taught him to keep his Junker inclinations in check when necessary. When it seemed necessary no longer, they came crudely to the fore again; this was, of course, evidence of decline. His political methods were those of a young member of the Officer Corps. In his attacks on the Prussian Constitution in the Chamber, he did not hesitate to use the phrases and methods by means of which one extricates oneself from awkward scrapes in the officers' mess. All the innovations he introduced into diplomacy were borrowed from officer-cadet conventions. But whereas Louis Napoleon often became unsure of himself in decisive moments, as for example,

at the time of the *coup d'état* in 1851, when Morny had literally to use force in order to get him to go through with what had been begun, or on the eve of the war in 1870, when his uncertainty undermined his whole position, it must be said for Bismarck that nothing of that kind ever happened to him. His willpower never deserted him. Rather was it the case that it was often suddenly transformed into open brutality. And it is this above all which was the secret of his successes. All the ruling classes in Germany, Junkers and bourgeois alike, had so lost all traces of energy, spinelessness had become so much the custom in "educated" Germany, that the one man amongst them who still had willpower thereby became their greatest personality and a tyrant over them, so that they were ready to dance to his tune even against their better nature and judgment. "Uneducated" Germany has not yet reached that stage. The working people have shown that they have willpower which even Bismarck's strong will cannot break.

—ENGELS, *The Role of Force in History* (1887-88), pp. 56-59.

[4]

ENGLAND:
POLITICS AND THE WORKING CLASS

A. THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND THE ENGLISH
WORKING CLASS

Sixty, eighty years ago, England was a country like every other, with small towns, few and simple industries, and a thin but *proportionally* large agricultural population. Today it is a country like *no* other, with a capital of two and a half million inhabitants; with vast manufacturing cities; with an industry that supplies the world, and produces almost everything by means of the most complex machinery; with an industrious, intelligent, dense population, of which two-thirds are employed in trade and commerce, and composed of classes wholly different; forming, in fact, with other customs and other needs, a different nation from the England of those days. This industrial revolution is of the same importance for England as the politi-

cal revolution for France, and the philosophical revolution for Germany; and the difference between England in 1760 and in 1844 is at least as great as that between France under the *ancien régime* and during the revolution of July. But the mightiest result of this industrial transformation is the English proletariat.

We have already seen how the proletariat was called into existence by the introduction of machinery. The rapid extension of manufacture demanded hands, wages rose, and troops of workmen migrated from the agricultural districts to the towns. Population multiplied enormously, and nearly all the increase took place in the proletariat. Further, Ireland had entered upon an orderly development only since the beginning of the 18th century. There, too, the population, more than decimated by English cruelty in earlier disturbances, now rapidly multiplied, especially after the advance in manufacture began to draw masses of Irishmen towards England. Thus arose the great manufacturing and commercial cities of the British Empire, in which at least three-fourths of the population belong to the working class, while the lower middle class consists only of small shopkeepers, and very few handicraftsmen. For, though the rising manufacture first attained importance by transforming tools into machines, workrooms into factories, and consequently, the toiling lower middle class into the toiling proletariat, and the former large merchants into manufacturers, though the lower middle class was thus early crushed out, and the population reduced to the two opposing elements, workers and capitalists, this happened outside of the domain of manufacture proper, in the province of handicraft and retail trade as well. In the place of the former masters and apprentices, came great capitalists and workingmen who had no prospect of rising above their class. Handwork was carried on after the fashion of factory work, the division of labor was strictly applied, and small employers who could not compete with great establishments were forced down into the proletariat. At the same time the destruction of the former organization of handwork, and the disappearance of the lower middle class deprived the workingman of all possibility of rising into the middle class himself. Hitherto he had always had the prospect of establishing himself somewhere as master artificer, perhaps employing journeymen and apprentices; but now, when master artificers were crowded out by

manufacturers, when large capital had become necessary for carrying on work independently, the working class became, for the first time, an integral, permanent class of the population, whereas it had formerly often been merely a transition leading to the bourgeoisie. Now, he who was born to toil had no other prospect than that of remaining a toiler all his life. Now, for the first time, therefore, the proletariat was in a position to undertake an independent movement.

In this way were brought together those vast masses of workmen who now fill the whole British Empire, whose social condition forces itself every day more and more upon the attention of the civilized world. The condition of the working class is the condition of the vast majority of the English people. The question: What is to become of those destitute millions, who consume today what they earned yesterday; who have created the greatness of England by their inventions and their toil; who become with every passing day more conscious of their might, and demand, with daily increasing urgency, their share of the advantages of society?—This, since the Reform Bill, has become the national question. All Parliamentary debates, of any importance, may be reduced to this; and, though the English middle class will not as yet admit it, though they try to evade this great question, and to represent their own particular interests as the truly national ones, their action is utterly useless. With every session of Parliament the working class gains ground, the interests of the middle class diminish in importance; and, in spite of the fact that the middle class is the chief, in fact, the only power in Parliament, the last session of 1844 was a continuous debate upon subjects affecting the working class, the Poor Relief Bill, the Factory Act, the Masters' and Servants' Act; and Thomas Duncombe, the representative of the working men in the House of Commons, was the great man of the session; while the Liberal middle class with its motion of repealing the Corn Laws, and the Radical middle class with its resolution for refusing the taxes, played pitiable roles. Even the debates about Ireland were at bottom debates about the Irish proletariat, and the means of coming to its assistance. It is high time, too, for the English middle class to make some concessions to the workmen who no longer plead but threaten; for in a short time it may be too late.

In spite of all this, the English middle class, especially the

manufacturing class, which is enriched directly by means of the poverty of the workers, persists in ignoring this poverty. This class, feeling itself the mighty representative class of the nation, is ashamed to lay the sore spot of England bare before the eyes of the world; will not confess, even to itself, that the workers are in distress, because it, the property-holding, manufacturing class, must bear the moral responsibility for this distress. Hence the scornful smile which intelligent Englishmen (and they, the middle class, alone are known on the Continent) assume when any one begins to speak of the condition of the working class; hence the utter ignorance on the part of the whole middle class of everything which concerns the workers; hence the ridiculous blunders which men of this class, in and out of Parliament, make when the position of the proletariat comes under discussion; hence the absurd freedom from anxiety, with which the middle class dwells upon a soil that is honeycombed, and may any day collapse, the speedy collapse of which is as certain as a mathematical or mechanical demonstration; hence the miracle that the English have as yet no single book upon the condition of their workers, although they have been examining and mending the old state of things no one knows how many years. Hence also the deep wrath of the whole working class, from Glasgow to London, against the rich, by whom they are systematically plundered and mercilessly left to their fate, a wrath which before too long a time goes by, a time almost within the power of man to predict, must break out into a Revolution in comparison with which the French Revolution, and the year 1794, will prove to have been child's play.

—ENGELS, *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845), MARX and ENGELS, *On Britain*, pp. 35-41, 49-52.

B. MISERY OF THE WORKING MASSES

It is a great fact that the misery of the working masses has not diminished from 1848 to 1864, and yet this period is unrivaled for the development of its industry and the growth of its commerce. In 1850, a moderate organ of the British middle class, of more than average information, predicted that if the exports and imports of England were to rise 50 per cent, English pauperism would sink to zero. Alas! On April 7, 1864, the Chancellor of the Exchequer delighted his parliamentary audience by

the statement that the total import and export trade of England had grown in 1863 "to £ 443,955,000! that astonishing sum about three times the trade of the comparatively recent epoch of 1843!" With all that, he was eloquent upon "poverty." "Think," he exclaimed, "of those who are on the border of that region," upon "wages. . .not increased"; upon "human life . . .in nine cases out of ten but a struggle of existence!" He did not speak of the people of Ireland, gradually replaced by machinery in the north, and by sheepwalks in the south, though even the sheep in that unhappy country are decreasing, it is true, not at so rapid a rate as the men. He did not repeat what then had been just betrayed by the highest representatives of the upper ten thousand in a sudden fit of terror. . . .

After a 30-year struggle, fought with most admirable perseverance, the English working classes, improving a momentaneous split between the landlords and moneylords, succeeded in carrying the Ten Hours' Bill. The immense physical, moral and intellectual benefits hence accruing to the factory operatives, half-yearly chronicled in the reports of the inspectors of factories, are now acknowledged on all sides. Most of the Continental governments had to accept the English Factory Act in more or less modified forms, and the English Parliament itself is every year compelled to enlarge its sphere of action. But besides its practical import, there was something else to exalt the marvellous success of the workingmen's measure. Through their most notorious organs of science, such as Dr. Ure, Professor Senior, and other sages of that stamp, the middle class had predicted, and to their heart's content proved, that any legal restriction of the hours of labor must sound the death knell of British industry, which, vampire-like, could but live by sucking blood, and children's blood, too. In olden times, child murder was a mysterious rite of the religion of Moloch, but it was practised on some very solemn occasions only, once a year perhaps, and then Moloch had no exclusive bias for the children of the poor. This struggle about the legal restriction of the hours of labor raged the more fiercely since, apart from frightened avarice, it told indeed upon the great contest between the blind rule of the supply and demand laws which form the political economy of the middle class, and social production controlled by social foresight, which forms the political economy of the working

class. Hence the Ten Hours' Bill was not only a great practical success; it was the victory of a principle; it was the first time that in broad daylight the political economy of the middle class succumbed to the political economy of the working class.

But there was in store a still greater victory of the political economy of labor over the political economy of property. We speak of the cooperative movement, especially the cooperative factories raised by the unassisted efforts of a few bold "hands." The value of these great social experiments cannot be overrated. By deed, instead of by argument, they have shown that production on a large scale, and in accord with the behests of modern science, may be carried on without the existence of a class of masters employing a class of hands; that to bear fruit, the means of labor need not be monopolized as a means of dominion over, and of extortion against, the laboring man himself; and that, like slave labor, like serf labor, hired labor is but a transitory and inferior form, destined to disappear before associated labor plying its toil with a willing hand, a ready mind, and a joyous heart. In England, the seeds of the cooperative system were sown by Robert Owen; the workingmen's experiments, tried on the Continent, were, in fact, the practical upshot of the theories, not invented, but loudly proclaimed, in 1848.

At the same time, the experience of the period from 1848 to 1864 has proved beyond doubt that, however excellent in principle, and however useful in practice, cooperative labor, if kept within the narrow circle of the casual efforts of private workmen, will never be able to arrest the growth in geometrical progression of monopoly, to free the masses, nor even to perceptibly lighten the burden of their miseries. It is perhaps for this very reason that plausible noblemen, philanthropic middle-class spouters, and even keen political economists, have all at once turned nauseously complimentary to the very cooperative labor system they had vainly tried to nip in the bud by deriding it as the Utopia of the dreamer, or stigmatizing it as the sacrilege of the Socialist. To save the industrious masses, cooperative labor ought to be developed to national dimensions, and consequently, to be fostered by national means. Yet, the lords of land and the lords of capital will always use their political privileges for the defense and perpetuation of their economical monopolies.

So far from promoting, they will continue to lay every possible impediment in the way of the emancipation of labor.

—MARX, “Inaugural Address of the International Working Men’s Association” (1864), MARX and ENGELS, *On Britain*, pp. 483-86.

[5]

ENGLAND'S COLONIAL EMPIRE

A. IRELAND: BULWARK OF THE LANDED ARISTOCRACY

Ireland is the bulwark of the *English landed aristocracy*. The exploitation of this country is not only one of the main sources of that aristocracy’s material welfare; it is its greatest *moral* strength. It, in fact, represents the *domination of England over Ireland*. Ireland is therefore the great means by which the English aristocracy maintains *its domination in England* itself.

If, on the other hand, the English army and police were to withdraw from Ireland tomorrow, you would at once have an agrarian revolution there. But the overthrow of the English aristocracy in Ireland involves and has as a necessary consequence its overthrow in England. And this would fulfill the prerequisite for the proletarian revolution in England. The destruction of the English landed aristocracy in Ireland is an infinitely easier operation than in England itself, because in Ireland the *land question* has hitherto been the *exclusive form* of the social question, because it is a question of existence, of *life and death*, for the immense majority of the Irish people, and because it is at the same time inseparable from the *national* question. Quite apart from the Irish being more passionate and revolutionary in character than the English.

As for the English *bourgeoisie* it has in the first place a common interest with the English aristocracy in turning Ireland into mere pastureland which provides the English market with meat and wool at the cheapest possible prices. It is equally interested

in reducing, by eviction and forcible emigration, the Irish population to such a small number that *English capital* (capital invested in land leased for farming) can function there with "security." It has the same interest in *clearing the estate of Ireland* as it had in the clearing of the agricultural districts of England and Scotland. The £ 6,000-10,000 absentee and other Irish revenues which at present flow annually to London have also to be taken into account.

But the English bourgeoisie has also much more important interests in Ireland's present-day economy. Owing to the constantly increasing concentration of farming, Ireland steadily supplies its own surplus to the English labor market, and thus forces down wages and lowers the moral and material condition of the English working class.

And most important of all! Every industrial and commercial center in England now possesses a working class *divident* into two *hostile* camps, English proletarians and Irish proletarians. The ordinary English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers his standard of life. In relation to the Irish worker he feels himself a member of the *ruling* nation and so turns himself into a tool of the aristocrats and capitalists of his country *against Ireland*, thus strengthening their domination *over himself*. He cherishes religious, social and national prejudices against the Irish worker. His attitude towards him is much the same as that of the "poor whites" to the "niggers" in the former slave states of the U.S.A. The Irishman pays him back with interest in his own money. He sees in the English worker at once the accomplice and the stupid tool of the *English domination in Ireland*.

This antagonism is artificially kept alive and intensified by the press, the pulpit, the comic papers, in short, by all the means at the disposal of the ruling classes. This *antagonism is the secret of the impotence of the English working class*, despite its organization. It is the secret by which the capitalist class maintains its power. And that class is fully aware of it.

But the evil does not stop here. It continues across the ocean. The antagonism between English and Irish is the hidden basis of the conflict between the United States and England. It makes any honest and serious cooperation between the working classes of the two countries impossible. It enables the governments of both countries, whenever they think fit, to break the edge of the

social conflict by their mutual bullying, and, in case of need, by war with one another.

England, being the metropolis of capital, the power which has hitherto ruled the world market, is for the present the most important country for the workers' revolution, and moreover the *only* country in which the material conditions for this revolution have developed up to a certain degree of maturity. Therefore to hasten the social revolution in England is the most important object of the International Working-Men's Association. The sole means of hastening it is to make Ireland independent. Hence it is the task of the International everywhere to put the conflict between England and Ireland in the foreground, and everywhere to side openly with Ireland. And it is the special task of the Central Council in London to awaken a consciousness in the English workers that *for them* the *national emancipation of Ireland* is no question of abstract justice or humanitarian sentiment but *the first condition of their own social emancipation*.

—MARX, Letter to Meyer and Vogt (1870), MARX and ENGELS, *On Britain*, pp. 550-53.

B. IRELAND AND THE ENGLISH WORKING CLASS

I have become more and more convinced—and it is only a matter of bringing this conviction home to the English working class—that it can never do anything decisive here in England until it separates its policy with regard to Ireland in the most definite way from the policy of the ruling classes, until it not only makes common cause with the Irish, but even takes the initiative in dissolving the Union established in 1801 and replacing it by a free federal relationship. And, indeed, this must be done not as a matter of sympathy with Ireland, but as a demand made in the interests of the English proletariat. If not, the English people will remain in the leading strings of the ruling classes, because *it* must join with them in a common front against Ireland. Every one of its movements in England itself is crippled by the quarrel with the Irish, who even in England form a very important section of the working class. *The primary condition of emancipation here—the overthrow of the English landed oligarchy—remains impossible because its position here cannot be stormed so long as it maintains its strongly entrenched outpost in Ireland. But there, once affairs are in the hands of the Irish*

people itself, once it is made its own legislator and ruler, once it becomes autonomous, the abolition of the landed aristocracy (to a large extent the *same persons* as the English landlords) will be infinitely easier than here, because in Ireland it is not only a simple economic question, but at the same time a *national* question, since the landlords there, unlike those in England, are not the traditional dignitaries and representatives, but the mortally hated oppressors of the nation. And not only does England's internal social development remain crippled by her present relation with Ireland; her foreign policy, and particularly her policy with regard to Russia and the United States of America, suffers likewise.

But since the English working class undoubtedly throws the decisive weight into the scale of social emancipation generally, the lever has to be applied here. As a matter of fact, the English republic under Cromwell came to grief over Ireland. The Irish have played a capital joke on the English government by electing the "convict felon" O'Donovan Rossa to Parliament. The government papers are already threatening a renewed suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, a renewed system of terror! In fact, England never had and never *can*—so long as the present relationship lasts—rule Ireland otherwise than by the most abominable reign of terror and the most reprehensible corruption.

—MARX, Letter to Dr. Kugelmann (1869), MARX and ENGELS, *On Britain*, pp. 547-49.

C. THE FUTURE RESULTS OF BRITISH RULE IN INDIA

How came it that English supremacy was established in India? The paramount power of the Great Mogul was broken by the Mogul Viceroys. The power of the Viceroys was broken by the Mahrattas. The power of the Mahrattas was broken by the Afghans, and while all were struggling against all, the Briton rushed in and was enabled to subdue them all. A country not only divided between the Mohammedan and Hindu, but between tribe and tribe, between caste and caste; a society whose framework was based on a sort of equilibrium, resulting from a general repulsion and constitutional exclusiveness between all its members. Such a country and such a society, were they not the predestined prey of conquest? If we knew nothing of the

past history of Hindustan, would there not be the one great and incontestible fact, that even at this moment India is held in English thralldom by an Indian army maintained at the cost of India? India, then, could not escape the fate of being conquered, and the whole of her past history, if it be anything, is the history of the successive conquests she has undergone. Indian society has no history at all, at least no known history. What we call its history is but the history of the successive intruders who founded their empires on the passive basis of that unresisting and unchanging society. The question, therefore, is not whether the English had a right to conquer India, but whether we are to prefer India conquered by the Turk, by the Persian, by the Russian, to India conquered by the Briton.

England has to fulfill a double mission in India: one destructive, and the other regenerating—the annihilation of old Asiatic society, and the laying the material foundations of Western society in Asia.

Arabs, Turks, Tartars, Moguls, who had successively overrun India, soon became *Hinduized*, the barbarian conquerers being, by an eternal law of history, conquered themselves by the superior civilization of their subjects. The British were the first conquerors superior, and therefore inaccessible to Hindu civilization. They destroyed it by breaking up the native communities, by uprooting the native industry, and by leveling all that was great and elevated in the native society. The historic pages of their rule in India report hardly anything beyond that destruction. The work of regeneration hardly transpires through a heap of ruins. Nevertheless it has begun.

The political unity of India, more consolidated, and extending farther than it ever did under the Great Moguls, was the first condition of its regeneration. That unity, imposed by the British sword, will now be strengthened and perpetuated by the electric telegraph. The native army, organized and trained by the British drill sergeant, was the *sine qua non* of Indian self-emancipation, and of India ceasing to be the prey of the first foreign intruder. The free press, introduced for the first time into Asiatic society, and managed principally by the common offspring of Hindus and Europeans, is a new and powerful agent of reconstruction. . . . From the Indian natives, reluctantly and sparingly educated at Calcutta, under English superinten-

dence, a fresh class is springing, endowed with the requirements for government and imbued with European science. Steam has brought India into regular and rapid communication with Europe, has connected its chief ports with those of the whole southeastern ocean, and has revindicated it from the isolated position which was the prime law of its stagnation. The day is not far distant when, by a combination of railways and steam vessels, the distance between England and India measured by time, will be shortened to eight days, and when that once fabulous country will thus be actually annexed to the Western world.

The ruling classes of Great Britain have had, till now, but an accidental, transitory and exceptional interest in the progress of India. The aristocracy wanted to conquer it, the moneyocracy to plunder it and the millocracy to undersell it. But now the tables are turned. The millocracy have discovered that the transformation of India into a reproductive country has become of vital importance to them, and that, to that end, it is necessary above all to gift her with means of irrigation and of internal communication. They intend now drawing a net of railroads over India. And they will do it. The results must be inappreciable.

It is notorious that the productive powers of India are paralyzed by the utter want of means for conveying and exchanging its various produce. Nowhere, more than in India, do we meet with social destitution in the midst of natural plenty, for want of of the means of exchange. It was proved before a Committee of the British House of Commons, which sat in 1848 that "when grain was selling from 6s. to 8s. a quarter at Kandeish, it was sold at 64s. to 70s. at Poonah, where the people were dying in the streets of famine, without the possibility of gaining supplies from Kandeish, because the clay roads were impracticable." . . .

We know that the municipal organization and the economical basis of the village communities has been broken up, but their worst feature, the dissolution of society into stereotype and disconnected atoms, has survived their vitality.

The village isolation produced the absence of roads in India, and the absence of roads perpetuated the village isolation. On this plan a community existed with a given scale of low conveniences, almost without intercourse with other villages, without the desires and efforts indispensable to social advance. The British having broken up this self-sufficient *inertia* of the villages,

railways will provide the new want of communication and intercourse. . . .

I know that the English millocracy intend to endow India with railways with the exclusive view of extracting at diminished expenses cotton and other raw materials for their manufactures. But when you have once introduced machinery into the locomotion of a country, which possesses iron and coals, you are unable to withhold it from its fabrication. You cannot maintain a net of railways over an immense country without introducing all those industrial processes necessary to meet the immediate and current wants of railway locomotion, and out of which there must grow the application of machinery to those branches of industry not immediately connected with railways. The railway system will therefore become, in India, truly the forerunner of modern industry. This is the more certain as the Hindus are allowed by British authorities themselves to possess particular aptitude for accommodating themselves to entirely new labor, and acquiring the requisite knowledge of machinery. Ample proof of this fact is afforded by the capacities and expertness of the native engineers in the Calcutta mint, where they have been for years employed in working the steam machinery, by the natives attached to the several steam engines in the Hurdwar coal districts, and by other instances. Mr. Campbell himself, greatly influenced as he is by the prejudices of the East India Company,* is obliged to avow "that the great mass of the Indian people possesses a great *industrial energy*, is well fitted to accumulate capital, and remarkable for a mathematical clearness of head, and talent for figures and exact sciences." "Their intellects," he says, "are excellent." Modern industry, resulting from the railway system, will dissolve the heredity divisions of labor, upon which rest the Indian castes, those decisive impediments to Indian progress and Indian power.

All the English bourgeoisie may be forced to do will neither emancipate nor materially mend the social condition of the mass of the people, depending not only on the development of the

*The British East India Company was formed in 1599 for monopoly trade with India. Under the pretext of "trade" operations, the company conquered India for British capitalism and ruled it for many years. After the Indian rising of 1857, the company was dissolved and the British government took over directly the administration and exploitation of India. — *Ed.*

productive power, but on their appropriation by the people. But what they will not fail to do is to lay down the material premises for both. Has the bourgeoisie ever done more? Has it ever effected a progress without dragging individuals and people through blood and dirt, through misery and degradation?

The Indians will not reap the fruits of the new elements of society scattered among them by the British bourgeoisie, till in Great Britain itself the now ruling classes shall have been supplanted by the industrial proletariat, or till the Hindus themselves shall have grown strong enough to throw off the English yoke altogether. At all events, we may safely expect to see, at a more or less remote period, the regeneration of that great and interesting country, whose gentle natives are, to use the expression of Prince Saltykov, even in the most inferior classes, "*plus fins et plus adroits que les Italiens*," whose submission even is counterbalanced by a certain calm nobility, who, notwithstanding their natural languor, have astonished the British officers by their bravery, whose country has been the source of our languages, our religions, and who represent the type of the ancient German in the *Jat** and the type of the ancient Greek in the Brahmin.

I cannot part with the subject of India without some concluding remarks.

The profound hypocrisy and inherent barbarism of bourgeois civilization lies unveiled before our eyes, turning from its home, where it assumes respectable forms, to the colonies, where it goes naked. . . .

The devastating effects of English industry, when contemplated with regard to India, a country as vast as Europe and containing 150 million acres, are palpable and confounding. But we must not forget that they are only the organic results of the whole system of production as it is now constituted. That production rests on the supreme rule of capital. The centralization of capital is essential to the existence of capital as an independent power. The destructive influence of that centralization upon the markets of the world but reveal, in the most gigantic dimensions, the inherent organic laws of political economy now

**Jat*. A race of peasants in Northwest India, supposed to be of Indo-Aryan origin.—*Ed.*

at work in every civilized town. The bourgeois period of history has to create the material basis of the new world—on the one hand universal intercourse founded upon the mutual dependency of mankind, and the means of that intercourse; on the other hand the development of the productive powers of man and the transformation of material production into a scientific domination of natural agencies. Bourgeois industry and commerce create these material conditions of a new world in the same way as geological revolutions have created the surface of the earth. When a great social revolution shall have mastered the results of the bourgeois epoch, the market of the world and the modern powers of production, and subjected them to the common control of the most advanced peoples, then only will human progress cease to resemble that hideous pagan idol, who would not drink the nectar but from the skulls of the slain.

—MARX, *New York Tribune* (1853), *Selected Works*, 2 vol. ed., vol. II, pp. 657-64.

D. BRITISH INCOMES IN INDIA

The present state of affairs in Asia suggests the inquiry, What is the real value of their Indian dominion to the British nation and people? Directly, that is in the shape of tribute, or surplus of Indian receipts over Indian expenditures, nothing whatever reaches the British Treasury. On the contrary, the annual outgo is very large. From the moment that the East India Company entered extensively on the career of conquest—now just about a century ago—their finances fell into an embarrassed condition, and they were repeatedly compelled to apply to Parliament, not only for military aid to assist them in holding the conquered territories, but for financial aid to save them from bankruptcy. And so things have continued down to the present moment, at which so large a call is made for troops on the British nation, to be followed, no doubt, by corresponding calls for money. In prosecuting its conquests hitherto, and building up its establishments, the East India Company has contracted a debt of upward of £ 50,000,000 sterling, while the British Government has been at the expense, for years past, of transporting to and from and keeping up in India, in addition to the forces, native and European, of the East India Company, a standing army of 30 thou-

sand men. Such being the case, it is evident that the advantage to Great Britain from her Indian Empire must be limited to the profits and benefits which accrue to individual British subjects. These profits and benefits, it must be confessed, are very considerable.

First, we have the stockholders in the East India Company, to the number of about 3,000 persons, to whom under the recent Charter there is guaranteed, upon a paid-up capital of six million pounds sterling, an annual dividend of 10.5 per cent, amounting to £ 630,000 annually. As the East India stock is held in transferable shares, anybody may become a stockholder who has money enough to buy the stock, which, under the existing Charter, commands a premium of from 125 to 150 per cent. Stock to the amount of £ 500, costing, say \$6,000, entitles the holder to speak at the proprietors' meetings, but to vote he must have £ 1,000 of stock. Holders of £ 3,000 have two votes, of £ 6,000 three votes, and of £ 10,000 or upward four votes. The proprietors, however have but little voice, except in the election of the Board of Directors, of whom they choose 12, while the Crown appoints six; but these appointees of the Crown must be qualified by having resided for ten years or more in India. One-third of the Directors go out of office each year, but may be reelected or reappointed. To be a Director, one must be a proprietor of £ 2,000 of stock. The Directors have a salary of £ 500 each, and their Chairman and Deputy Chairman twice as much; but the chief inducement to accept the office is the great patronage attached to it in the appointment of all Indian officers, civil and military—a patronage, however, largely shared, and, as to the most important offices, engrossed substantially, by the Board of Control. This Board consists of six members, all Privy Councilors, and in general two or three of them Cabinet Ministers—the President of the Board being always so, in fact a Secretary of State for India. . . .

Here are about 10,000 British subjects holding lucrative situations in India, and drawing their pay from the Indian service. To these must be added a considerable number living in England, whither they have retired upon pensions, which in all the services are payable after serving a certain number of years. These pensions, with the dividends and interest on debts due in England, consume some 15 to 20 million dollars drawn an-

nually from India, and which may in fact be regarded as so much tribute paid to the English Government indirectly through its subjects. Those who annually retire from the several services carry with them very considerable amounts of savings from their salaries, which is so much more added to the annual drain on India.

Besides those Europeans actually employed in the service of the Government, there are other European residents in India to the number of 6,000 or more, employed in trade or private speculation. Except a few indigo, sugar and coffee planters in the rural districts, they are principally merchants, agents and manufacturers, who reside in the cities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, or their immediate vicinity. The foreign trade of India, including imports and exports to the amount of about 50 million dollars of each, is almost entirely in their hands, and their profits are no doubt very considerable.

It is thus evident that individuals gain largely by the English connection with India, and of course their gain goes to increase the sum of the national wealth. But against all this a very large offset is to be made. The military and naval expenses paid out of the pockets of the people of England on Indian account have been constantly increasing with the extent of the Indian dominion. To this must be added the expense of Burmese, Afghan, Chinese and Persian wars. In fact, the whole cost of the late Russian war may fairly be charged to the Indian account, since the fear and dread of Russia, which led to that war, grew entirely out of jealousy as to her designs on India. Add to this the career of endless conquest and perpetual aggression in which the English are involved by the possession of India, and it may well be doubted whether, on the whole, this dominion does not threaten to cost quite as much as it can ever be expected to come to.

—MARX, *New York Tribune* (1857), *First Indian War of Independence*, MARX and ENGELS, pp. 89f.

REVOLUTIONARY SPAIN

The revolution in Spain has now so far taken on the appearance of a permanent condition that, as our correspondent at London has informed us, the wealthy and conservative classes have begun to emigrate and to seek security in France. This is not surprising; Spain has never adopted the modern French fashion, so generally in vogue in 1848, of beginning and accomplishing a revolution in three days. Her efforts in that line are complex and more prolonged. Three years seems to be the shortest limit to which she restricts herself, while her revolutionary cycle sometimes expands to nine. Thus her first revolution in the present century extended from 1808 to 1814; the second from 1820 to 1823; and the third from 1834 to 1843. How long the present one will continue, or in what it will result, it is impossible for the keenest politician to foretell; but it is not too much to say that there is no other part of Europe, not even Turkey and the Russian war, which offers so profound an interest to the thoughtful observer, as does Spain at this instant. . . .

But how are we to account for the singular phenomenon that, after almost three centuries of a Hapsburg dynasty, followed by a Bourbon dynasty—either of them quite sufficient to crush a people—the municipal liberties of Spain more or less survive? that in the very country, where of all the feudal states absolute monarchy first arose in its most unmitigated form, centralization has never succeeded in taking root? The answer is not difficult. It was in the 16th century that were formed the great monarchies which established themselves everywhere on the downfall of the conflicting feudal classes—the aristocracy and the towns. But in the other great States of Europe absolute monarchy presents itself as a civilizing center, as the initiator of social unity. There it was the laboratory, in which the various elements of society were so mixed and worked, as to allow the towns to change the local independence and sovereignty of the Middle Ages for the general rule of the middle classes, and the common sway of civil society. In Spain, on the contrary, while the aristocracy sunk into degradation without losing their worst privilege, the towns lost their medieval power without gaining modern importance.

Since the establishment of absolute monarchy they have vegetated in a state of continuous decay. We have not here to state the circumstances, political or economical, which destroyed Spanish commerce, industry, navigation and agriculture. For the present purpose it is sufficient to simply recall the fact. As the commercial and industrial life of the towns declined, internal exchanges became rare, the mingling of the inhabitants of different provinces less frequent, the means of communication neglected, and the great roads gradually deserted. Thus the local life of Spain, the independence of its provinces and communes, the diversified state of society originally based on the physical configuration of the country, and historically developed by the detached manner in which the several provinces emancipated themselves from the Moorish rule, and formed little independent commonwealths — was now finally strengthened and confirmed by the economical revolution which dried up the sources of national activity. And while the absolute monarchy found in Spain material in its very nature repulsive to centralization, it did all in its power to prevent the growth of common interests arising out of a national division of labor and the multiplicity of internal exchanges — the very basis on which alone a uniform system of administration and the rule of general laws can be created. Thus the absolute monarchy in Spain, bearing but a superficial resemblance to the absolute monarchies of Europe in general, is rather to be ranged in a class with Asiatic forms of government. Spain, like Turkey, remained an agglomeration of mismanaged republics with a nominal sovereign at their head. Despotism changed character in the different provinces with the arbitrary interpretation of the general laws by viceroys and governors; but despotic as was the government it did not prevent the provinces from subsisting with different laws and customs, different coins, military banners of different colors, and with their respective systems of taxation. The oriental despotism attacks municipal self-government only when opposed to its direct interests, but is very glad to allow those institutions to continue so long as they take off its shoulders the duty of doing something and spare it the trouble of regular administration.

Thus it happened that Napoleon, who, like all his contemporaries, considered Spain as an inanimate corpse, was fatally surprised at the discovery that when the Spanish State was

dead, Spanish society was full of life, and every part of it overflowing with powers of resistance. By the treaty of Fontainebleau he had got his troops to Madrid; by alluring the royal family into an interview at Bayonne he had forced Carlos IV to retract his abdication, and then to make over to him his dominions; and he had intimidated Ferdinand VII into a similar declaration. Carlos IV, his Queen and the Prince of Peace conveyed to Compiègne, Ferdinand VII and his brothers imprisoned in the castle of Valençay, Bonaparte conferred the throne of Spain on his brother Joseph, assembled a Spanish junta at Bayonne, and provided them with one of his ready-made constitutions. Seeing nothing alive in the Spanish monarchy except the miserable dynasty which he had safely locked up, he felt quite sure of this confiscation of Spain. But, only a few days after his *coup de main*, he received the news of an insurrection at Madrid. Murat, it is true, quelled that tumult by killing about 1,000 people; but when this massacre became known, an insurrection broke out in Asturias, and soon afterward embraced the whole monarchy. It is to be remarked that this first spontaneous rising originated with the people, while the "better" classes had quietly submitted to the foreign yoke.

Thus it is that Spain was prepared for her more recent revolutionary career, and launched into the struggles which have marked her development in the present century. The facts and influences we have thus succinctly detailed still act in forming her destinies and directing the impulses of her people. We have presented them as necessary not only to an appreciation of the present crisis, but of all she has done and suffered since the Napoleonic usurpation—a period now of nearly 50 years—not without tragic episodes and heroic efforts—indeed, one of the most touching and instructive chapters in all modern history.

—MARX, *New York Tribune* (1854), MARX and ENGELS, *Revolution in Spain*, pp. 19, 25-28.

THE UNITED STATES: THE CIVIL WAR

A. JOHN BROWN: AMERICAN SLAVES AND RUSSIAN SERFS

In my opinion, the biggest things that are happening in the world today are on the one hand the movement of the slaves in America started by the death of John Brown, and on the other the movement of the serfs in Russia. . . .

I have just seen in the *Tribune* that there has been a fresh rising of slaves in Missouri, naturally suppressed. But the signal has now been given. If things get serious by and by, what will then become of Manchester?

—MARX, Letter to Engels (Jan. 11, 1860), MARX and ENGELS, *The Civil War in the United States*, p. 221.

B. HARPERS FERRY

Your opinion of the significance of the slave movement in America and Russia is now confirmed. The Harpers Ferry affair with its aftermath in Missouri bears its fruit; the free Negroes in the South are everywhere hunted out of the states, and I have just read in the first New York cotton report (W. P. Wright and Co., January 10, 1860) that the planters have hurried their cotton on to the ports in order to guard against any probable consequences arising out of the Harpers Ferry affair.

—ENGELS, Letter to Marx (Jan. 20, 1860), MARX and ENGELS, *The Civil War in the United States*, p. 221.

C. CONTROL OF WASHINGTON: THE MILITARY OBJECTIVE

Unfortunately, I have not collected any newspapers on the American War, and many places, likewise, are not to be found on the map. The main thing is this:

The South had prepared in secret for years, but particularly since the excitement of the presidential election; through the treason of Buchanan's ministers it had obtained money and arms *en masse* at the last moment. Till March 4, therefore, the North was completely paralyzed. Even up to the fall of Sumter Lincoln did nothing or could do nothing but concentrate somewhat more and put in somewhat better trim the few troops of

the line (18,000 men in all, mostly dispersed in the West against the Indians). Now, after the attack on Sumter, the North was at length sufficiently aroused to reduce all opposition outbursts to silence and thereby to make possible a powerful military action. Seventy-five thousand men were raised, who may now be on the move, but ten times this number seem to have offered themselves, and there may now be as many as 100,000 men on the move, though not yet concentrated by a long way. A further levy by Lincoln is daily expected and will require less time, since everything is now better prepared. The 75,000 men, or rather that part of them which is stationed in the neighborhood of Washington, on the Ohio opposite Kentucky and at St. Louis in Missouri (not counting, therefore, the reserves in Ohio and Pennsylvania), have been sufficient to restore for the present the equilibrium between the forces of the North and South on the line of the Potomac and even to permit for the moment the offensive of the North over a short distance.

The first objective of both the South and the North was Washington. The offensive of the South against it was far too weak; beyond Richmond the main force appears to have been no longer strong enough for a timely blow. The only thing that was achieved was the dispatch of a mobile column to Harpers Ferry on the Potomac, above Washington. This position is eminently suitable for an offensive against the North (Maryland and Pennsylvania); it lies at the confluence of the Shenandoah, an important river, and the Potomac, is tactically of great strength and completely dominates both streams. The Federal arsenal seems to have been placed there not unintentionally by a government that foresaw and favored a future secession. The occupation of Harpers Ferry interrupts the domination of the Potomac line by the Union troops at a sensitive spot and gives the Southern troops, in the event of their advancing in numbers as far as this line, complete command of both banks forthwith.

On the holding of Washington by the North hung the fate of Maryland and Delaware; cut off from the South, occupied by Union troops, they fell at once to the Union. Second success of the Union.

The reconquest of Missouri by the Germans of St. Louis was the third success, and is of enormous importance, since the possession of St. Louis bars the Mississippi. How far the neu-

trality of Kentucky is favorable to the North or South will presumably depend on circumstances and events. At any rate, it restricts the theater of war for the present to the territory lying to the west.

Result: After all the preparations of the South, then, it has accomplished nothing more than that the North, with only one month's preparation, has already conquered from it the capital of the country and three slave states, and a fourth slave state does not dare to secede; that the Southern offensive has come to a halt at the Potomac, and the North has already moved across this river, so far without meeting resistance. For every additional man that the South can now put in the field, the North will put three to four. The states that have seceded have about 7,500,000 inhabitants, of whom more than 3,000,000 are slaves; 1,000,000 whites, at least, must be deducted for watching over the slaves, so that barely two and a half million remain to form the mass of the population available for war. If ten per cent of these are raised — the strongest force, I should say, that has ever been raised for defense — that gives, at most, 250,000 men. But so many will not be got together. Switzerland, with nearly the same population — rather more than two million — has about 160,000 militiamen *on paper*. The North, on the other hand, counting the free states only, numbers 20,000,000, who are *all* available, with the exception, perhaps, of California, Utah and the remotest Western territories. Let us say there is an available population of 17,000,000, and let us take not ten per cent of these, but only its third part, 3.3 per cent, as available for a war of offense, then that gives over 500,000 men, more than sufficient to overwhelm the South, despite its utmost efforts. As far as the relationship, man to man, is concerned, there is no question that physically and morally the people of the North are considerably superior to those of the South. The combativeness of the Southerner is combined to an appreciable extent with the cowardice of the assassin. Every man goes about armed, but only *to be able to down his adversary in a quarrel before the latter expects the attack*. That is on the average. . . . [*The remainder of the letter is missing.*]

— ENGELS, Letter to Marx (June 12, 1861), MARX and ENGELS, *The Civil War in the United States*, pp. 223-25.

D. HOW THE ENGLISH PRESS DISTORTS THE SLAVERY ISSUE

For months the leading weekly and daily papers of the London press have reiterated the same litany on the American Civil War. While they insult the free states of the North, they anxiously defend themselves against the suspicion of sympathizing with the slave states of the South. In fact, they continually write two articles: one article, in which they attack the North, and another article, in which they excuse their attacks on the North. *Qui s'excuse s'accuse* [he who excuses himself accuses himself].

In essence the extenuating arguments read: The war between The North and the South is a tariff war. The war is, further, not for any principle, does not touch the question of slavery and in fact turns on Northern lust for sovereignty. Finally, even if justice is on the side of the North, does it not remain a vain endeavor to want to subjugate eight million Anglo-Saxons by force! Would not the separation of the South release the North from all connection with Negro slavery and assure to it, with its 20 million inhabitants and its vast territory, a higher, hitherto scarcely dreamt-of, development? Accordingly must not the North welcome secession as a happy event, instead of wanting to put it down by a bloody and futile civil war?

Point by point we will probe the *plaidoyer* [defense counsel's pleas] of the English press.

The war between North and South — so runs the first excuse — is a mere tariff war, a war between a protection system and a free trade system, and England naturally stands on the side of free trade. Shall the slaveowner enjoy the fruits of slave labor in their entirety or shall he be cheated of a portion of these by the protectionists of the North? That is the question which is at issue in this war. . . .

But, the London press pleads further, the war of the United States is nothing but a war for the maintenance of the Union by force. The Yankees cannot make up their minds to strike 15 stars from their standard. They want to cut a colossal figure on the world stage. Yes, it would be different, if the war was waged for the abolition of slavery! The question of slavery, however, as, among others, *The Saturday Review* categorically declares, has absolutely nothing to do with this war.

It is above all to be remembered that the war did not emanate from the North, but from the South. The North finds itself on

the defensive. For months it had quietly looked on, while the secessionists appropriated to themselves the Union's forts, arsenals, shipyards, customs houses, pay offices, ships and supplies of arms, insulted its flag and took prisoner bodies of its troops. Finally the secessionists resolved to force the Union government out of its passive attitude by a sensational act of war, and *solely for this reason* proceeded to the bombardment of Fort Sumter near Charleston. On April 11, 1861, their General Beauregard had learnt in a parley with Major Anderson, the commander of Fort Sumter, that the fort was only supplied with provisions for three days more and accordingly must be peacefully surrendered after this period. In order to forestall this peaceful surrender, the secessionists opened the bombardment early on the following morning (April 12), which brought about the fall of the place in a few hours. News of this had hardly been telegraphed to Montgomery, the seat of the Secession Congress, when War Minister Walker publicly declared in the name of the new Confederacy: "No man can say where *the war opened today* will end." At the same time he prophesied "that before the first of May the flag of the Southern Confederacy would wave from the dome of the old Capitol in Washington and within a short time perhaps also from the Faneuil Hall in Boston." Only now ensued the proclamation in which Lincoln summoned 75,000 men to the protection of the Union. The bombardment of Fort Sumter cut off the only possible constitutional way out, namely, the summoning of a general convention of the American people, as Lincoln had proposed in his inaugural address. For Lincoln there now remained only the choice of fleeing from Washington, evacuating Maryland and Delaware and surrendering Kentucky, Missouri and Virginia, or of answering war with war.

The question of the principle of the American Civil War is answered by the battle slogan with which the South broke the peace. Stephens, the Vice-President of the Southern Confederacy, declared in the Secession Congress, that what essentially distinguished the Constitution newly hatched at Montgomery from the Constitution of the Washingtons and Jeffersons was that now for the first time slavery was recognized as an institution good in itself, and as the foundation of the whole state edifice, whereas the revolutionary fathers, men steeped in the prejudices of the 18th century, had treated slavery as an evil im-

ported from England and to be eliminated in the course of time. . . .

Just as the bombardment of Fort Sumter gave the signal for the opening of the war, the election victory of the Republican Party of the North, the election of Lincoln as President, gave the signal for secession. On November 6, 1860, Lincoln was elected. On November 8, 1860, it was telegraphed from South Carolina: "Secession is regarded here as an accomplished fact"; on November 10 the legislature of Georgia occupied itself with secession plans, and on November 15 a special session of the legislature of Mississippi was fixed to take secession into consideration. . . .

The Republican Party put forward its first platform for the presidential election in 1856. Although its candidate, John Frémont, was not victorious, the huge number of votes that were cast for him at any rate proved the rapid growth of the Party, particularly in the Northwest. In their second National Convention for the presidential election (May 17, 1860), the Republicans repeated their platform of 1856, only enriched by some additions. Its principal contents were the following: Not a foot of fresh territory is further conceded to slavery. The filibustering policy abroad must cease. The reopening of the slave trade is stigmatized. Finally, free-soil laws are to be enacted for the furtherance of free colonization.

The vitally important point in this platform was that not a foot of fresh terrain was conceded to slavery; rather it was to remain once and for all confined to the limits of the states where it already legally existed. Slavery was thus to be formally interned; but continual expansion of territory and continual extension of slavery beyond their old limits is a law of life for the slave states of the Union.

The cultivation of the Southern export articles, cotton, tobacco, sugar, etc., carried on by slaves, is only remunerative as long as it is conducted with large gangs of slaves, on a mass scale and on wide expanses of a naturally fertile soil, that requires only simple labor. Intensive cultivation, which depends less on fertility of the soil than on investment of capital, intelligence and energy of labor, is contrary to the nature of slavery. Hence the rapid transformation of states like Maryland and Virginia, which formerly employed slaves on the production of export articles,

into states which raised slaves in order to export these slaves into the deep South. Even in South Carolina, where the slaves form four-sevenths of the population, the cultivation of cotton has for years been almost completely stationary in consequence of the exhaustion of the soil. Indeed, by force of circumstances South Carolina is already transformed in part into a slave-raising state, since it already sells slaves to the states of the extreme South and Southwest for four million dollars yearly. As soon as this point is reached, the acquisition of new Territories becomes necessary, in order that one section of the slaveholders may equip new, fertile landed estates with slaves and in order that by this means a new market for slave-raising, therefore, for the sale of slaves, may be created for the section left behind it. It is, for example, indubitable that without the acquisition of Louisiana, Missouri and Arkansas by the United States, slavery in Virginia and Maryland would long ago have been wiped out. In the Secessionist Congress at Montgomery, Senator Toombs, one of the spokesmen of the South, has strikingly formulated the economic law that commands the constant expansion of the territory of slavery. "In fifteen years more," said he, "without a great increase in slave territory, either the slaves must be permitted to flee from the whites, or the whites must flee from the slaves."

As is known, the representation of the individual states in Congress depends, for the House of Representatives, on the number of persons constituting their respective populations. As the populations of the free states grow far more quickly than those of the slave states, the number of the Northern Representatives was bound very rapidly to overtake that of the Southern. The real seat of the political power of the South is accordingly transferred more and more to the American Senate, where every state, be its population great or small, is represented by two Senators. In order to maintain its influence in the Senate and, through the Senate, its hegemony over the United States, the South therefore required a continual formation of new slave states. This, however, was only possible through conquest of foreign lands, as in the case of Texas, or through the transformation of the Territories belonging to the United States first into slave Territories and later into slave states, as in the case of Missouri, Arkansas, etc. John Calhoun, whom the slave-holders

admire as their statesman *par excellence*, stated as early as February 19, 1847, in the Senate, that the Senate alone put a balance of power into the hands of the South, that extension of the slave territory was necessary to preserve this equilibrium between South and North in the Senate, and that the attempts of the South at the creation of new slave states by force were accordingly justified.

Finally, the number of actual slaveholders in the South of the Union does not amount to more than 300,000, a narrow oligarchy that is confronted with many millions of so-called poor whites, whose numbers constantly grow through concentration of landed property and whose condition is only to be compared with that of the Roman plebeians in the period of Rome's extreme decline. Only by acquisition and the prospect of acquisition of new Territories, as well as by filibustering expeditions, is it possible to square the interests of these "poor whites" with those of the slaveholders, to give their turbulent longings for deeds a harmless direction and to tame them with the prospect of one day becoming slaveholders themselves.

A strict confinement of slavery within its old terrain, therefore, was bound according to economic law to lead to its gradual effacement, in the political sphere to annihilate the hegemony that the slave states exercised through the Senate, and finally to expose the slaveholding oligarchy within its own states to threatening perils from the side of the "poor whites." With the principle that any further extension of slave Territories was to be prohibited by law, the Republicans therefore attacked the rule of the slaveholders at its root. The Republican election victory was accordingly bound to lead to the open struggle between North and South. Meanwhile, this election victory, as already mentioned, was itself conditioned by the split in the Democratic camp. . . .

The whole movement was and is based, as one sees, on the *slave question*: Not in the sense of whether the slaves within the existing slave states should be emancipated or not, but whether the 20 million free men of the North should subordinate themselves any longer to an oligarchy of three hundred thousand slaveholders; whether the vast Territories of the republic should be planting-places for free states or for slavery; finally, whether the national policy of the Union should take armed propaganda

of slavery in Mexico, Central and South America as its device. In another article we will probe the assertion of the London press that the North must sanction secession as the most favorable and only possible solution of the conflict.

—MARX, *Die Presse* (Oct. 1861), *The Civil War in the United States*, pp. 58-71.

E. PRESIDENT LINCOLN AND GENERAL McCLELLAN

President Lincoln never ventures a step forward before the tide of circumstances and the call of general public opinion forbids further delay. But once "old Abe" has convinced himself that such a turning point has been reached, he then surprises friend and foe alike by a sudden operation executed as noiselessly as possible. Thus, in the most unassuming manner, he has quite recently carried out a coup that half a year earlier would possibly have cost him his presidential office and even a few months ago would have called forth a storm of debate. We mean the *removal of McClellan* from his post of Commander-in-Chief of all the Union armies.

—MARX, *The Civil War in the United States*, pp. 155f.

F. "THE SECESSIONIST CONSPIRACY," A WAR WITHOUT PARALLEL

From whatever standpoint one regards it, the American Civil War presents a spectacle without parallel in the annals of military history. The vast extent of the disputed territory; the far-flung front of the lines of operation; the numerical strength of the hostile armies, the creation of which drew barely any support from a prior organizational basis; the fabulous costs of these armies; the manner of leading them and the general tactical and strategical principles in accordance with which the war is waged, are all new in the eyes of the European onlooker.

The secessionist conspiracy, organized, patronized and supported long before its outbreak by Buchanan's administration, gave the South an advantage, by which alone it could hope to achieve its aim. Endangered by its slave population and by a strong Unionist element among the whites themselves, with a number of free men two-thirds smaller than the North, but readier to attack, thanks to the multitude of adventurous idlers

that it harbors — for the South everything depended on a swift, bold, almost foolhardy offensive. If the Southerners succeeded in taking St. Louis, Cincinnati, Washington, Baltimore and perhaps Philadelphia, they might then count on a panic, during which diplomacy and bribery could secure recognition of the independence of all the slave states. If this first onslaught failed, at least at the decisive points, their position must then become daily worse, simultaneously with the development of the strength of the North. This point was rightly understood by the men who in truly Bonapartist spirit had organized the secessionist conspiracy. They opened the campaign in corresponding manner. Their bands of adventurers overran Missouri and Tennessee, while their more regular troops invaded east Virginia and prepared a *coup de main* against Washington. With the miscarriage of this coup, the Southern campaign was, from the *military standpoint*, lost.

The North came to the theater of war reluctantly, sleepily, as was to be expected with its higher industrial and commercial development. The social machinery was here far more complicated than in the South, and it required far more time to give its motion this unwonted direction. The enlistment of the volunteers for three months was a great, but perhaps unavoidable mistake. It was the policy of the North to remain on the defensive in the beginning at all decisive points, to organize its forces, to train them through operations on a small scale and without the risk of decisive battles, and as soon as the organization was sufficiently strengthened and the traitorous element simultaneously more or less removed from the army, to pass finally to an energetic, unflagging offensive and, above all, to reconquer Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia and North Carolina. The transformation of the civilians into soldiers was bound to take more time in the North than in the South. Once effected, one could count on the individual superiority of the Northern man. . . .

The six months' respite that followed the defeat of Manassas was utilized by the North better than by the South. Not only were the Northern ranks recruited in greater measure than the Southern. Their officers received better instructions; the discipline and training of the troops did not encounter the same obstacles as in the South. Traitors and incompetent interlopers

were more and more removed, and the period of the Bull Run panic already belongs to the past. The armies on both sides are naturally not to be measured by the standard of great European armies or even of the former regular army of the United States. Napoleon could in fact drill battalions of raw recruits in the depots during the first month, have them on the march during the second and during the third lead them against the foe; but then every battalion received a sufficient stiffening of officers and non-commissioned officers, every company some old soldiers and on the day of the battle the new troops were brigaded together with veterans and, so to speak, framed by the latter. All these conditions were lacking in America. Without the considerable mass of military experience that emigrated to America in consequence of the European revolutionary commotions of 1848-1849, the organization of the Union Army would have required a much longer time still.

—MARX, *Die Presse* (March 1862), *The Civil War in the United States*, pp. 164-67.

G. FROM “CONSTITUTIONAL” TO “REVOLUTIONARY” WAR

At the present moment, when secession's stocks are rising, the spokesmen of the border states increase their claims. However, Lincoln's appeal to them shows, where it threatens them with inundation by the Abolition party, that things are taking a revolutionary turn. Lincoln knows what Europe does not know, that it is by no means apathy or giving way under pressure of defeat that causes his demand for 300,000 recruits to meet with such a cold response. New England and the Northwest, which have provided the main body of the army, are determined to enforce a revolutionary waging of war on the government and to inscribe the battle slogan of “Abolition of Slavery!” on the star-spangled banner. Lincoln yields only hesitantly and uneasily to this pressure from without, but knows that he is incapable of offering resistance to it for long. Hence his fervent appeal to the border states to renounce the institution of slavery voluntarily and under the conditions of a favorable contract. He knows that it is only the continuance of slavery in the border states that has so far left slavery untouched in the South and prohibited the North from applying its great radical remedy. He

errs only if he imagines that the "loyal" slaveholders are to be moved by benevolent speeches and rational arguments. They will yield only to force.

So far we have only witnessed the first act of the Civil War—the *constitutional* waging of war. The second act, the revolutionary waging of war, is at hand.

Meanwhile, during its first session the Congress, which has now adjourned, has decreed a series of important measures that we will briefly summarize here.

Apart from its financial legislation, it has passed the Homestead Bill that the Northern popular masses had long striven for in vain; by this a part of the state lands is given gratis for cultivation to the colonists, whether American born or immigrants. It has abolished slavery in the District of Columbia and the national capital, with monetary compensation for the former slaveholders. Slavery has been declared "forever impossible" in all the *Territories* of the United States. The Act under which the new State of West Virginia is taken into the Union prescribes abolition of slavery by stages and declares all Negro children born after July 4, 1863, to be born free. The conditions of this emancipation by stages are on the whole borrowed from the law that was enacted 70 years ago in Pennsylvania for the same purpose. By a fourth Act all slaves of rebels are to be emancipated as soon as they fall into the hands of the republican army. Another law, which is now being put into effect *for the first time*, provides that these emancipated Negroes may be militarily organized and sent into the field against the South. The independence of the Negro republics of Liberia and Haiti has been recognized and, finally, a treaty for the abolition of the slave trade has been conducted with England.

Thus, however the dice may fall in the fortunes of battle, it can now safely be said that Negro slavery will not long outlive the Civil War.

—MARX, *Die Presse* (Aug. 1862), *The Civil War in the United States*, pp. 198-201.

H. A HISTORICAL PREDICTION

Your war over there is one of the most imposing experiences one can ever live through. Despite the numerous blunders committed by the Northern armies (and the South has committed

its share), the conquering wave is slowly but surely rolling on, and the time must come in 1865 when the *organized* resistance of the South will suddenly fold up like a pocketknife, and the war will degenerate into banditry, as was the case in the Carlist War in Spain and, more recently in Naples. A people's war of this sort, on both sides, is unprecedented ever since the establishment of powerful states; its outcome will doubtless determine the future of America for hundreds of years to come. As soon as slavery—the greatest of obstacles to the political and social development of the United States—has been smashed, the country will experience a boom that will very soon assure it an altogether different place in the history of the world, and the army and navy created during the war will then soon find employment.

Moreover, it is easy to see why the North found it hard to create an army and generals. From the start the Southern oligarchy placed the country's small armed forces under its own control—it supplied the officers and also robbed the arsenals. The North was left without any military cadres, except for the militia, while the South had been preparing over the course of several years. From the outset the South had available a population accustomed to the saddle for use as light cavalry, while the North lagged behind in this respect. The North adopted the method, introduced by the South, of allotting posts to adherents of a certain party; the South, engulfed in a revolution and under the rule of a military dictatorship, was able to disregard this. Hence all the blunders. I do not deny that Lee is better than all the generals of the North and that his latest campaigns around the fortified Richmond encampment are masterpieces, from which the glorious Prince Friedrich Karl of Prussia could learn a great deal. But the resolute attacks of Grant and Sherman finally rendered all this strategy useless.

It is obvious that Grant is sacrificing an enormous number of men—but could he have acted otherwise? I haven't the slightest idea of the state of discipline of your army, its steadfastness under fire, its capacity and readiness to endure hardships, and in particular, its *morale*, *i.e.*, what can be demanded of it without risking demoralization. One must know all that before venturing a judgment, especially if one is on the other side of the ocean, without adequate information, and without any decent maps. But it seems to me certain that the army now commanded by

Sherman is the best of your armies, as superior to Hood's army as Lee's army is to Grant's.

—ENGELS, Letter to Weydemeyer (1864), *Letters to Americans*, pp. 63f.

I. LETTER TO PRESIDENT LINCOLN

Address of the International Working-Men's Association

*to Abraham Lincoln**

To Abraham Lincoln,
President of the United States of America.

Sir:—We congratulate the American people upon your reelection by a large majority. If resistance to the Slave Power was the reserved watchword of your first election, the triumphant war cry of your reelection is, Death to Slavery.

From the commencement of the titanic American strife the workingmen of Europe felt instinctively that the star-spangled banner carried the destiny of their class. The contest for the territories which opened the dire epopee, was it not to decide whether the virgin soil of immense tracts should be wedded to the labor of the immigrant or prostituted by the tramp of the slave driver?

When an oligarchy of 300,000 slaveholders dared to inscribe, for the first time in the annals of the world, "slavery" on the banner of armed revolt; when on the very spots where hardly a century ago the idea of one great democratic republic had first sprung up, whence the first declaration of the Rights of Man issued, and the first impulse given to the European revolution of the 18th century; when on those very spots counterrevolution, with systematic thoroughness, gloried in rescinding "the ideas entertained at the time of the formation of the old Constitution," and maintained "slavery to be a beneficent institution, indeed the only solution of the great problem of the relation of labor to capital," and cynically proclaimed property in man "the cornerstone of the new edifice"; then the working classes of Europe understood at once, even before the fanatic

*This address was signed by all the members of the General Council of the International Workingmen's Association (the First International) and was forwarded to President Lincoln through Charles Francis Adams, the Minister of the United States in London. It was published in *The Bee-Hive*, London, January 7, 1865.

partisanship of the upper classes for the Confederate gentry had given its dismal warning, that the slaveholders' rebellion was to sound the tocsin for a general holy crusade of property against labor, and that for the men of labor, with their hopes for the future, even their past conquests were at stake in that tremendous conflict on the other side of the Atlantic. Everywhere they bore therefore patiently the hardships imposed upon them by the cotton crisis, opposed enthusiastically the proslavery intervention, importunities of their "betters," and from most parts of Europe contributed their quota of blood to the good cause.

While the workingmen, the true political power of the North, allowed slavery to defile their own republic; while before the Negro, mastered and sold without his concurrence, they boasted it the highest prerogative of the white-skinned laborer to sell himself and choose his own master; they were unable to attain the true freedom of labor or to support their European brethren in their struggle for emancipation, but this barrier to progress has been swept off by the red sea of civil war.

The workingmen of Europe feel sure that as the American War of Independence initiated a new era of ascendancy for the middle class, so the American antislavery War will do for the working classes. They consider it an earnest of the epoch to come, that it fell to the lot of Abraham Lincoln, the single-minded son of the working class, to lead his country through the matchless struggle for the rescue of an enchained race and the reconstruction of a social world.

— MARX, *Die Presse* (1865), *Letters to Americans*, pp. 65f.

J. MARX AND ENGELS ON PRESIDENT JOHNSON

Johnson's policy disquiets me. Ridiculous affectation of severity against single persons; up to the present extremely vacillating and weak in substance. The reaction has already begun in America and will soon be greatly strengthened, if the hitherto prevailing slackness does not quickly cease.

MARX

I, too, like Mr. Johnson's policy less and less. His hatred of Negroes comes out more and more violently, while as against the old lords of the South he lets all power go out of his hands. If things go on like this, in six months all the old villains of secession will be sitting in Congress at Washington. Without

colored suffrage nothing whatever can be done there, and J[ohnson] leaves it to the vanquished, the ex-slaveholders, to decide upon this matter. It is too absurd. However, one must certainly reckon with things developing differently from what Messrs. the Barons imagine. The majority of them are surely totally ruined and will be glad to sell land to migrants and speculators from the North. These will come soon enough and change many things. The poor whites, I think, will gradually die out. With this stock there is nothing more to be done; what is left after two generations will merge with the migrants into a stock entirely different. The Negroes will probably become small squatters as in Jamaica. So that finally, indeed, the oligarchy goes down, but the process could now be brought to a speedy conclusion on the spot at one time, whilst, as it is, it becomes long drawn out.

ENGELS

—MARX, Letter to Engels (June 1865); ENGELS, Letter to Marx (July 1865), *The Civil War in the United States*, pp. 276f.

[8]

THE UNITED STATES:
POLITICS AND THE LABOR MOVEMENT

A. CLOSE OF THE CIVIL WAR BRINGS A NEW ERA

*Address of the International Working Men's Association to the National Labor Union**

Fellow Workmen:

In the inaugural address of our association we said: "It was not the wisdom of the ruling classes, but the heroic resistance to their criminal folly by the working classes of England that saved the West of Europe from plunging headlong into an infamous crusade for the perpetuation and propagation of slav-

*Written in English by Marx and adopted by the General Council of the International Workingmen's Association on May 11, 1869.

ery on the other side of the Atlantic." It is now your turn to prevent a war whose direct result would be to throw back, for an indefinite period, the rising labor movement on both sides of the Atlantic.

We need hardly tell you that there are European powers anxiously engaged in fomenting a war between the United States and England. A glance at the statistics of commerce shows that the Russian export of raw products—and Russia has nothing else to export—was giving way to American competition when the Civil War tipped the scales. To turn the American ploughshare into a sword would at this time save from impending bankruptcy a power whom your republican statesmen in their wisdom had chosen for their confidential adviser. But disregarding the particular interests of this or that government, is it not in the general interest of our oppressors to disturb by a war the movement of rapidly extending international cooperation?

In our congratulatory address to Mr. Lincoln on the occasion of his reelection to the Presidency we expressed it as our conviction that the Civil War would prove to be as important to the progress of the working class as the War of Independence has been to the elevation of the middle class. And the successful close of the war against slavery has indeed inaugurated a new era in the annals of the working class. In the United States itself an independent labor movement has since arisen which the old parties and the professional politicians view with distrust. But to bear fruit it needs years of peace. To suppress it, a war between the United States and England would be the sure means.

The immediate tangible result of the Civil War was of course a deterioration of the condition of the American workingmen. Both in the United States and in Europe the colossal burden of a public debt was shifted from hand to hand in order to settle it upon the shoulders of the working class. The prices of necessaries, remarks one of your statesmen, have risen 78 per cent since 1860, while the wages of simple manual labor have risen 50 and those of skilled labor 60 per cent. "Pauperism," he complains, "is increasing in America more rapidly than population." Moreover the sufferings of the working class are in glaring contrast to the newfangled luxury of financial aristocrats, shoddy aristocrats, and other vermin bred by war. Still the Civil War offered a compensation in the liberation of the slaves and the impulse

which it thereby gave to your own class movement. Another war, not sanctified by a sublime aim or a social necessity but like the wars of the Old World, would forge chains for the free workingmen instead of sundering those of the slave. The accumulated misery which it would leave in its wake would furnish your capitalists at once with the motive and the means of separating the working class from their courageous and just aspirations by the soulless sword of a standing army. Yours, then, is the glorious task of seeing to it that at last the working class shall enter upon the scene of history, no longer as a servile following, but as an independent power, as a power imbued with a sense of its responsibility and capable of commanding peace where their would-be masters cry war.

—MARX, *Letters to Americans*, pp. 75f.

B. POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE UNITED STATES

Nowhere do “politicians” form a more separate, powerful section of the nation than in North America. There, each of the two great parties which alternately succeed each other in power is itself in turn controlled by people who make a business of politics, who speculate on seats in the legislative assemblies of the Union as well as of the separate states, or who make a living by carrying on agitation for their party and on its victory are rewarded with positions.

It is well known that the Americans have been striving for 30 years to shake off this yoke, which has become intolerable, and that in spite of all they can do they continue to sink ever deeper in this swamp of corruption. It is precisely in America that we see best how there takes place this process of the state power making itself independent in relation to society, whose mere instrument it was originally intended to be. Here there exists no dynasty, no nobility, no standing army, beyond the few men keeping watch on the Indians, no bureaucracy with permanent posts or the right to pensions. And nevertheless we find here two great gangs of political speculators, who alternately take possession of the state power and exploit it by the most corrupt means and for the most corrupt ends—and the nation is powerless against these two great cartels of politicians, who are ostensibly its servants, but in reality exploit and plunder it.

—ENGELS, Introduction (1891), MARX, *The Civil War in France*, pp. 20f.

C. PRIVILEGED POSITION OF THE NATIVE-BORN WORKING CLASS

Your great obstacle in America, it seems to me, lies in the exceptional position of the native-born workers. Up to 1848 one could speak of a permanent native-born working class only as an exception. The small beginnings of one in the cities in the East still could always hope to become farmers or bourgeois. Now such a class has developed and has also organized itself on trade union lines to a great extent. But it still occupies an aristocratic position and wherever possible leaves the ordinary badly paid occupations to the immigrants, only a small portion of whom enter the aristocratic trade unions. But these immigrants are divided into different nationalities, which understand neither one another nor, for the most part, the language of the country. And your bourgeoisie knows much better even than the Austrian government how to play off one nationality against the other: Jews, Italians, Bohemians, etc., against Germans and Irish, and each one against the other, so that differences in workers' standards of living exist, I believe, in New York to an extent unheard of elsewhere. And added to this is the complete indifference of a society that has grown up on a purely capitalist basis, without any easygoing feudal background, toward the human lives that perish in the competitive struggle. . . .

In such a country continually renewed waves of advance, followed by equally certain setbacks, are inevitable. Only the advances always become more powerful, the setbacks less paralyzing, and on the whole the cause does move forward. But this I consider certain: the purely bourgeois foundation, with no pre-bourgeois swindle back of it, the corresponding colossal energy of development, which is displayed even in the mad exaggeration of the present protective tariff system, will one day bring about a change that will astound the whole world. Once the Americans get started, it will be with an energy and impetuosity compared with which we in Europe shall be mere children.

—ENGELS, Letter to Schlüter (1892), *Letters to Americans*, pp. 242f.

D. "THE AMERICANS CANNOT DISCOUNT THEIR FUTURE"

Here in old Europe things are somewhat livelier than in your "youthful" country, which still doesn't quite want to get out of

its hobbledehoy stage. It is remarkable, but quite natural, how firmly rooted are bourgeois prejudices even in the working class in such a young country, which has never known feudalism and has grown up on a bourgeois basis from the beginning. Out of his very opposition to the mother country—which is still clothed in its feudal disguise—the American worker also imagines that the traditionally inherited bourgeois regime is something progressive and superior by nature and for all time, a *non plus ultra* [not to be surpassed]. Just as in New England, Puritanism, the reason for the whole colony's existence, has become for this very reason a traditional heirloom and almost inseparable from local patriotism. The Americans may strain and struggle as much as they like, but they cannot discount their future—colossally great as it is—all at once like a bill of exchange; they must wait for the date on which it falls due; and just *because* their future is so great, their present must occupy itself mainly with preparatory work for the future, and this work, as in every young country, is of a predominantly material nature and involves a certain backwardness of thought, a clinging to the traditions connected with the foundation of the new nationality. . . .

Only great events can be of assistance here, and if, added to the more or less completed transfer of the public lands to private ownership, there now comes the expansion of industry under a less insane tariff policy and the conquest of foreign markets, it may go well with you, too. The class struggles here in England, too, were more turbulent during the *period of development* of large-scale industry and died down just in the period of England's undisputed industrial domination of the world. In Germany, too, the development of large-scale industry since 1850 coincides with the rise of the Socialist movement, and it will be no different, probably, in America. It is the revolutionizing of all established conditions by industry *as it develops* that also revolutionizes people's minds.

Moreover, the Americans have for a long time been providing the European world with the proof that the bourgeois republic is the republic of capitalist businessmen, in which politics are a business deal like any other. . . .

—ENGELS, Letter to Sorge (1892), *Letters to Americans*, pp. 242f.

E. DOGMATIC MARXISM AND THE HENRY GEORGE BOOM

The Henry George boom has of course brought to light a colossal mass of fraud, and I am glad I was not there. But in spite of it all it was an epoch-making day. The Germans [living in America] have not understood how to use their theory as a lever which could set the American masses in motion; they do not understand the theory themselves for the most part and treat it in a doctrinaire and dogmatic way as something that has to be learned by heart, which then will satisfy all requirements forthwith. To them it is a credo and not a guide to action. What is more, they learn no English on principle. Hence the American masses had to seek out their own path and seem to have found it for the time being in the K[nights] of L[abor], whose confused principles and ludicrous organization seem to correspond to their own confusion. But from all I hear, the K. of L. are a real power, especially in New England and the West, and are becoming more so every day owing to the brutal opposition of the capitalists. I think it is necessary to work inside them, to form within this still quite plastic mass a core of people who understand the movement and its aims and will therefore take over the leadership, at least of a section, when the inevitably impending breakup of the present "order" takes place. The rottenest side of the K. of L. was their political neutrality, which has resulted in sheer trickery on the part of the Powderlys, etc.; but the edge of this has been taken off by the behavior of the masses in the November elections, especially in New York. The first great step of importance for every country newly entering into the movement is always the constitution of the workers as an independent political party, no matter how, so long as it is a distinct workers' party. And this step has been taken, much more rapidly than we had a right to expect, and that is the main thing. That the first program of this party is still confused and extremely deficient, that it has raised the banner of Henry George, these are unavoidable evils but also merely transitory ones. The masses must have time and opportunity to develop, and they can have the opportunity only when they have a movement of their own—no matter in what form so long as it is *their own* movement—in which they are driven further by their own mistakes and learn through their mistakes. The movement in America is at the same stage as it was with us before 1848, the

really intelligent people there will first have to play the part played by the Communist League among the workers' associations before 1848. Except that in America now things will proceed infinitely faster; for the movement to have gained such election successes after scarcely eight months of existence is wholly unprecedented. And what is still lacking will be set going by the bourgeoisie; nowhere in the whole world do they come out so shamelessly and tyrannically as over there, and your judges brilliantly outshine Bismarck's pettifoggers in the Reich. Where the bourgeoisie wages the struggle by such methods, the struggle comes to a decision rapidly, and if we in Europe do not hurry up the Americans will soon outdistance us. But just now it is doubly necessary to have a few people on our side there who are thoroughly versed in theory and well-tested tactics and can also speak and write English; because, for good historical reasons, the Americans are worlds behind in all theoretical questions, and while they did not bring over any medieval institutions from Europe, they did bring over masses of medieval traditions, religion, English common (feudal) law, superstition, spiritualism, in short, every kind of imbecility which was not directly harmful to business and which is now very serviceable for stupefying the masses. If there are people at hand there whose minds are theoretically clear, who can tell them the consequences of their own mistakes beforehand and make clear to them that every movement which does not keep the destruction of the wage system constantly in view as the final goal is bound to go astray and fail—then much nonsense can be avoided and the process considerably shortened. But it must be done in English; the specific German character must be laid aside, and for that the gentlemen of the *Sozialist* hardly have the qualifications, while those of the *Volkszeitung* are cleverer only where *business* is involved.

In Europe the effect of the American elections in November was tremendous. That England, and America in particular, had no labor movement up to now was the big trump card of the radical republicans everywhere, especially in France. Now these gentlemen have been utterly contradicted; on November 2nd the whole foundation, especially of Mr. Clemenceau's policy, collapsed. "Look at America," was his eternal motto; "where there is a real republic, there is no poverty and no labor move-

ment!" And the same thing is happening to the liberals and "democrats" in Germany and here—where they are also witnessing the beginning of their own movement. The very fact that the movement is so sharply accentuated as a labor movement and has sprung up so suddenly and forcefully has stunned the people completely.

—ENGELS, Letter to Sorge (1886), *Letters to Americans*, pp. 162-64.

F. DEVELOPMENT OF THE WORKING CLASS

There were two circumstances which for a long time prevented the unavoidable consequences of the Capitalist system from showing themselves in the full glare of day in America. These were the easy access to the ownership of cheap land, and the influx of immigration. They allowed, for many years, the great mass of the native American population to "retire" in early manhood from wage labor and to become farmers, dealers, or employers of labor, while the hard work for wages, the position of a proletarian for life, mostly fell to the lot of immigrants. But America has outgrown this early stage. The boundless backwoods have disappeared, and the still more boundless prairies are faster and faster passing from the hands of the nation and the states into those of private owners. The great safety valve against the formation of a permanent proletarian class has practically ceased to act. A class of life-long and even hereditary proletarians exists at this hour in America. A nation of 60 millions striving hard to become—and with every chance of success, too—the leading manufacturing nation of the world—such a nation cannot permanently import its own wage working class; not even if immigrants pour in at the rate of half a million a year. The tendency of the capitalist system toward the ultimate splitting-up of society into two classes, a few millionaires on the one hand, and a great mass of mere wage workers on the other, this tendency, though constantly crossed and counteracted by other social agencies, works nowhere with greater force than in America; and the result has been the production of a class of native American wage workers, who form, indeed, the aristocracy of the wage working class as compared with the immigrants, but who become conscious more and more

every day of their solidarity with the latter and who feel all the more acutely their present condemnation of life-long wage toil, because they still remember the bygone days, when it was comparatively easy to rise to a higher social level.

—ENGELS, Appendix, American edition, *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1886), in MARX and ENGELS, *On Britain*, footnote, pp. 6-7.

G. "THE AMERICAN WORKING-CLASS IS MOVING"

Whatever the mistakes and the *Borniertheit* [narrow-mindedness] of the leaders of the movement, and partly of the newly awakening masses too, one thing is certain: the American working class is moving, and no mistake. And after a few false starts, they will get into the right track soon enough. This appearance of the Americans upon the scene I consider one of the greatest events of the year.

What the downbreak of Russian Tsarism would be for the great military monarchies of Europe—the snapping of their mainstay—that is for the bourgeois of the whole world the breaking out of class war in America. For America after all is the ideal of all bourgeois: a country rich, vast, expanding, with purely bourgeois institutions unleavened by feudal remnants of monarchical traditions, and without a permanent and hereditary proletariat. Here every one could become, if not a capitalist, at all events an independent man, producing or trading, with his own means, for his own account. And because there were not, *as yet*, classes with opposing interests, our — and your — bourgeois thought that America stood *above* class antagonisms and struggles. That delusion has now broken down, the last Bourgeois Paradise on earth is fast changing into a Purgatorio, and can only be prevented from becoming, like Europe, an Inferno by the go-ahead pace at which the development of the newly fledged proletariat of America will take place. The way in which they have made their appearance on the scene is quite extraordinary: six months ago nobody suspected anything and now they appear all of a sudden in such organized masses as to strike terror into the whole capitalist class. I only wish Marx could have lived to see it!

—ENGELS, Letter to Mrs. Wischnewetsky (1886), *Letters to Americans*, pp. 157f.

RUSSIA

A. ON MATURING REVOLUTIONARY CONDITIONS IN RUSSIA

This crisis* is a *new turning point* in European history. Russia has long been standing on the threshold of an upheaval, all the elements of it are prepared—I have studied conditions there from the original *Russian* sources, unofficial and official (the latter only available to a few people but got for me through friends in Petersburg). The gallant Turks have hastened the explosion by years with the thrashing they have inflicted, not only upon the Russian army and Russian finances, but in a highly personal and individual manner on the *dynasty commanding* the army (the Tsar, the heir to the throne and six other Romanovs). The upheaval will begin *secundum artem* [according to the rules of the art] with some playing at constitutionalism and then there will be a fine row. If Mother Nature is not particularly unfavorable towards us we shall still live to see the fun! The stupid nonsense which the Russian students are perpetrating is only a symptom, worthless in itself. But it is a symptom. All sections of Russian society are in complete disintegration economically, morally and intellectually.

This time the revolution will begin in the East, hitherto the unbroken bulwark and reserve army of counterrevolution.

—MARX, Letter to Sorge (1877), *Selected Correspondence*, pp. 348f.

B. RUSSIA ON THE EVE OF REVOLUTION

There is no doubt Russia is on the eve of a revolution. Her finances are in extreme disorder. Increasing taxation proves of no avail, the interest on old state loans is paid by means of new loans, and every new loan meets with greater difficulties; money can now only be raised under the pretext of building railways! The administration, as of old, corrupt from top to bottom, the officials living more from theft, bribery and extortion than from their salaries. The entire agricultural production—by far the

*The Russo-Turkish war and Near Eastern crisis.

most essential for Russia—thrown into complete disorder by the redemption settlement of 1861; the big landowners without sufficient labor, the peasants without sufficient land, oppressed by taxation and sucked dry by usurers, the yield from agriculture declining from year to year. The whole held together with great difficulty and only outwardly by an oriental despotism whose arbitrariness we in the West simply cannot imagine; a despotism which not only from day to day comes into more glaring contradiction with the views of the enlightened classes and in particular with those of the rapidly developing bourgeoisie of the capital cities, but which, under its present bearer, has lost faith in itself, one day making concessions to liberalism and the next canceling them again in terror, and thus bringing itself more and more into disrepute. With all that, a growing recognition among the enlightened strata of the nation concentrated in the capital that this position is untenable, that a revolution is imminent, and the illusion that it will be possible to guide this revolution into a smooth, constitutional channel. Here we have united all the conditions of a revolution, of a revolution which, possibly started by the upper classes of the capital, even perhaps by the government itself, must be rapidly carried further, beyond the first constitutional phase, by the peasants; of a revolution, which will be of the greatest importance for the whole of Europe if only because it will destroy at one blow the last, so far intact, reserve of the entire European reaction. This revolution is surely approaching. Only two events can delay it: a successful war against Turkey or Austria, for which money and firm alliances are necessary, or—a premature attempt at insurrection which would drive the property-owning classes back into the arms of the government.

—ENGELS, “On Social Conditions in Russia” (1875), MARX and ENGELS, *Selected Works*, 2 vol. ed., vol. II, pp. 684f.

C. THE DEVELOPING REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION IN RUSSIA

What I know or believe about the situation in Russia impels me to the opinion that the Russians are approaching their 1789. The revolution *must* break out there in a given time; it *may* break out there any day. In these circumstances the country is like a charged mine which only needs a fuse to be laid to it.

Especially since March 13.* This is one of the exceptional cases where it is possible for a handful of people to *make* a revolution, *i.e.*, with one small push to cause a whole system, which (to use a metaphor of Plekhanov's) is in more than labile equilibrium, to come crashing down, and thus by one action, in itself insignificant, to release uncontrollable explosive forces. Well now, if ever Blanquism—the fantasy of overturning an entire society through the action of a small conspiracy—had a certain justification for its existence, that is certainly in Petersburg. Once the spark has been put to the powder, once the forces have been released and national energy has been transformed from potential into kinetic energy (another favorite image of Plekhanov's and a very good one)—the people who laid the spark to the mine will be swept away by the explosion, which will be a thousand times as strong as themselves and which will seek its vent where it can, according as the economic forces and resistances determine.

Supposing these people imagine they can seize power, what does it matter? Provided they make the hole which will shatter the dyke, the flood itself will soon rob them of their illusions. But if by chance these illusions resulted in giving them a superior force of will, why complain of that? People who boasted that they had *made* a revolution have always seen the next day that they had no idea what they were doing, that the revolution *made* did not in the least resemble the one they would have liked to make. That is what Hegel calls the irony of history, an irony which few historic personalities escape. Look at Bismarck, the revolutionary against his will, and Gladstone who has ended in quarreling with his adored Tsar.

To me the most important thing is that the impulse should be given in Russia, that the revolution should break out. Whether this fraction or that fraction gives the signal, whether it happens under this flag or that flag matters little to me. If it were a palace conspiracy it would be swept away tomorrow. There where the position is so strained, where the revolutionary elements are accumulated to such a degree, where the economic situation of the enormous mass of the people becomes daily more impossible, where every stage of social development is

*March 1, 1881 (Old Style), the day on which Tsar Alexander II was assassinated.

represented, from the primitive commune to modern large-scale industry and high finance, and where all these contradictions are violently held together by an unexampled despotism, a despotism which is becoming more and more unbearable to the youth in whom the national worth and intelligence are united — there, when 1789 has once been launched, 1793 will not be long in following.

— ENGELS, Letter to Zasulich (1885), *Selected Correspondence*, pp. 437f.

D. RUSSIA, GERMANY AND WORLD WAR

A war, on the other hand, would throw us back for years. Chauvinism would swamp everything, for it would be a fight for existence. Germany would put about five million armed men into the field, or ten per cent of the population, the others about four to five per cent, Russia relatively less. But there would be from ten to 15 million combatants. I should like to see how they are to be fed; it would be a devastation like the Thirty Years' War. And no quick decision could be arrived at, despite the colossal fighting forces. For France is protected on the north-eastern and south-eastern frontiers by very extensive fortifications and the new constructions in Paris are a model. So it will last a long time, and Russia cannot be taken by storm either. If, therefore, everything goes according to Bismarck's desires, more will be demanded of the nation than ever before and it is possible enough that partial defeats and the dragging out of the decisive war would produce an internal upheaval. But if the Germans were defeated from the first or forced into a prolonged defensive, then the thing would certainly start.

If the war was fought out to the end without internal disturbances a state of exhaustion would supervene such as Europe has not experienced for 200 years. American industry would then conquer all along the line and would force us all up against the alternatives: either retrogression to nothing but agriculture for *home consumption* (American corn forbids anything else) or — social transformation. I imagine, therefore, that the plan is not to push things to extremities, to more than a sham war. But once the first shot is fired, control ceases, the horse can take the bit between its teeth.

— ENGELS, Letter to Sorge (1888), MARX and ENGELS, *Selected Correspondence*, pp. 455f.

E. CONSEQUENCES OF A WORLD WAR

And finally no war is any longer possible for Prussia-Germany except a world war and a world war indeed of an extension and violence hitherto undreamt-of. Eight to ten millions of soldiers will mutually massacre one another and in doing so devour the whole of Europe until they have stripped it barer than any swarm of locusts has ever done. The devastations of the Thirty Years' War compressed into three or four years, and spread over the whole Continent; famine, pestilence, general demoralization both of the armies and of the mass of the people produced by acute distress; hopeless confusion of our artificial machinery in trade, industry and credit, ending in general bankruptcy; collapse of the old states and their traditional state wisdom to such an extent that crowns will roll by dozens on the pavement and there will be nobody to pick them up; absolute impossibility of foreseeing how it will all end and who will come out of the struggle as victor; only one result absolutely certain: general exhaustion and the establishment of the conditions for the ultimate victory of the working class. This is the prospect when the system of mutual outbidding in armaments, driven to extremities, at last bears its inevitable fruits. This, my lords, princes and statesmen, is where in your wisdom you have brought old Europe. And when nothing more remains to you but to open the last great war dance—that will suit us all right. The war may perhaps push us temporarily into the background, may wrench from us many a position already conquered. But when you have unfettered forces which you will then no longer be able again to control, things may go as they will: at the end of the tragedy you will be ruined and the victory of the proletariat will either be already achieved or at any rate inevitable.

—ENGELS, "Preface," S. Borkheim's *In Memory of the Supreme German Patriots 1806-1807* (1889), MARX and ENGELS, *Selected Correspondence*, pp. 456f.

F. THE "MISSION" OF CAPITALISM IN RUSSIA

We still have, in conclusion, to sum up on the question which in literature has come to be known as that of the "mission" of capitalism, *i.e.*, of its historical role in the economic development of Russia. Recognition of the progressiveness of this role is quite compatible (as we have tried to show in detail at every

stage in our exposition of the facts) with the full recognition of the negative and dark sides of capitalism, with the full recognition of the profound and all-sided social contradictions which are inevitably inherent in capitalism, and which reveal the historically transient character of this economic regime. It is the Narodniks—who exert every effort to make it appear that to admit that capitalism is historically progressive means to be an apologist of capitalism—who are at fault in underrating (and sometimes in even ignoring) the most profound contradictions of Russian capitalism, by glossing over the disintegration of the peasantry, the capitalist character of the evolution of our agriculture, and the rise of a class of rural and industrial allotment-holding wage laborers, by glossing over the complete predominance of the lowest and worst forms of capitalism in the celebrated “kustar” industries.

The progressive historical role of capitalism may be summed up in two brief propositions: increase in the productive forces of social labor, and the socialization of that labor. But both these facts manifest themselves in extremely diverse processes in different branches of the national economy.

The development of the productive forces of social labor is to be observed in full relief only in the epoch of large-scale machine industry. Until that highest stage of capitalism was reached, there still remained hand production and primitive technique, which developed quite spontaneously and exceedingly slowly. The post-Reform epoch differs radically in this respect from previous epochs in Russian history. The Russia of the wooden plough and the flail, of the watermill and the handloom, began rapidly to be transformed into the Russia of the iron plough and the threshing machine, of the steam mill and the power loom. There is not a single branch of the national economy subordinate to capitalist production where an equally thorough transformation of technique is not to be observed. The process of this transformation cannot, by the very nature of capitalism, proceed except amid a series of unevennesses and disproportions: periods of prosperity alternate with periods of crisis; the development of one industry leads to the decline of another, the progress of agriculture covers one aspect of agriculture in one area, and another in another, the growth of trade and industry outstrips the growth of agriculture, etc. A whole

number of the errors of Narodnik authors spring from their efforts to prove that this disproportionate, spasmodic, feverish development is not development.

Another feature of the development by capitalism of the social productive forces is that the growth of the means of production (productive consumption) outstrips by far the growth of personal consumption: we have indicated on more than one occasion how this is manifested in agriculture and in industry. This feature springs from the general laws of the realization of the product in capitalist society, and fully conforms to the antagonistic nature of this society.

The socialization of labor by capitalism is manifested in the following processes. Firstly, the very growth of commodity production destroys the scatteredness of small economic units, that is characteristic of natural economy, and draws together the small local markets into an enormous national (and then world) market. Production for oneself is transformed into production for the whole of society; and the higher capitalism is developed, the stronger becomes the contradiction between this collective character of production and the individual character of appropriation. Secondly, in place of the former scatteredness of production, capitalism creates an unprecedented concentration of it, both in agriculture and in industry. That is the most striking and outstanding, but not the only, manifestation of the feature of capitalism under review. Thirdly, capitalism ousts the forms of personal dependence that constituted an inalienable component of preceding systems of economy. In Russia, the progressive character of capitalism in this respect is particularly marked, since the personal dependence of the producer existed in our country (and partly continues to exist to this day) not only in agriculture but also in manufacturing industry ("factories" employing serf labor), in the mining and metallurgical industries, in the fishing industry, etc.

Compared with the labor of the dependent or bonded peasant, the labor of the freely hired worker is progressive in all branches of the national economy. Fourthly, capitalism necessarily creates mobility of the population, something not required by previous systems of social economy and impossible under them on anything like a large scale. Fifthly, capitalism constantly reduces the proportion of the population engaged in agriculture

(where the most backward forms of social and economic relationships always prevail), and increases the number of large industrial centers. Sixthly, capitalist society increases the populations's need for association, for organization, and lends these organizations a character distinct from those of former times. While breaking down the narrow, local, social-estate associations of medieval society and creating fierce competition, capitalism at the same time splits the whole of society into large groups of persons occupying different positions in production, and gives a tremendous impetus to organization within each group. Seventhly, all the above-mentioned changes effected in the old economic system by capitalism inevitably lead also to a change in the mentality of the population. The spasmodic character of economic development, the rapid transformation of the methods of production and the enormous concentration of production, the disappearance of all forms of personal dependence and patriarchalism in relationships, the mobility of the population, the influence of the big industrial centers, etc.—all this cannot but lead to a profound change in the very character of the producers. . . .

—LENIN, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* (1899), pp. 654-59.

G. THE 1905 REVOLUTION

Today is the twelfth anniversary of "Bloody Sunday", which is rightly regarded as the beginning of the Russian revolution.

Thousands of workers—not Social Democrats, but loyal god-fearing subjects—led by the priest Gapon, streamed from all parts of the capital to its center, to the square in front of the Winter Palace, to submit a petition to the tsar. The workers carried icons. In a letter to the tsar, their then leader, Gapon, had guaranteed his personal safety and asked him to appear before the people.

Troops were called out. Uhlans and Cossacks attacked the crowd with drawn swords. They fired on the unarmed workers, who on their bended knees implored the Cossacks to allow them to go to the tsar. Over 1,000 were killed and over 2,000 wounded on that day, according to police reports. The indignation of the workers was indescribable.

Such is the general picture of January 22, 1905—"Bloody Sunday".

That you may understand more clearly the historic significance of this event, I shall quote a few passages from the workers' petition. It begins with the following words:

"We workers, inhabitants of St. Petersburg, have come to Thee. We are unfortunate, reviled slaves, weighed down by despotism and tyranny. Our patience exhausted, we ceased work and begged our masters to give us only that without which life is a torment. But this was refused; to the employers everything seemed unlawful. We are here, many thousands of us. Like the whole of the Russian people, we have no human rights whatever. Owing to the deeds of Thy officials we have become slaves".

The petition contains the following demands: amnesty, civil liberties, fair wages, gradual transfer of the land to the people, convocation of a constituent assembly on the basis of universal and equal suffrage. It ends with the following words:

"Sire, do not refuse aid to Thy people! Demolish the wall that separates Thee from Thy people. Order and promise that our requests will be granted, and Thou wilt make Russia happy; if not, we are ready to die on this very spot. We have only two roads: freedom and happiness, or the grave."

Reading it *now*, this petition of uneducated, illiterate workers, led by a patriarchal priest, creates a strange impression. Involuntarily one compares this naïve petition with the present peace resolutions of the social-pacifists, the would-be socialists who in reality are bourgeois phrase-mongers. The unenlightened workers of prerevolutionary Russia did not know that the tsar was the head of the *ruling class*, the class, namely of big landowners, already bound by a thousand ties with the big bourgeoisie and prepared to defend their monopoly, privileges and profits by every means of violence. The social-pacifists of today, who pretend to be "highly educated" people—no joking—do not realize that it is just as foolish to expect a "democratic" peace from bourgeois governments that are waging an imperialist predatory war, as it was to believe that peaceful petitions would induce the bloody tsar to grant democratic reforms.

Nevertheless, there is a great difference between the two—the present-day social-pacifists are, to a large extent, hypocrites, who strive by gentle admonitions to divert the people from the rev-

olutionary struggle, whereas the uneducated workers in pre-revolutionary Russia proved by their deeds that they were straightforward people awakened to political consciousness for the first time.

It is in this awakening of tremendous masses of the people to political consciousness and revolutionary struggle that the historic significance of January 22, 1905 lies.

"There is not yet a revolutionary people in Russia," wrote Mr. Pyotr Struve, then leader of the Russian liberals and publisher abroad of an illegal, uncensored organ, *two days* before "Bloody Sunday". The idea that an illiterate peasant country could produce a revolutionary people seemed utterly absurd to this "highly educated," supercilious and extremely stupid leader of the bourgeois reformists. So deep was the conviction of the reformists of those days—as of the reformists of today—that a real revolution was impossible!

Prior to January 22 (or January 9, old style), 1905, the revolutionary party of Russia consisted of a small group of people, and the reformists of those days (exactly like the reformists of today) derisively called us a "sect". Several hundred revolutionary organizers, several thousand members of local organizations, half a dozen revolutionary papers appearing not more frequently than once a month, published mainly abroad and smuggled into Russia with incredible difficulty and at the cost of many sacrifices—such were the revolutionary parties in Russia, and the revolutionary Social-Democracy in particular, prior to January 22, 1905. This circumstance gave the narrow-minded and overbearing reformists formal justification for their claim that there was not yet a revolutionary people in Russia.

Within a few months, however, the picture changed completely. The hundreds of revolutionary Social-Democrats "suddenly" grew into thousands; the thousands became the leaders of between two and three million proletarians. The proletarian struggle produced widespread ferment, often revolutionary movements among the peasant masses, 50 to 100 million strong; the peasant movement had its reverberations in the army and led to soldiers' revolts, to armed clashes between one section of the army and another. In this manner a colossal country, with a population of 130,000,000, went into the revolution; in this way, dormant Russia was transformed into a Russia of a revolutionary proletariat and a revolutionary people.

It is necessary to study this transformation, understand why it was possible, its methods and ways, so to speak.

The principal factor in this transformation was the *mass strike*. The peculiarity of the Russian revolution is that it was a *bourgeois-democratic* revolution in its social content, but a *proletarian* revolution in its methods of struggle. It was a bourgeois-democratic revolution since its immediate aim, which it could achieve directly and with its own forces, was a democratic republic, the eight-hour day and confiscation of the immense estates of the nobility—all the measures the French bourgeois revolution in 1792-93 had almost completely achieved.

At the same time, the Russian revolution was also a proletarian revolution, not only in the sense that the proletariat was the leading force, the vanguard of the movement, but also in the sense that a specifically proletarian weapon of struggle—the strike—was the principal means of bringing the masses into motion and the most characteristic phenomenon in the wave-like rise of decisive events. . . .

The history of the Russian revolution shows that it was the vanguard, the finest elements of the wage-workers, that fought with the greatest tenacity and the greatest devotion. The larger the mills and factories involved, the more stubborn were the strikes, and the more often did they recur during the year. The bigger the city, the more important was the part the proletariat played in the struggle. Three big cities, St. Petersburg, Riga and Warsaw, which have the largest and most class-conscious working-class element, show an immeasurably greater number of strikers, in relation to all workers, than any other city, and, of course, much greater than the rural districts. . . .

A distinctive feature was the manner in which economic strikes were interwoven with political strikes during the revolution. There can be no doubt that only this very close link-up of the two forms of strike gave the movement its great power. The broad masses of the exploited could not have been drawn into the revolutionary movement had they not been given daily examples of how the wage-workers in the various industries were forcing the capitalists to grant immediate, direct improvements in their conditions. This struggle imbued the masses of the Russian people with a new spirit. Only then did the old serf-ridden, sluggish, patriarchal, pious and obedient Russia cast out the old Adam; only then did the Russian people obtain a really democratic and really revolutionary education.

When the bourgeois gentry and their uncritical echoers, the social-reformists, talk priggishly about the "education" of the masses, they usually mean something schoolmasterly, pedantic, something that demoralizes the masses and instils in them bourgeois prejudices.

The real education of the masses can never be separated from their independent political, and especially revolutionary, struggle. Only struggle educates the exploited class. Only struggle discloses to it the magnitude of its own power, widens its horizon, enhances its abilities, clarifies its mind, forges its will. That is why even reactionaries had to admit that the year 1905, the year of struggle, the "mad year," definitely buried patriarchal Russia. . . .

The beginning of 1905 brought the first great wave of strikes that swept the entire country. As early as the spring of that year we see the rise of the first big, not only economic, but also political *peasant movement* in Russia. The importance of this historical turning-point will be appreciated if it is borne in mind that the Russian peasantry was liberated from the severest form of serfdom only in 1861, that the majority of the peasants are illiterate, that they live in indescribable poverty, oppressed by the landlords, deluded by the priests and isolated from each other by vast distances and an almost complete absence of roads.

Russia witnessed the first revolutionary movement against tsarism in 1825, a movement represented almost exclusively by noblemen. Thereafter and up to 1881, when Alexander II was assassinated by the terrorists, the movement was led by middle-class intellectuals. They displayed supreme self-sacrifice and astonished the whole world by the heroism of their terrorist methods of struggle. Their sacrifices were certainly not in vain. They doubtlessly contributed—directly or indirectly—to the subsequent revolutionary education of the Russian people. But they did not, and could not, achieve their immediate aim of generating a people's revolution.

That was achieved only by the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat. Only the waves of mass strikes that swept over the whole country, strikes connected with the severe lessons of the imperialist Russo-Japanese War, roused the broad masses of peasants from their lethargy. The word "striker" acquired an entirely new meaning among the peasants: it signified a rebel,

a revolutionary, a term previously expressed by the word "student." But the "student" belonged to the middle class, to the "learned", to the "gentry", and was therefore alien to the people. The "striker", on the other hand, was of the people; he belonged to the exploited class. Deported from St. Petersburg, he often returned to the village where he told his fellow-villagers of the conflagration which was spreading to all the cities and would destroy both the capitalists and the nobility. A new type appeared in the Russian village — the class-conscious young peasant. He associated with "strikers", he read newspapers, he told the peasants about events in the cities, explained to his fellow-villagers the meaning of political demands, and urged them to fight the landowning nobility, the priests and the government officials.

The peasants would gather in groups to discuss their conditions, and gradually they were drawn into the struggle. Large crowds attacked the big estates, set fire to the manor-houses and appropriated supplies, seized grain and other foodstuffs, killed policemen and demanded transfer to the people of the huge estates.

In the spring of 1905, the peasant movement was only just beginning, involving only a minority, approximately one-seventh, of the uyezds [districts].

But the combination of the proletarian mass strikes in the cities with the peasant movement in the rural areas was sufficient to shake the "firmest" and last prop of tsarism. I refer to the *army*.

There began a series of *mutinies* in the navy and the army. During the revolution, every fresh wave of strikes and of the peasant movement was accompanied by mutinies in all parts of Russia. The most well-known of these is the mutiny on the Black Sea cruiser *Prince Potemkin*, which was seized by the mutineers and took part in the revolution in Odessa. After the defeat of the revolution and unsuccessful attempts to seize other ports (Feodosia in the Crimea, for instance), it surrendered to the Rumanian authorities in Constanta. . . .

A comparison of these 1905 mutinies with the Decembrist uprising of 1825 is particularly interesting. In 1825 the leaders of the political movement were almost exclusively officers, and officers drawn from the nobility. They had become infected,

through contact, with the democratic ideas of Europe during the Napoleonic wars. The mass of the soldiers, who at that time were still serfs, remained passive.

The history of 1905 presents a totally different picture. With few exceptions, the mood of the officers was either bourgeois-liberal, reformist, or frankly counter-revolutionary. The workers and peasants in military uniform were the soul of the mutinies. The movement spread to all sections of the people, and for the first time in Russia's history involved the majority of the exploited. But what it lacked was, on the one hand, persistence and determination among the masses—they were too much afflicted with the malady of trustfulness—and, on the other, organization of revolutionary Social-Democratic workers in military uniform—they lacked the ability to take the leadership into their own hands, march at the head of the revolutionary army and launch an offensive against the government.

I might remark, incidentally, that these two shortcomings will—more slowly, perhaps, than we would like, but surely—be eliminated not only by the general development of capitalism, but also by the present war. . . .

At any rate, the history of the Russian revolution, like the history of the Paris Commune of 1871, teaches us the incontrovertible lesson that militarism can never and under no circumstances be defeated and destroyed, except by a victorious struggle of one section of the national army against the other section. It is not sufficient simply to denounce, revile and “repudiate” militarism, to criticize and prove that it is harmful; it is foolish peacefully to refuse to perform military service. The task is to keep the revolutionary consciousness of the proletariat tense and train its best elements, not only in a general way, but concretely, so that when popular ferment reaches the highest pitch, they will put themselves at the head of the revolutionary army.

The day-to-day experience of any capitalist country teaches us the same lesson. Every “minor” crisis that such a country experiences discloses to us in miniature the elements, the rudiments, of the battles that will inevitably take place on a large scale during a big crisis. What else, for instance, is a strike if not a minor crisis of capitalist society? Was not the Prussian Minister for Internal Affairs, Herr von Puttkammer, right when he coined the famous phrase: “In every strike there lurks the hydra

of revolution"? Does not the calling out of troops during strikes in all, even the most peaceful, the most "democratic" — save the mark — capitalist countries show *how* things will shape out in a really *big* crisis?

But to return to the history of the Russian revolution.

I have tried to show you how the workers' strikes sitred up up the whole country and the broadest, most backward strata of the exploited, how the peasant movement began, and how it was accompanied by mutiny in the armed forces.

The movement reached its zenith in the autumn of 1905. On August 19, the tsar issued a manifesto on the introduction of popular representation. The so-called Bulygin Duma was to be created on the basis of a suffrage embracing a ridiculously small number of voters, and this peculiar "parliament" was to have no legislative powers whatever, only *advisory*, consultative powers!

The bourgeoisie, the liberals, the opportunists were ready to grasp with both hands this "gift" of the frightened tsar. Like all reformists, our reformists of 1905 could not understand that historic situations arise when reforms, and particularly promises of reforms, pursue only one aim: to allay the unrest of the people, force the revolutionary class to cease, or at least slacken, its struggle.

The Russian revolutionary Social-Democracy was well aware of the real nature of this grant of an illusory constitution in August 1905. That is why, without a moment's hesitation, it issued the slogans: "Down with the advisory Duma! Boycott the Duma! Down with the tsarist government! Continue the revolutionary struggle to overthrow it! Not the tsar, but a provisional revolutionary government must convene Russia's first real, popular representative assembly!"

History proved that the revolutionary Social-Democrats were right, for the *Bulygin Duma* was never convened. It was swept away by the revolutionary storm before it could be convened. And this storm forced the tsar to promulgate a new electoral law, which provided for a considerable increase in the number of voters, and to recognize the legislative character of the Duma.

October and December 1905 marked the highest point in the rising tide of the Russian revolution. All the wellsprings of the people's revolutionary strength flowed in a wider stream

than ever before. The number of strikers—which in January 1905, as I have already told you, was 440,000—reached over half a million in October 1905 (in a single month!). To this number, which applies *only* to factory workers, must be added several hundred thousand railway workers, postal and telegraph employees, etc.

The general railway strike stopped all rail traffic and paralyzed the power of the government in the most effective manner. The doors of the universities were flung wide open, and the lecture halls, which in peacetime were used solely to befuddle youthful minds with pedantic professorial wisdom and to turn the students into docile servants of the bourgeoisie and tsarism, now became the scene of public meetings at which thousands of workers, artisans and office workers openly and freely discussed political issues.

Freedom of the press was won. The censorship was simply ignored. No publisher dared send the obligatory censor-copy to the authorities, and the authorities did not dare take any measure against this. For the first time in Russian history, revolutionary newspapers appeared freely in St. Petersburg and other towns. In St. Petersburg alone, three Social-Democratic daily papers were published, with circulations ranging from 50,000 to 100,000.

The proletariat marched at the head of the movement. It set out to win the eight-hour day by revolutionary action. "*An Eight-Hour Day and Arms!*" was the fighting slogan of the St. Petersburg proletariat. That the fate of the revolution could, and would, be decided only by armed struggle was becoming obvious to an ever-increasing mass of workers.

In the fire of battle, a peculiar mass organization was formed, the famous *Soviets of Workers' Deputies*, comprising delegates from all factories. In several cities these *Soviets of Workers' Deputies* began more and more to play the part of a provisional revolutionary government, the part of organs and leaders of the uprising. Attempts were made to organize Soviets of Soldiers' and Sailors' Deputies and to combine them with the Soviets of Workers' Deputies.

For a time several cities in Russia became something in the nature of small local "republics." The government authorities were deposed and the Soviet of Workers' Deputies actually

functioned as the new government. Unfortunately, these periods were all too brief, the "victories" were too weak, too isolated.

The peasant movement in the autumn of 1905 reached still greater dimensions. *Over one-third* of all the uyezds were affected by the so-called "peasant disorders" and regular peasant uprisings. The peasants burned down no less than two thousand estates and distributed among themselves the food stocks of which the predatory nobility had robbed the people.

Unfortunately, this work was not thorough enough! Unfortunately, the peasants destroyed only one-fifteenth of the total number of landed estates, only one-fifteenth part of what they *should have* destroyed in order to wipe the shame of large feudal landownership from the face of Russian earth. Unfortunately, the peasants were too scattered, too isolated from each other in their actions; they were not organized enough, not aggressive enough, and therein lies one of the fundamental reasons for the defeat of the revolution.

A movement for national liberation flared up among the oppressed peoples of Russia. *Over one-half, almost three-fifths (to be exact, 57 per cent)* of the population of Russia is subject to national oppression; they are not even free to use their native language, they are forcibly Russified. The Moslems, for instance, who number tens of millions, were quick to organize a Moslem League — this was a time of rapid growth of all manner of organizations.

The following instance will give the audience, particularly the youth, an example of how at that time the movement for national liberation in Russia rose in conjunction with the labor movement.

In December 1905, Polish children in hundreds of schools burned all Russian books, pictures and portraits of the tsar, and attacked and drove out the Russian teachers and their Russian schoolfellows, shouting: "Get out! Go back to Russia!" The Polish secondary school pupils put forward, among others, the following demands: (1) all secondary schools must be under the control of a Soviet of Workers' Deputies; (2) joint pupils' and workers' meetings to be held in school premises; (3) secondary school pupils to be allowed to wear red blouses as a token of adherence to the future proletarian republic.

The higher the tide of the movement rose, the more vigorously and decisively did the reaction arm itself to fight the revolution. The Russian Revolution of 1905 confirmed the truth of what Karl Kautsky wrote in 1902 in his book *Social Revolution* (he was still, incidentally, a revolutionary Marxist and not, as at present, a champion of social-patriotism and opportunism). This is what he wrote:

“...The impending revolution...will be less like a spontaneous uprising against the government and more like a protracted *civil war*.”

That is how it was, and undoubtedly that is how it will be in the coming European revolution!

Tsarism vented its hatred particularly upon the Jews. On the one hand, the Jews furnished a particularly high percentage (compared with the total Jewish population) of leaders of the revolutionary movement. And now, too, it should be noted to the credit of the Jews, they furnish a relatively high percentage of internationalists, compared with other nations. On the other hand, tsarism adroitly exploited the basest anti-Jewish prejudices of the most ignorant strata of the population in order to organize, if not to lead directly, *pogroms*—over 4,000 were killed and more than 10,000 mutilated in 100 towns. These atrocious massacres of peaceful Jews, their wives and children, roused disgust throughout the civilized world. I have in mind, of course, the disgust of the truly democratic elements of the civilized world, and these are *exclusively* the socialist workers, the proletarians.

Even in the freest, even in the republican countries of Western Europe, the bourgeoisie manages very well to combine its hypocritical phrases about “Russian atrocities” with financial support of tsarism and imperialist exploitation of Russia through export of capital, etc.

The climax of the 1905 Revolution came in the December uprising in Moscow. For nine days a small number of rebels, of organized and armed workers—there were not more than *eight thousand*—fought against the tsar’s government, which dared not trust the Moscow garrison. In fact, it had to keep it locked up, and was able to quell the rebellion only by bringing in the Semenovskiy Regiment from St. Petersburg.

The bourgeoisie likes to describe the Moscow uprising as something artificial, and to treat it with ridicule. For instance, in

German so-called "scientific" literature, Herr Professor Max Weber, in his lengthy survey of Russia's political development, refers to the Moscow uprising as a "putsch." "The Lenin group," says this "highly learned" Herr Professor, "and a section of the Socialist-Revolutionaries had long prepared for this *senseless* uprising."

To properly assess this piece of professorial wisdom of the cowardly bourgeoisie, one need only recall the strike statistics. In January 1905, only 123,000 were involved in purely political strikes, in October the figure was 330,000, and *in December the maximum was reached—370,000* taking part in purely political strikes in a single month! Let us recall, too, the progress of the revolution, the peasant and soldier uprisings, and we shall see that the bourgeois "scientific" view of the December uprising is not only absurd. It is a subterfuge resorted to by the representatives of the cowardly bourgeoisie, which sees in the proletariat its most dangerous class enemy.

In reality, the inexorable trend of the Russian revolution was towards an armed, decisive battle between the tsarist government and the vanguard of the class-conscious proletariat.

I have already pointed out, in my previous remarks, wherein lay the weakness of the Russian revolution that led to its temporary defeat.

The suppression of the December uprising marked the beginning of the ebb of the revolution. But in this period, too, extremely interesting moments are to be observed. Suffice it to recall that twice the foremost militant elements of the working class tried to check the retreat of the revolution and to prepare a new offensive.

But my time has nearly expired, and I do not want to abuse the patience of my audience. I think, however, that I have outlined the most important aspects of the revolution—its class character, its driving forces and its methods of struggle—as fully as so big a subject can be dealt with in a brief lecture.

A few brief remarks concerning the world significance of the Russian revolution.

Geographically, economically and historically, Russia belongs not only to Europe, but also to Asia. That is why the Russian revolution succeeded not only in finally awakening Europe's biggest and most backward country and in creating a revolutionary people led by a revolutionary proletariat.

It achieved more than that. The Russian revolution engendered a movement throughout the whole of Asia. The revolutions in Turkey, Persia and China prove that the mighty uprising of 1905 left a deep imprint, and that its influence, expressed in the forward movement of *hundreds and hundreds* of millions, is ineradicable.

In an indirect way, the Russian revolution influenced also the countries of the West. One must not forget that news of the tsar's constitutional manifesto, on reaching Vienna on October 30, 1905, played a decisive part in the final victory of universal suffrage in Austria. . . .

The forms and occasions for the impending battles in the coming European revolution will doubtlessly differ in many respects from the forms of the Russian revolution.

Nevertheless, the Russian revolution — precisely because of its proletarian character, in that particular sense of which I have spoken — is the *prologue* to the coming European revolution. Undoubtedly, this coming revolution can only be a proletarian revolution, and in an even more profound sense of the word: a proletarian, socialist revolution also in its content. This coming revolution will show to an even greater degree, on the one hand, that only stern battles, only civil wars, can free humanity from the yoke of capital, and, on the other hand, that only class-conscious proletarians can and will give leadership to the vast majority of the exploited.

We must not be deceived by the present grave-like stillness in Europe. Europe is pregnant with revolution. The monstrous horrors of the imperialist war, the suffering caused by the high cost of living everywhere engender a revolutionary mood; and the ruling classes, the bourgeoisie, and its servitors, the governments, are more and more moving into a blind alley from which they can never extricate themselves without tremendous upheavals.

Just as in Russia in 1905, a popular uprising against the tsarist government began under the leadership of the proletariat with the aim of achieving a democratic republic, so, in Europe, the coming years, precisely because of this predatory war, will lead to popular uprisings under the leadership of the proletariat against the power of finance capital, against the big banks, against the capitalists; and these upheavals cannot end other-

wise than with the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, with the victory of socialism.

We of the older generation may not live to see the decisive battles of this coming revolution. But I can, I believe, express the confident hope that the youth which is working so splendidly in the socialist movement of Switzerland, and of the whole world, will be fortunate enough not only to fight, but also to win, in the coming proletarian revolution.

—LENIN, "Lecture on the 1905 Revolution" (Jan. 1917),
Selected Works (3 vol. ed.), vol. 1, pp. 788-802.

H. BETWEEN THE FEBRUARY AND OCTOBER REVOLUTIONS

The moment of history through which Russia is now passing is marked by the following main characteristics:

The Class Character of the Revolution That Has Taken Place

(1) The old tsarist power, which represented only a handful of feudalist landowners who commanded the entire state machinery (the army, the police and the bureaucracy), has been overthrown and removed, but not completely destroyed. The monarchy has not been formally abolished; the Romanov gang continues to hatch monarchist intrigues. The vast landed possessions of the feudalist squirearchy have not been abolished.

(2) State power in Russia has passed into the hands of a new class, namely, the bourgeoisie and landowners who had become bourgeois. *To this extent* the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia is completed.

Having come to power, the bourgeoisie has formed a bloc (an alliance) with the overt monarchists, who are notorious for their exceptionally ardent support of Nicholas the Bloody and Stolypin the Hangman in 1906-14 (Guchkov and other politicians to the right of the Cadets). The new bourgeois government of Lvov and Co. has attempted and has begun to negotiate with the Romanovs for the restoration of the monarchy in Russia. Behind a screen of revolutionary phrases, this government is appointing partisans of the old regime to key positions. It is striving to reform the whole machinery of state (the army, the police and the bureaucracy) as little as possible, and has turned it over to the bourgeoisie. The new government has already begun to hinder

in every way the revolutionary initiative of mass action and the seizure of power by the people *from below*, which is the *sole* guarantee of the real success of the revolution.

Up to now this government has not even fixed a date for the convocation of the Constituent Assembly. It is now laying a finger on the landed estates, which form the material foundation of feudal tsarism. This government does not even contemplate starting an investigation into, and making public, the activities of the monopolist financial organizations, the big banks, the syndicates and cartels of the capitalists, etc., or instituting control over them.

The key positions, the decisive ministerial posts in the new government (the Ministry of the Interior and the War Ministry, *i.e.*, the command over the army, the police, the bureaucracy — the entire apparatus for oppressing the people) are held by outright monarchists and supporters of the system of big landed estates. The Cadets, these day-old republicans, republicans against their own will, have been assigned minor posts, having no direct relation to the *command* over the people or to the apparatus of state power. A. Kerensky, a Trudovik and “would-be socialist,” has no function whatsoever, except to lull the vigilance and attention of the people with sonorous phrases.

For all these reasons, the new bourgeois government does not deserve the confidence of the proletariat even in the sphere of internal policy, and no support of this government by the proletariat is admissible.

The Foreign Policy of the New Government

(3) In the field of foreign policy, which has now been brought to the forefront by objective circumstances, the new government is a government for the continuation of the imperialist war, a war that is being waged in alliance with the imperialist powers — Britain, France and others — for division of the capitalist spoils and for subjugating small and weak nations.

Subordinated to the interests of Russian capitalism and its powerful protector and master — Anglo-French imperialist capitalism, the wealthiest in the world — the new government, notwithstanding the wishes expressed in no uncertain fashion on behalf of the obvious majority of the peoples of Russia through the Soviet of Soldiers' and Workers' Deputies, has taken no

real steps to put an end to the slaughter of peoples for the interests of the capitalists. It has not even published the secret treaties of an obviously predatory character (for the partition of Persia, the plunder of China, the plunder of Turkey, the partition of Austria, the annexation of Eastern Prussia, the annexation of the German colonies, etc.), which, as everybody knows, bind Russia to Anglo-French predatory imperialist capital. It has *confirmed* these treaties concluded by tsarism, which for centuries robbed and oppressed more nations than other tyrants and despots, and which not only oppressed, but also disgraced and demoralized the great Russian nation by making it an executioner of other nations.

The new government has confirmed these shameful depredatory treaties and has not proposed an immediate armistice to all the belligerent nations, in spite of the clearly expressed demand of the majority of the peoples of Russia, voiced through the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. It has evaded the issue with the help of solemn, sonorous, bombastic, but absolutely empty declarations and phrases, which, in the mouths of bourgeois diplomats, have always served, and still serve, to deceive the trustful and naive masses of the oppressed people.

(4) Not only, therefore, is the new government unworthy of the slightest confidence in the field of foreign policy, but to go on demanding that it should proclaim the will of the peoples of Russia for peace, that it should renounce annexations, and so on and so forth, is in practice merely to deceive the people, to inspire them with false hopes and to retard the clarification of their minds. It is indirectly to reconcile them to the continuation of a war the true social character of which is determined not by pious wishes, but by the class character of the government that wages the war, by the connection between the class represented by this government and the imperialist finance capital of Russia, Britain, France, etc., by *the real and actual policy* which that class is pursuing.

*The Peculiar Nature of the Dual Power
and its Class Significance*

(5) The main feature of our revolution, a feature that most imperatively demands thoughtful consideration, is the *dual*

power which arose in the very first days after the triumph of the revolution.

This dual power is evident in the existence of *two* governments: one is the main, the real, the actual government of the bourgeoisie, the "Provisional Government" of Lvov and Co., which holds in its hands all the organs of power; the other is a supplementary and parallel government, a "controlling" government in the shape of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, which holds no organs of state power, but directly rests on the support of an obvious and indisputable majority of the people, on the armed workers and soldiers.

The class origin and the class significance of this dual power is the following: the Russian revolution of March 1917 not only swept away the whole tsarist monarchy, not only transferred the entire power to the bourgeoisie, but also *moved close towards* a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. The Petrograd and the other, the local, Soviets constitute precisely such a dictatorship (that is, a power resting not on the law but directly on the force of armed masses of the population), a dictatorship precisely of the above-mentioned classes.

(6) The second highly important feature of the Russian revolution is the fact that the Petrograd Soviet of Soldiers' and Workers' Deputies, which, as everything goes to show, enjoys the confidence of most of the local Soviets, is *voluntarily* transferring state power to the bourgeoisie and *its* Provisional Government, is voluntarily *ceding* supremacy to the latter, having entered into an agreement to support it, and is limiting its own role to that of an observer, a supervisor of the convocation of the Constituent Assembly (the date for which has not even been announced as yet by the Provisional Government).

This remarkable feature, unparalleled in history in such a form, has led to the *interlocking of two* dictatorships: the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie (for the government of Lvov and Co. is a dictatorship, *i.e.*, a power based not on the law, not on the previously expressed will of the people, but on seizure by force, accomplished by a definite class, namely, the bourgeoisie) and the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry (the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies).

There is not the slightest doubt that such an "interlocking"

cannot last long. Two powers *cannot exist* in a state. One of them is bound to pass away; and the entire Russian bourgeoisie is already trying its hardest everywhere and in every way to keep out and weaken the Soviets, to reduce them to nought, and to establish the undivided power of the bourgeoisie.

The dual power merely expresses a *transitional* phase in the revolution's development, when it has gone farther than the ordinary bourgeois-democratic revolution, *but has not yet reached* a "pure" dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry.

The class significance (and the class explanation) of this transitional and unstable situation is this: like all revolutions, our revolution required the greatest heroism and self-sacrifice on the part of the people for the struggle against tsarism; it also immediately *drew* unprecedentedly vast numbers of ordinary citizens *into the movement*.

From the point of view of science and practical politics, one of the chief symptoms of *every* real revolution is the unusually rapid, sudden, and abrupt increase in the number of "ordinary citizens" who begin to participate actively, independently and effectively in political life and in the *organization of the state*.

Such is the case in Russia. Russia at present is seething. Millions and tens of millions of people, who had been politically dormant for ten years and politically crushed by the terrible oppression of tsarism and by inhuman toil for the landowners and capitalists, *have awakened and taken eagerly* to politics. And who are these millions and tens of millions? For the most part small proprietors, petty bourgeois, people standing midway between the capitalists and the wage workers. Russia is the most petty-bourgeois of all European countries.

A gigantic petty-bourgeois wave has swept over everything and overwhelmed the class-conscious proletariat, not only by force of numbers but also ideologically; that is, it has infected and imbued very wide circles of workers with the petty-bourgeois political outlook.

The petty bourgeoisie are in real life dependent upon the bourgeoisie, for they live like masters and not like proletarians (from the point of view of their *place* in social *production*) and follow the bourgeoisie in their outlook.

An attitude of unreasoning trust in the capitalists—the worst foes of peace and socialism—characterizes the politics of the

popular masses in Russia at the present moment; this is the fruit that has *grown* with revolutionary rapidity on the social and economic soil of the most petty-bourgeois of all European countries. This is the *class* basis for the “*agreement*” between the Provisional Government and the Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies (I emphasize that I am referring not so much to the formal agreement as to *actual* support, a tacit agreement, the surrender of power inspired by unreasoning trust), an agreement which has given the Guchkovs a fat piece—real power—and the Soviet merely promises and honors (for the time being), flattery, phrases, assurances and the bowings and scrapings of the Kerenskys.

On the other side we have the inadequate numerical strength of the proletariat in Russia and its insufficient class-consciousness and organization.

All the Narodnik parties, including the Socialist-Revolutionaries, have always been petty-bourgeois. This is also true of the party of the Organizing Committee (Chkheidze, Tsereteli, etc.). The non-party revolutionaries (Steklov and others) have similarly yielded to the tide, or have not been able to stand up to it, have not had the time to do it.

*The Peculiar Nature of the Tactics
Which Follow From the Above*

(7) For the Marxist, who must reckon with objective facts, with the masses and classes, and not with individuals and so on, the peculiar nature of the actual situation as described above must determine the peculiar nature of the tactics for the *present* moment.

This peculiarity of the situation calls, in the first place, for the “pouring of vinegar and bile into the sweet water of revolutionary-democratic phraseology” (as my fellow member on the Central Committee of our Party, Teodorovich, so aptly put it at yesterday’s session of the All-Russia Congress of Railwaymen in Petrograd). Our work must be one of criticism, of *explaining* the mistakes of the petty-bourgeois Socialist-Revolutionary and Social-Democratic parties, of preparing and welding the elements of a *consciously* proletarian, Communist party, and of curing the proletariat of “general” petty-bourgeois intoxication.

This *seems* to be “nothing more” than propaganda work, but

in reality it is most *practical revolutionary* work; for there is no advancing a revolution that has come to a standstill, that has choked itself with phrases, and that keeps "marking time," *not* because of external obstacles, *not because of the violence* of the bourgeoisie (Guchkov is still only threatening to employ violence against the soldier mass), but *because* of the unreasoning trust of the people.

Only by overcoming this unreasoning trust (and we can and should overcome it only ideologically, by comradely persuasion, by pointing to the *lessons of experience*) can we set ourselves free from the prevailing *orgy of revolutionary phrasemongering* and really stimulate the consciousness both of the proletariat and of the mass in general, as well as their bold and determined initiative *in the localities*—the independent realization, development and consolidation of liberties, democracy, and the principle of people's ownership of all the land.

(8) The worldwide experience of bourgeois and landowner governments has evolved *two* methods of keeping the people in subjection. The first is violence. Nicholas Romanov I, nicknamed Nicholas of the Big Stick, and Nicholas II, the Bloody, demonstrated to the Russian people the maximum of what can and cannot be done in the way of these hangmen's practices. But there is another method, best developed by the British and French bourgeoisie, who "learned their lesson" in a series of great revolutions and revolutionary movements of the masses. It is the method of deception, flattery, fine phrases, promises by the million, petty sops and concessions of the unessential while retaining the essential.

The peculiar feature of the present situation in Russia is the transition at a dizzy speed from the first method to the second, from violent oppression of the people to *flattering* and deceiving the people by promises. Vaska the Cat listens, but goes on eating. Milyukov and Guchkov are holding power, they are protecting the profits of the capitalists, conducting an imperialist war in the interests of Russian and Anglo-French capital, and trying to get away with promises, declamation and bombastic statements in reply to the speeches of "cooks" like Chkheidze, Tsereteli and Steklov, who threaten, exhort, conjure, beseech, demand and proclaim. . . . Vaska the Cat listens, but goes on eating.

But from day to day trustful lack of reasoning and unreasoning trust will be falling away, especially among the proletarians and *poor* peasants, who are being taught by experience (by their social and economic position) to distrust the capitalists.

The leaders of the petty bourgeoisie "must" teach the people to trust the bourgeoisie. The proletarians must teach the people to distrust the bourgeoisie.

— LENIN, "The Tasks of the Proletariat in our Revolution" (September 1917). *Selected Works* (3 vol. ed.), vol. II, pp. 23-29.

I. OBJECTIVE CONDITIONS FOR THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

To show that it is precisely the present moment that the Party *must* recognize as the one in which the entire course of events has objectively placed *insurrection* on the order of the day and that insurrection must be treated as an art, it will perhaps be best to use the method of comparison, and to draw a parallel between July 3-4 and the September days.

On July 3-4 it could have been argued, without violating the truth, that the correct thing to do was to take power, for our enemies would in any case have accused us of insurrection and ruthlessly treated us as rebels. However, to have decided on this account in favor of taking power at that time would have been wrong, because the objective conditions for the victory of the insurrection did not exist.

(1) We still lacked the support of the class which is the vanguard of the revolution.

We still did not have a majority among the workers and soldiers of Petrograd and Moscow. Now we have a majority in both Soviets. It was created *solely* by the history of July and August, by the experience of the "ruthless treatment" meted out to the Bolsheviks, and by the experience of the Kornilov revolt.

(2) There was no countrywide revolutionary upsurge at that time. There is now, after the Kornilov revolt; the situation in the provinces and assumption of power by the Soviets in many localities prove this.

(3) At that time there was no *vacillation* on any serious political scale among our enemies and among the irresolute petty bourgeoisie. Now the vacillation is enormous. Our main enemy,

Allied and world imperialism (for world imperialism is headed by the "Allies"), *has begun to waver* between a war to a victorious finish and a separate peace directed against Russia. Our petty-bourgeois democrats, having clearly lost their majority among the people, have begun to vacillate enormously, and have rejected a bloc, *i.e.*, a coalition, with the Cadets.

(4) Therefore, an insurrection on July 3-4 would have been a mistake; we could not have retained power either physically or politically. We could not have retained it physically even though Petrograd was at times in our hands, because at that time our workers and soldiers would not have *fought and died* for Petrograd. There was not at the time that "savageness", or fierce hatred *both of the Kerenskys and of the Tseretelis and Chernovs*. Our people had still not been tempered by the experience of the persecution of the Bolsheviks in which the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks participated.

We could not have retained power politically on July 3-4 because, *before the Kornilov revolt*, the army and the provinces could and would have marched against Petrograd.

Now the picture is entirely different.

We have the following of the majority of a *class*, the vanguard of the revolution, the vanguard of the people, which is capable of carrying the masses with it.

We have the following of the *majority* of the people, because Chernov's resignation, while by no means the only symptom, is the most striking and obvious symptom that the peasants *will not receive land* from the Socialist-Revolutionaries' bloc (or from the Socialist-Revolutionaries themselves). And that is the chief reason for the popular character of the revolution.

We are in the advantageous position of a party that knows for certain which way to go at a time when *imperialism as a whole* and the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary bloc as a whole are vacillating in an incredible fashion.

Our victory is assured, for the people are close to desperation, and we are showing the entire people a sure way out; we demonstrated to the entire people during the "Kornilov days" the value of our leadership, and then *proposed* to the politicians of the bloc a compromise, *which they rejected*, although there is no letup in their vacillations.

It would be a great mistake to think that our offer of a compromise had not *yet* been rejected, and that the Democratic Con-

ference may *still* accept it. The compromise was proposed *by a party to parties*; it could not have been proposed in any other way. It was rejected by *parties*. The Democratic Conference is a *conference*, and nothing more. One thing must not be forgotten, namely, that the *majority* of the revolutionary people, the poor, embittered peasants, are not represented in it. It is a conference of *a minority of the people*—this obvious truth must not be forgotten. It would be a big mistake, sheer parliamentary cretinism on our part, if we were to regard the Democratic Conference as a parliament; for even *if it were* to proclaim itself a permanent and sovereign parliament of the revolution, it would nevertheless *decide nothing*. The power of decision lies *outside it* in the working-class quarters of Petrograd and Moscow.

All the objective conditions exist for a successful insurrection. We have the exceptional advantage of a situation in which *only* our victory in the insurrection can put an end to that most painful thing on earth, vacillation, which has worn the people out; in which *only* our victory in the insurrection will give the peasants land immediately; a situation in which *only our* victory in the insurrection can *foil* the game of a separate peace directed against the revolution—foil it by publicly proposing a fuller, juster and earlier peace, a peace that will *benefit* the revolution.

—LENIN, “Marxism and Insurrection” (September 1917),
Selected Works (3 vol. ed.), vol. II, pp. 366-68.

PART THREE

PRE-CAPITALIST ECONOMIC FORMATIONS AND EUROPE'S TRANSITION TO CAPITALISM

All past history, with the exception of its primitive stages, was the history of class struggles; these warring classes of society are always the products of the modes of production and of exchange—in a word, of the economic conditions of their time.

—ENGELS, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (1880), MARX and ENGELS, *Selected Works* (1968), p. 415.

Introduction

WHEN MARX and Engels developed their theory of scientific socialism, they not only examined the capitalist world in which they lived; they also drew upon the general historical knowledge they had acquired as well-informed intellectuals of their time.

Very early, however, they learned that a deeper study of history was essential for the elaboration of their social ideas. They saw that capitalism could not be fully understood without knowing how it grew out of feudalism. A study of feudalism, in turn, led them back to the slave societies of the ancient world and to various other social formations in different parts of the globe.

Consequently, a large portion of the writings of Marx and Engels deals in considerable detail with historical matters. One of the first major works of Engels, *The Condition of the*

Working Class in England in 1844, not only describes life and work in Britain's great manufacturing centers, but studies the technological and social origins of the factory system. In this work Engels characterized what had happened in Britain in the late 18th and early 19th centuries as the "industrial revolution." —a designation that has been a scientific and household term ever since.

More than a decade later, after much work in history and economics on the part of both men, Marx compiled in 1857-1858 the voluminous manuscripts known as *Grundrisse der Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie*,* which he used as notes for *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859) and later for *Capital*. The section of the *Grundrisse* printed as *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*, as well as the "Preface" and "Introduction" to the *Critique of Political Economy*, contain wide-ranging and scholarly discussions of historical questions. The areas covered include not only classical antiquity and European feudalism, but also the early development of Asian society and the then almost unexplored prehistoric periods of Germanic and Slavonic tribal society.

Coming to more familiar works, there is general agreement on the brilliance of the historical analyses in Volume I of *Capital*, especially those chapters dealing with the primitive accumulation of capital. Less well known are the historical sections of Volume III (including Engels' "Supplement") which trace in detail the development of merchant and usurer capital from ancient times to the epoch of capitalism.

In later years, as Marx and Engels continued their historical studies, they were heartened to see some of their major hypotheses confirmed by the work of the German historian, George L. von Maurer, and the American pioneer anthropologist, Lewis Henry Morgan. Marx's herculean effort to complete *Capital* despite failing health prevented him from committing many of his further historical ideas to paper, but Engels—often utilizing Marx's notes—wrote the essay on "The Mark," a sketch of the history of the German peasant class and feudal property for-

*First published in German in 1939-41 (2 vols., Moscow), it is currently being translated into English as part of the *Collected Works of Marx and Engels*. A small portion of this work is available in English under the title, *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*.

mations, and his anthropological-political study, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*.

The way Marx and Engels posed the central questions of history shows their difference from traditional historians. Their historical writings deal with such questions as: What is the relationship between man's increasing mastery over the forces of nature and the social institutions he develops? How are we to explain the recurrent explosions that result in the replacing of one set of relations of production by another — that is, social revolution? What is the meaning of *property*, and how do societies in history each create their own distinctive forms of property relations? How do the division of labor and social cooperation make possible the creation of surpluses — without which progress is impossible? How does the state come into being, and what role does it play in different societies? What is the relationship between the institution of slavery and the achievements of classical antiquity? Why was the so-called Asiatic mode of production relatively stable, and why, on the other hand, was European feudalism far more receptive to change? What role do commodity exchange, money and commerce play in pre-capitalist societies? Why did capitalism develop out of European feudalism and not out of other societies? What are the decisive prerequisites for the emergence of capitalism? The excerpts in this section touch on these, as well as other equally provocative questions.

Marx and Engels' treatment of the question of "stages" in history is one of the most important — and most controversial — features of Marxist historical theory. Non-Marxists have made numerous attempts to delineate the main periods of history, from the simple division of ancient, medieval and modern, to the most intricate and bewildering schemata. Marx, basing himself on the primacy of production and production relations, saw the main social economic formations that developed out of primitive communism as the Asiatic, the ancient, the feudal, and the capitalist modes. The last of these, he believed, would be followed by the socialist or communist mode.

Increasing numbers of contemporary scholars have taken over — in whole or in part — the general Marxian approach to the question of socioeconomic formations. This is especially true among archaeologists and anthropologists, many of whom use Marxian and Marxian-derived concepts. It is also true among

historians who deal with the period of the transition from feudalism to capitalism. The greatest resistance to the acceptance of the Marxian approach is in the modern epoch, where some scholars try to obscure the specific characteristics of the capitalist mode and the socialist mode by the invention of such concepts as "industrial society," which is supposed to blanket the two. In addition, there are of course many historians and sociologists who deny the existence of any meaningful historical divisions. The material in this section, as well as in Part Four, will show how essential is the Marxist concept of social-economic formations.

In examining Marx's outline of socioeconomic formations—Asiatic, ancient, feudal, capitalist, and socialist—a number of things should be observed. First, it must be understood that Marx did not assert that there is a simple linear pattern of historical development. Many, including some Marxists, have interpreted the highly condensed summary of the succession of historical periods in the well-known "Preface" to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* to mean that all history, in all times and all places, mechanically follows the sequence Marx outlined. A deeper reading of his works, especially *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*, shows that this was not Marx's view. He saw the question of "stages" as highly complex and, when analyzed concretely, requiring many careful qualifications. It was because they understood that their generalized historical theory needed refinement, qualification and development that Marx and Engels gave so much time and energy to particular, detailed historical studies. They never ceased checking their theory against the facts, and each new study added a new dimension to the theory.

Secondly, it should be noted that, except for capitalism, Marx and Engels did not work out the laws of the various social formations. As scientific scholars, they knew that the formulation of such laws requires full and accurate knowledge, which in their day was available only in fragmentary form. As late as 1890, Engels wrote: "All history must be studied afresh, the conditions of the existence of the different formations of society must be individually examined before the attempt is made to deduce from them the political, civil-legal, aesthetic, philosophic, religious, etc., notions corresponding to them. Only a little has

been done here up to now because only a few people have got down to it seriously.”*

Despite the scanty material at their disposal, Marx and Engels were able to make historical contributions on detailed matters as well as on general theory. Their most notable work was on the epoch of feudalism and the period of emerging capitalism, as the selections given here illustrate. In the area of primitive communism, Engels' *The Origin of the Family* and Marx's *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations* are both original and suggestive, although in fields that at the time of writing were virtually virgin territory. Their many comments on ancient society were widely scattered and often tangential to other themes they were discussing.

Two subjects which held special interest for Marx and Engels were the Asiatic mode of production and the early history of the German and Slavonic tribes. In dealing with the Asiatic mode, Marx provided insights into the basic structure of early Indian and Chinese societies, as well as other early social formations. In writing about the German and Slavonic tribes Marx showed—among many other things—how the concept of *property* developed as these peoples moved from primitive tribalism to class-divided societies.

Perhaps the most important contribution of Marx and Engels to historiography is their analysis of *transition*—the way in which new social formations replace old ones. Their fullest discussion is naturally on the transition from feudalism to capitalism, and is elaborated in *Capital* and elsewhere. Their approach to this decisive historical step is rich and many-sided, embracing innumerable complexities, variations, ebbs and flows. From their discussion one learns that laws in social science must never be oversimplified or treated dogmatically. Some of the problems about transition raised by Marx—for example, the precise timing and the relative weight of the elements in the transition from feudalism to capitalism—are still the subject of debate today. As for the transitions in earlier stages, Marx and Engels are deliberately tentative, merely indicating the main directions.

Marx and Engels' historical analyses threw light on events in their own times, and they continue to have relevance for subse-

*Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 473.

quent developments. For example, their studies of slavery in the ancient world helped them to understand the nature of slavery in the pre-Civil War United States. Their work on Indian history enabled them to expose British colonial policy and its specious rationalizations. Their understanding of the Asiatic mode and early Slavic history was useful in developing insights into the future of Russian political alternatives.

Lenin made use of Marx and Engels' work in his analysis of the remnants of slavery in the United States (*Capitalism and Agriculture in the United States of America*). He also followed their lead in his own extensive studies of Russian feudalism. In the process he made original analyses of the transition from feudalism to capitalism in Russia. His work in this area provided major premises for the Bolshevik approach to the specifics of the Russian Revolution. Scholars and political leaders in Asia, Africa and Latin America today make similar use of the historical writings of Marx and Engels, as well as those of Lenin.

[1]

ARCHAIC AND ANCIENT SOCIETIES

A. COMMUNAL PROPERTY RELATIONS

Once men finally settle down, the way in which to a smaller degree this original [tribal] community is modified, will depend on various external, climatic, geographical, physical, etc., conditions as well as on their special natural makeup—their tribal character. The spontaneously evolved tribal community, or, if you will, the herd—the common ties of blood, language, custom, etc.—is the first precondition of the appropriation of the objective conditions of life, and of the activity which reproduces and gives material expression to, or objectifies (*vergegenständlichen*) it (activity as herdsmen, hunters, agriculturalists, etc.). The earth is the great laboratory, the arsenal which provides both the means and the materials of labor, and also the location, the *basis* of the community. Men's relation to it is naïve: they regard themselves as its *communal proprietors*, and as those of the

community which produces and reproduces itself by living labor. Only in so far as the individual is a member—in the literal and figurative sense—of such a community, does he regard himself as an owner or possessor. In reality *appropriation* by means of the process of labor takes place under these *preconditions*, which are not the *product* of labor but appear as its natural or *divine* preconditions.

Where the fundamental relationship is the same, this form can realize itself in a variety of ways. For instance, as is the case in most Asiatic fundamental forms it is quite compatible with the fact that the *all-embracing unity* which stands above all these small common bodies may appear as the higher or *sole proprietor*, the real communities only as *hereditary* possessors. Since the *unity* is the real owner, and the real precondition of common ownership, it is perfectly possible for it to appear as something separate and superior to the numerous real, particular communities. The individual is then in fact propertyless, or property—*i.e.*, the relationship of the individual to the *natural* conditions of labor and reproduction, the inorganic nature which he finds and makes his own, the objective body of his subjectivity—appears to be mediated by means of a grant (*Ablassen*) from the total unity to the individual through the intermediary of the particular community. The despot here appears as the father of all the numerous lesser communities, thus realizing the common unity of all. It therefore follows that the surplus product (which, incidentally, is legally determined in terms of [*infolge*] the real appropriation through labor) belongs to this highest unity. Oriental despotism therefore appears to lead to a legal absence of property. In fact, however, its foundation is tribal or common property, in most cases created through a combination of manufacture and agriculture within the small community which thus becomes entirely self-sustaining and contains within itself all conditions of production and surplus production.

Part of its surplus labor belongs to the higher community, which ultimately appears as a *person*. This surplus labor is rendered both as tribute and as common labor for the glory of the unity, in part that of the despot, in part that of the imagined tribal entity of the god. In so far as this type of common property is actually realized in labor, it can appear in two ways. The small communities may vegetate independently side by side, and

within each the individual labors independently with his family on the land allotted to him. (There will also be a certain amount of labor for the common store – for insurance as it were – on the one hand; and on the other for defraying the costs of the community as such, *i.e.* for war, religious worship, etc. The dominion of lords, in its most primitive sense, arises only at this point, *e.g.* in the Slavonic and Rumanian communities. Here lies the transition to serfdom, etc.) Secondly, the unity can involve a common organization of labor itself, which in turn can constitute a veritable system, as in Mexico, and especially Peru, among the ancient Celts and some tribes of India. Furthermore, the communality within the tribal body may tend to appear either as a representation of its unity through the head of the tribal kinship group, or as a relationship between the heads of families. Hence either a more despotic or a more democratic form of the community. The communal conditions for real appropriation through labor, such as irrigation systems (very important among the Asian peoples), means of communication, etc., will then appear as the work of the higher unity – the despotic government which is poised above the lesser communities.

– MARX, *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations* (1858), pp. 68-71.

B. STABILITY OF THE ASIATIC MODE OF PRODUCTION

Those small and extremely ancient Indian communities, some of which have continued down to this day, are based on possession in common of the land, on the blending of agriculture and handicrafts, and on an unalterable division of labor, which serves, whenever a new community is started, as a plan and scheme ready cut and dried. Occupying areas of from 100 up to several thousand acres, each forms a compact whole producing all it requires. The chief part of the products is destined for direct use by the community itself, and does not take the form of a commodity. Hence, production here is independent of that division of labor brought about, in Indian society as a whole, by means of the exchange of commodities. It is the surplus alone that becomes a commodity, and a portion of even that, not until it has reached the hands of the State, into whose hands from time immemorial a certain quantity of these products has found its way in the shape of rent in kind. The constitution of these

communities varies in different parts of India. In those of the simplest form, the land is tilled in common, and the produce divided among the members. At the same time, spinning and weaving are carried on in each family as subsidiary industries. Side by side with the masses thus occupied with one and the same work, we find the "chief inhabitant," who is judge, police and tax-gatherer in one; the bookkeeper, who keeps the accounts of the tillage and registers everything relating thereto; another official, who prosecutes criminals, protects strangers traveling through and escorts them to the next village; the boundary man, who guards the boundaries against neighboring communities; the water-overseer, who distributes the water from the common tanks for irrigation; the Brahmin, who conducts the religious services; the schoolmaster, who on the sand teaches the children reading and writing; the calendar-Brahmin, or astrologer, who makes known the lucky or unlucky days for seedtime and harvest, and for every other kind of agricultural work; a smith and a carpenter, who make and repair all the agricultural implements; the potter, who makes all the pottery of the village; the barber, the washerman, who washes clothes, the silversmith, here and there the poet, who in some communities replaces the silversmith, in others the schoolmaster. This dozen of individuals is maintained at the expense of the whole community. If the population increases, a new community is founded, on the pattern of the old one, on unoccupied land. The whole mechanism discloses a systematic division of labor; but a division like that in manufactures is impossible, since the smith and the carpenter, etc., find an unchanging market, and at the most there occur, according to the sizes of the villages, two or three of each, instead of one. The law that regulates the division of labor in the community acts with the irresistible authority of a law of nature, at the same time that each individual artificer, the smith, the carpenter, and so on, conducts in his workshop all the operations of his handicraft in the traditional way, but independently, and without recognizing any authority over him. The simplicity of the organization for production in these self-sufficing communities that constantly reproduce themselves in the same form, and when accidentally destroyed, spring up again on the spot and with the same name — this simplicity supplies the key to the secret of the unchangeableness of Asiatic

societies, an unchangeableness in such striking contrast with the constant dissolution and refounding of Asiatic States, and the never-ceasing changes of dynasty. The structure of the economic elements of society remains untouched by the storm clouds of the political sky.

— MARX, *Capital*, vol. I (1867), pp. 357f.

C. SLAVERY AND CIVILIZATION

The natural division of labor within the family cultivating the soil made possible, at a certain level of well-being, the introduction of one or more strangers as additional labor forces. This was especially the case in countries where the old common ownership of the land had already disappeared or at least the former joint cultivation had given place to the separate cultivation of parcels of land by the respective families. Production had so far developed that the labor power of a man could now produce more than was necessary for its mere maintenance; the means of maintaining additional labor forces existed; likewise the means of employing them; labor power acquired a *value*. But within the community and the association to which it belonged there were no superfluous labor forces available. On the other hand, such forces were provided by war, and war was as old as the simultaneous existence alongside of each other of several groups of communities. Up to that time they had not known what to do with prisoners of war, and had therefore simply killed them; at an even earlier period, eaten them. But at the stage of the “economic order” which had now been attained the prisoners acquired a value; their captors therefore let them live and made use of their labor. Thus force, instead of controlling the economic order, was on the contrary pressed into the service of the economic order. *Slavery* was invented. It soon became the predominant form of production among all peoples who were developing beyond the primitive community, but in the end was also one of the chief causes of the decay of that system. It was slavery that first made possible the division of labor between agriculture and industry on a considerable scale, and along with this, the flower of the ancient world, Hellenism. Without slavery, no Greek state, no Greek art, and science; without slavery, no Roman Empire. But without Hellenism and the Roman Empire as a basis, also no modern Europe. We should never forget that our whole economic, political and intellectual development has as

its presupposition a state of things in which slavery was as necessary as it was universally recognized. In this sense we are entitled to say: without the slavery of antiquity, no modern socialism.

It is very easy to inveigh against slavery and similar things in general terms, and to give vent to high moral indignation at such infamies. Unfortunately all that this conveys is only what everyone knows, namely that these institutions of antiquity are no longer in accord with our present-day conditions and our sentiments, which these conditions determine. But it does not tell us one word as to how these institutions arose, why they existed, and what role they have played in history. And when we examine these questions, we are compelled to say—however contradictory and heretical it may sound—that the introduction of slavery under the conditions of that time was a great step forward. For it is a fact that man sprang from the beasts, and had consequently to use barbaric and almost bestial means to extricate himself from barbarism. The ancient communes, where they continued to exist, have for thousands of years formed the basis of the most barbarous form of state, oriental despotism, from India to Russia. It was only where these communities dissolved that the peoples made progress of themselves, and their first economic advance consisted in the increase and development of production by means of slave labor. It is clear that so long as human labor was still so little productive that it provided but a small surplus over and above the necessary means of subsistence, any increase of the productive forces, extension of trade, development of the state and of law, or beginning of art and science, was only possible by means of a greater division of labor between the masses discharging simple manual labor and the few privileged persons directing labor, conducting trade and public affairs, and, at a later stage, occupying themselves with art and science. The simplest and most natural form of this division of labor was in fact slavery. In the historical conditions of the ancient world, and particularly of Greece, the advance to a society based on class antagonisms could only be accomplished in the form of slavery. This was an advance even for the slaves; the prisoners of war, from whom the mass of the slaves was recruited, now at least kept their lives, instead of being killed as they had been before, or even roasted, as at a still earlier period.

—ENGELS, *Anti-Dühring* (1878), pp. 205-07.

D. CIVILIZATION AND THE DIVISION OF LABOR

Civilization opens with a new advance in the division of labor. At the lowest stage of barbarism men produced only directly for their own needs; any acts of exchange were isolated occurrences, the object of exchange merely some fortuitous surplus. In the middle stage of barbarism we already find among the pastoral peoples a possession in the form of cattle which, once the herd has attained a certain size, regularly produces a surplus over and above the tribe's own requirements, leading to a division of labor between pastoral peoples and backward tribes without herds, and hence to the existence of two different levels of production side by side with one another and the conditions necessary for regular exchange. The upper stage of barbarism brings us the further division of labor between agriculture and handicrafts, hence the production of a continually increasing portion of the products of labor directly for exchange, so that exchange between individual producers assumes the importance of a vital social function. Civilization consolidates and intensifies all these existing divisions of labor, particularly by sharpening the opposition between town and country (the town may economically dominate the country, as in antiquity, or the country the town, as in the Middle Ages), and it adds a third division of labor, peculiar to itself and of decisive importance: it creates a class which no longer concerns itself with production, but only with the exchange of the products—the *merchants*. Hitherto whenever classes had begun to form, it had always been exclusively in the field or production; the persons engaged in production were separated into those who directed and those who executed, or else into large-scale and small-scale producers. Now for the first time a class appears which, without in any way participating in production, captures the direction of production as a whole and economically subjugates the producers; which makes itself into an indispensable middleman between any two producers and exploits them both. Under the pretext that they save the producers the trouble and risk of exchange, extend the sale of their products to distant markets and are therefore the most useful class of the population, a class of parasites comes into being, “genuine social ichneumons,” who, as a reward for their actually very insignificant services, skim all the cream off production at home and abroad, rapidly amass enormous wealth

and correspondingly social influence, and for that reason receive under civilization ever higher honors and ever greater control of production, until at last they also bring forth a product of their own—the periodical trade crises.

At our stage of development, however, the young merchants had not even begun to dream of the great destiny awaiting them. But they were growing and making themselves indispensable, which was quite sufficient. And with the formation of the merchant class came also the development of *metallic money*, the minted coin, a new instrument for the domination of the non-producer over the producer and his production. The commodity of commodities had been discovered, that which holds all other commodities hidden in itself, the magic power which can change at will into everything desirable and desired. The man who had it ruled the world of production—and who had more of it than anybody else? The merchant. The worship of money was safe in his hands. He took good care to make it clear that, in face of money, all commodities, and hence all producers of commodities, must prostrate themselves in adoration in the dust. He proved practically that all other forms of wealth fade into mere semblance beside this incarnation of wealth as such. Never again has the power of money shown itself in such primitive brutality and violence as during these days of its youth. After commodities had begun to sell for money, loans and advances in money came also, and with them interest and usury. No legislation of later times so utterly and ruthlessly delivers over the debtor to the usurious creditor as the legislation of ancient Athens and ancient Rome—and in both cities it arose spontaneously, as customary law, without any compulsion other than the economic.

Alongside wealth in commodities and slaves, alongside wealth in money, there now appeared wealth in land also. The individuals' rights of possession in the pieces of land originally allotted to them by gens or tribe had now become so established that the land was their hereditary property. Recently they had striven above all to secure their freedom against the rights of the gentile community over these lands, since these rights had become for them a fetter. They got rid of the fetter—but soon afterwards of their new landed property also. Full, free ownership of the land meant not only power, uncurtailed and unlimited, to possess

the land; it meant also the power to alienate it. As long as the land belonged to the gens, no such power could exist. But when the new landed proprietor shook off once and for all the fetters laid upon him by the prior right of gens and tribe, he also cut the ties which had hitherto inseparably attached him to the land. Money, invented at the same time as private property in land, showed him what that meant. Land could now become a commodity; it could be sold and pledged. Scarcely had private property in land been introduced than the mortgage was already invented. As hetaerism and prostitution dog the heels of monogamy, so from now onwards mortgage dogs the heels of private landownership. You asked for full, free alienable ownership of the land and now you have got it. . . .

With trade expansion, money and usury, private property in land and mortgages, the concentration and centralization of wealth in the hands of a small class rapidly advanced, accompanied by an increasing impoverishment of the masses and an increasing mass of impoverishment. The new aristocracy of wealth, in so far as it had not been identical from the outset with the old hereditary aristocracy, pushed it permanently into the background (in Athens, in Rome, among the Germans). And simultaneous with this division of the citizens into classes according to wealth there was an enormous increase, particularly in Greece, in the number of slaves, whose forced labor was the foundation on which the superstructure of the entire society was reared.

— ENGELS, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884), pp. 150-53.

E. ANCIENT USE OF THE SURPLUS PRODUCT

The ancients never even thought of transforming the surplus product into capital. At least, only to a small extent. The widespread occurrence among them of the amassing of treasure in the narrow sense shows how much surplus product lay completely idle. They converted a great part of the surplus product into unproductive expenditure on works of art, religious monuments and public works. Still less was their production directed to the unfettering and development of the material forces of production — division of labor, machinery, use of natural forces and science in private production.

Broadly speaking, they never got beyond handicraft labor. The wealth which they produced for private consumption was consequently relatively small, and only seems large because it was amassed in the hands of a few people, who, incidentally, did not know what to do with it. If consequently there was no *overproduction* among the ancients, there was nevertheless *overconsumption* on the part of the rich, which in the final periods of Rome and Greece broke out into insane extravagance. The few trading peoples among them lived partly at the expense of all these essentially poor nations. It is the absolute development of the productive forces, and hence mass production, with the mass of producers confined within the circle of the necessary means of subsistence on the one hand, and on the other hand the barrier set by the capitalists' profit, which forms the basis of modern overproduction.

—MARX, *Theories of Surplus Value* (1905-1910), pp. 406f.

[2]

FEUDALISM

A. THE DISINTEGRATION OF FEUDAL LANDED PROPERTY

The domination of the land as an alien power over men is already inherent in feudal landed property. The serf is the adjunct of the land. Likewise, the lord of an entailed estate, the firstborn son, belongs to the land. It inherits him. Indeed, the domination of private property begins with property in land — that is its basis. But in feudal landed property the lord at least *appears* as the king of the estate. Similarly, there still exists the semblance of a more intimate connection between the proprietor and the land than that of mere *material* wealth. The estate is individualized with its lord: it has his rank, is baronial or ducal with him, has his privileges, his jurisdiction, his political position, etc. It appears as the inorganic body of its lord. Hence the proverb *nulle terre sans maître* [there is no land without its master], which expresses the fusion of nobility and landed property. Similarly, the rule of landed property does not appear directly as the rule of mere capital. For those belonging to it, the estate is more like their fatherland. It is a constricted sort of nationality.

In the same way, feudal landed property gives its name to its lord, as does a kingdom to its king. His family history, the history of his house, etc.—all this individualizes the estate for him and makes it literally his house, personifies it. Similarly those working on the estate have not the position of *day laborers*; but they are in part themselves his property, as are serfs; and in part they are bound to him by ties of respect, allegiance and duty. His relation to them is therefore directly political, and has likewise a human, *intimate* side. Customs, character, etc., vary from one estate to another and seem to be one with the land to which they belong; later, on the other hand, a man is bound to his land, not by his character or his individuality, but only by his purse strings. Finally, the feudal lord does not try to extract the utmost advantage from his land. Rather, he consumes what is there and calmly leaves the worry of producing to the serfs and the tenants. Such is *nobility's* relationship to landed property, which casts a romantic glory on its lords.

It is necessary that this appearance be abolished—that landed property, the root of private property, be dragged completely into the movement of private property and that it become a commodity; that the rule of the proprietor appear as the undisguised rule of private property, of capital, freed of all political tincture; that the relationship between proprietor and worker be reduced to the economic relationship of exploiter and exploited; that all personal relationships between the proprietor and his property cease, property becoming merely *objective*, material wealth; that the marriage of convenience should take the place of the marriage of honor with the land; and that the land should likewise sink to the status of a commercial value, like man. It is essential that that which is the root of landed property—filthy self-interest—make its appearance, too, in its cynical form. It is essential that the immovable monopoly turn into the mobile and restless monopoly, into competition; and that the idle enjoyment of the products of other peoples' blood and toil turn into a bustling commerce in the same commodity. Lastly, it is essential that in this competition landed property, in the form of capital, manifest its dominion over both the working class and the proprietors themselves who are either being ruined or raised by the laws governing the movement of capital. The medieval proverb *nulle terre sans seigneur* [there is no land without its lord]

is thereby replaced by that other proverb, *l'argent n'a pas de maître* [money knows no master], wherein is expressed the complete domination of dead matter over mankind.

—MARX, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, pp. 100-02.

B. ROLE OF USURY IN SLAVE AND FEUDAL SOCIETIES

Interest-bearing capital, or, as we may call it in its antiquated form, usurer's capital, belongs, together with its twin brother, merchant's capital, to the antediluvian forms of capital, which long precede the capitalist mode of production and are to be found in the most diverse economic formations of society.

The existence of usurer's capital merely requires that at least a portion of products should be transformed into commodities, and that money should have developed in its various functions along with trade in commodities.

The development of usurer's capital is bound up with the development of merchant's capital and especially that of money-dealing capital. In ancient Rome, beginning with the last years of the Republic, when manufacturing stood far below its average level of development in the ancient world, merchant's capital, money-dealing capital, and usurer's capital developed to their highest point within the ancient form. . . .

In all the forms in which slave economy (not the patriarchal kind, but that of later Grecian and Roman times) serves as a means of amassing wealth, where money therefore is a means of appropriating the labor of others through the purchase of slaves, land, etc., money can be expanded as capital, *i.e.*, bear interest, for the very reason that it can be so invested.

The characteristic forms, however, in which usurer's capital exists in periods antedating capitalist production are of two kinds. I purposely say characteristic forms. The same forms repeat themselves on the basis of capitalist production, but as mere subordinate forms. They are then no longer the forms which determine the character of interest-bearing capital. These two forms are: *first*, usury by lending money to extravagant members of the upper classes, particularly landowners; *secondly*, usury by lending money to small producers who possess their own conditions of labor—this includes the artisan, but mainly the peasant, since particularly under precapitalist conditions, in so far

as they permit of small independent individual producers, the peasant class necessarily constitutes the overwhelming majority of them.

Both the ruin of rich landowners through usury and the impoverishment of the small producers lead to the formation and concentration of large amounts of money-capital. But to what extent this process does away with the old mode of production, as happened in modern Europe, and whether it puts the capitalist mode of production in its stead, depends entirely upon the stage of historical development and the attendant circumstances.

Usurer's capital as the characteristic form of interest-bearing capital corresponds to the predominance of small-scale production of the self-employed peasant and small master craftsman. When the laborer is confronted by the conditions of labor and by the product of labor in the shape of capital, as under the developed capitalist mode of production, he has no occasion to borrow any money as a producer. When he does any money borrowing, he does so, for instance, at the pawnshop to secure personal necessities. But wherever the laborer is the owner, whether actual or nominal, of his conditions of labor and his product, he stands as a producer in relation to the money-lender's capital, which confronts him as usurer's capital. Newman expresses the matter insipidly when he says the banker is respected, while the usurer is hated and despised, because the banker lends to the rich, whereas the usurer lends to the poor. (F. W. Newman, *Lectures on Political Economy*, London, 1851, p. 44.) He overlooks the fact that a difference between two modes of social production and their corresponding social orders lies at the heart of the matter and that the situation cannot be explained by the distinction between rich and poor. Moreover, the usury which sucks dry the small producer goes hand in hand with the usury which sucks dry the rich owner of a large estate. As soon as the usury of the Roman patricians had completely ruined the Roman plebeians, the small peasants, this form of exploitation came to an end and a pure slave economy replaced the small peasant economy. . . .

Usurer's capital in the form whereby it indeed appropriates all of the surplus labor of the direct producers, without altering the mode of production; whereby the ownership or possession by the producers of the conditions of labor—and small-scale

production corresponding to this—is its essential prerequisite; whereby, in other words, capital does not directly subordinate labor to itself, and does not, therefore, confront it as industrial capital—this usurer's capital impoverishes the mode of production, paralyzes the productive forces instead of developing them, and at the same time perpetuates the miserable conditions in which the social productivity of labor is not developed at the expense of labor itself, as in the capitalist mode of production.

Usury thus exerts, on the one hand, an undermining and destructive influence on ancient and feudal wealth and ancient and feudal property. On the other hand, it undermines and ruins small-peasant and small-burgher production, in short, all forms in which the producer still appears as the owner of his means of production. Under the developed capitalist mode of production, the laborer is not the owner of the means of production, *i.e.*, the field which he cultivates, the raw materials which he processes, etc. But under this system separation of the producer from the means of production reflects an actual revolution in the mode of production itself. The isolated laborers are brought together in large workshops for the purpose of carrying out separate but interconnected activities; the tool becomes a machine. The mode of production itself no longer permits the dispersion of the instruments of production associated with small property; nor does it permit the isolation of the laborer himself. Under the capitalist mode of production usury can no longer separate the producer from his means of production, for they have already been separated.

Usury centralizes money wealth where the means of production are dispersed. It does not alter the mode of production, but attaches itself firmly to it like a parasite and makes it wretched. It sucks out its blood, enervates it, and compels reproduction to proceed under ever more pitiable conditions. Hence the popular hatred against usurers, which was most pronounced in the ancient world where ownership of means of production by the producer himself was at the same time the basis for political status, the independence of the citizen.

To the extent that slavery prevails, or in so far as the surplus product is consumed by the feudal lord and his retinue, while either the slave owner or the feudal lord fall into the clutches of the usurer, the mode of production still remains the same; it

only becomes harder on the laborer. The indebted slaveholder or feudal lord becomes more oppressive because he is himself more oppressed. Or he finally makes way for the usurer, who becomes a landed proprietor or a slaveholder himself, like the knights in ancient Rome. The place of the old exploiter, whose exploitation was more or less patriarchal because it was largely a means of political power, is taken by a hard, money-mad parvenu. But the mode of production itself is not altered thereby.

Usury has a revolutionary effect in all precapitalist modes of production only in so far as it destroys and dissolves those forms of property on whose solid foundation and continual reproduction in the same form the political organization is based. Under Asian forms, usury can continue a long time, without producing anything more than economic decay and political corruption. Only where and when the other prerequisites of capitalist production are present does usury become one of the means assisting in establishment of the new mode of production by ruining the feudal lord and small-scale producer, on the one hand, and centralizing the conditions of labor into capital, on the other. . . .

Usury, in contradistinction to consuming wealth, is historically important, inasmuch as it is in itself a process generating capital. Usurer's capital and merchant's wealth promote the formation of moneyed wealth independent of landed property. The less products assume the character of commodities, and the less intensively and extensively exchange value has taken hold of production, the more does money appear as actual wealth as such, as wealth in general—in contrast to its limited representation in use values. This is the basis of hoarding. Aside from money as world-money and as hoard, it is, in particular, the form of means of payment whereby it appears as the absolute form of commodities. And it is especially its function as a means of payment which develops interest and thereby money-capital. What squandering and corrupting wealth desires is money as such, money as a means of buying everything (also as a means of paying debts). The small producer needs money above all for making payments. (The transformation of services and taxes in kind to landlords and the state into money-rent and money-taxes plays a great role here.) In either case, money is needed as such. On the other hand, it is in usury that hoarding first becomes reality and that the hoarder fulfils his dream. What is sought from the

owner of a hoard is not capital, but money as such; but by means of interest he transforms his hoard of money into capital, that is, into a means of appropriating surplus labor in part or in its entirety, and similarly securing a hold on a part of the means of production themselves, even though they may nominally remain the property of others. Usury lives in the pores of production, as it were, just as the gods of Epicurus lived in the space between worlds. Money is so much harder to obtain, the less the commodity-form constitutes the general form of products. Hence the usurer knows no other barrier but the capacity of those who need money to pay or to resist. In small-peasant and small-burgher production money serves as a means of purchase, mainly, whenever the means of production of the laborer (who is still predominantly their owner under these modes of production) are lost to him either by accident or through extraordinary upheavals, or at least are not replaced in the normal course of reproduction. Means of subsistence and raw materials constitute an essential part of these requirements of production. If these become more expensive, it may make it impossible to replace them out of the returns for the product, just as ordinary crop failures may prevent the peasant from replacing his seed in kind. The same wars through which the Roman patricians ruined the plebeians by compelling them to serve as soldiers and which prevented them from reproducing their conditions of labor, and therefore made paupers of them (and pauperization, the crippling or loss of the prerequisites of reproduction is here the predominant form)—these same wars filled the storerooms and coffers of the patricians with looted copper, the money of that time. Instead of directly giving plebeians the necessary commodities, *i.e.*, grain, horses, and cattle, they loaned them this copper for which they had no use themselves, and took advantage of this situation to exact enormous usurious interest, thereby turning the plebeians into their debtor slaves. During the reign of Charlemagne, the Frankish peasants were likewise ruined by wars, so that they faced no choice but to become serfs instead of debtors. In the Roman Empire, as is known, extreme hunger frequently resulted in the sale of children and also in free men selling themselves as slaves to the rich. So much for general turning points. In individual cases the maintenance or loss of the means of production on the part of small producers depends

on a thousand contingencies, and every one of these contingencies or losses signifies impoverishment and becomes a crevice into which a parasitic usurer may creep. The mere death of his cow may render the small peasant incapable of renewing his reproduction on its former scale. He then falls into the clutches of the usurer, and once in the usurer's power he can never extricate himself.

The really important and characteristic domain of the usurer, however, is the function of money as a means of payment. Every payment of money, ground rent, tribute, tax, etc., which becomes due on a certain date, carries with it the need to secure money for such a purpose. Hence from the days of ancient Rome to those of modern times, wholesale usury relies upon tax-collectors, *fermiers généraux*, *receveurs généraux*. Then, there develops with commerce and the generalization of commodity production the separation, in time, of purchase and payment. The money has to be paid on a definite date. How this can lead to circumstances in which the money capitalist and usurer, even nowadays, merge into one is shown by modern money crises. This same usury, however, becomes one of the principal means of further developing the necessity for money as a means of payment—by driving the producer ever more deeply into debt and destroying his usual means of payment, since the burden of interest alone makes his normal reproduction impossible. At this point, usury sprouts up out of money as a means of payment and extends this function of money as its very own domain.

The credit system develops as a reaction against usury. But this should not be misunderstood, nor by any means interpreted in the manner of the ancient writers, the church fathers, Luther or the early socialists. It signifies no more and no less than the subordination of interest-bearing capital to the conditions and requirements of the capitalist mode of production.

On the whole, interest-bearing capital under the modern credit system is adapted to the conditions of the capitalist mode of production. Usury as such does not only continue to exist, but is even freed, among nations with a developed capitalist production, from the fetters imposed upon it by all previous legislation. Interest-bearing capital retains the form of usurer's capital in relation to persons or classes, or in circumstances where borrowing does not, nor can, take place in the sense corresponding to

the capitalist mode of production; where borrowing takes place as a result of individual need, as at the pawnshop; where money is borrowed by wealthy spendthrifts for the purpose of squandering; or where the producer is a non-capitalist producer, such as a small farmer or craftsman, who is thus still, as the immediate producer, the owner of his own means of production; finally where the capitalist producer himself operates on such a small scale that he resembles those self-employed producers.

What distinguishes interest-bearing capital—in so far as it is an essential element of the capitalist mode of production—from usurer's capital is by no means the nature or character of this capital itself. It is merely the altered conditions under which it operates, and consequently also the totally transformed character of the borrower who confronts the moneylender. Even when a man without fortune receives credit in his capacity of industrialist or merchant, it occurs with the expectation that he will function as capitalist and appropriate unpaid labor with the borrowed capital. He receives credit in his capacity of potential capitalist. The circumstance that a man without fortune but possessing energy, solidity, ability and business acumen may become a capitalist in this manner—and the commercial value of each individual is pretty accurately estimated under the capitalist mode of production—is greatly admired by apologists of the capitalist system. Although this circumstance continually brings an unwelcome number of new soldiers of fortune into the field and into competition with the already existing individual capitalists, it also reinforces the supremacy of capital itself, expands its base and enables it to recruit ever new forces for itself out of the substratum of society. In a similar way, the circumstance that the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages formed its hierarchy out of the best brains in the land, regardless of their estate, birth or fortune, was one of the principal means of consolidating ecclesiastical rule and suppressing the laity. The more a ruling class is able to assimilate the foremost minds of a ruled class, the more stable and dangerous becomes its rule.

—MARX, *Capital*, vol. III (1894), pp. 592-601.

C. THE PEASANT IN FEUDAL GERMANY

At the bottom of all the classes, save the last one, was the huge exploited mass of the nation, *the peasants*. It was the peasant who

carried the burden of all the other strata of society: princes, officialdom, nobility, clergy, patricians and middle class. Whether the peasant was the subject of a prince, an imperial baron, a bishop, a monastery or a city, he was everywhere treated as a beast of burden, and worse. If he was a serf, he was entirely at the mercy of his master. If he was a bondsman, the legal deliveries stipulated by agreement were sufficient to crush him; even they were being daily increased. Most of his time, he had to work on his master's estate. Out of that which he earned in his few free hours, he had to pay tithes, dues, ground rent, war taxes, land taxes, imperial taxes and other payments. He could neither marry nor die without paying the master. Aside from his regular work for the master, he had to gather litter, pick strawberries, pick bilberries, collect snail shells, drive the game for the hunting, chop wood, and so on. Fishing and hunting belonged to the master. The peasant saw his crop destroyed by wild game. The community meadows and woods of the peasants had almost everywhere been forcibly taken away by the masters. And in the same manner as the master reigned over the peasant's property, he extended his wilfulness over his person, his wife and daughters. He possessed the right of the first night. Whenever he pleased, he threw the peasant into the tower, where the rack waited for him just as surely as the investigating attorney waits for the criminal in our times. Whenever he pleased, he killed him or ordered him beheaded. None of the instructive chapters of the Carolina* which speaks of "cutting of ears," "cutting of noses," "blinding," "chopping of fingers," "beheading," "breaking on the wheel," "burning," "pinching with burning tongs," "quartering," etc., was left unpracticed by the gracious lord and master at his pleasure. Who could defend the peasant? The courts were manned by barons, clergymen, patricians, or jurists, who knew very well for what they were being paid. Not in vain did all the official estates of the empire live on the exploitation of the peasants.

Incensed as were the peasants under terrific pressure, it was still difficult to arouse them to revolt. Being spread over large areas, it was highly difficult for them to come to a common

**Carolina*, a criminal code of the 16th century, published in 1532 under Emperor Charles V.—*Ed.*

understanding; the old habit of submission inherited from generation to generation, the lack of practice in the use of arms in many regions, the unequal degree of exploitation depending on the personality of the master, all combined to keep the peasant quiet. It is for these reasons that, although local insurrections of peasants can be found in medieval times in large numbers, not one general national peasant revolt, least of all in Germany, can be observed before the peasant war. Moreover, the peasants alone could never make a revolution as long as they were confronted by the organized power of the princes, nobility and the cities. Only by allying themselves with other classes could they have a chance of victory, but how could they have allied themselves with other classes when they were equally exploited by all?

At the beginning of the 16th century the various groups of the empire, princes, nobility, clergy, patricians, middle-class, plebeians and peasants formed a highly complicated mass with the most varied requirements crossing each other in different directions. Every group was in the way of the other, and stood continually in an overt or covert struggle with every other group. A splitting of the entire nation into two major camps, as witnessed in France at the outbreak of the first revolution, and as at present manifest on a higher stage of development in the most progressive countries, was under such conditions a rank impossibility. Something approaching such division took place only when the lowest stratum of the population, the one exploited by all the rest, arose, namely, the plebeians and the peasants. The tangle of interests, views and endeavors of that time will be easily understood when one remembers what a confusion was manifested in the last two years in a society far less complicated and consisting only of feudal nobility, bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie, peasants and proletariat.

—ENGELS, *The Peasant War in Germany* (1850), pp. 47-49.

D. CLASS, IDEOLOGY AND HERESY IN REFORMATION GERMANY

The German ideology of today sees in the struggles to which the Middle Ages had succumbed nothing but violent theological bickerings, this notwithstanding our modern experiences.

Had the people of that time only been able to reach an understanding concerning the celestial things, say our patriotic historians and wise statesmen, there would have been no ground whatever for struggle over earthly affairs. These ideologists were gullible enough to accept on their face value all the illusions which an epoch maintains about itself, or which the ideologists of a certain period maintained about that period. This class of people, which saw in the revolution of 1789 nothing but a heated debate over the advantages of a constitutional monarchy as compared with absolutism, would see in the July Revolution a practical controversy over the untenability of the empire by the grace of God, and in the February Revolution, an attempt at solving the problem of a republic or monarchy, etc. Of the *class struggles* which were being fought out in these convulsions, and whose mere expression is being every time written as a political slogan on the banner of these class struggles, our ideologists have no conception even at the present time, although manifestations of them are audible enough not only abroad, but also from the grumbling and the resentment of many thousands of home proletarians.

In the so-called religious wars of the 16th century, very positive material class interests were at play, and those wars were class wars just as were the later collisions in England and France. If the class struggles of that time appear to bear religious earmarks, if the interests, requirements and demands of the various classes hid themselves behind a religious screen, it little changes the actual situation, and is to be explained by conditions of the time.

The Middle Ages had developed out of raw primitiveness. It had done away with old civilization, old philosophy, politics and jurisprudence, in order to begin anew in every respect. The only thing which it had retained from the old shattered world was Christianity and a number of half-ruined cities deprived of their civilization. As a consequence, the clergy retained a monopoly of intellectual education, a phenomenon to be found in every primitive stage of development, and education itself had acquired a predominantly theological nature.

In the hands of the clergy, politics and jurisprudence, as well as other sciences, remained branches of theology, and were treated according to the principles prevailing in the latter. The

dogmas of the church were at the same time political axioms, and Bible quotations had the validity of law in every court. Even after the formation of a special class of jurists, jurisprudence long remained under the tutelage of theology. This supremacy of theology in the realm of intellectual activities was at the same time a logical consequence of the situation of the church as the most general force coordinating and sanctioning existing feudal domination.

It is obvious that under such conditions, all general and overt attacks on feudalism, in the first place attacks on the church, all revolutionary, social and political doctrines, necessarily became theological heresies. In order to be attacked, existing social conditions had to be stripped of their aureole of sanctity.

The revolutionary opposition to feudalism was alive throughout all the Middle Ages. According to conditions of the time, it appeared either in the form of mysticism, as open heresy, or of armed insurrection. As mysticism, it is well known how indispensable it was for the reformers of the 16th century. Muenzer himself was largely indebted to it. The heresies were partly an expression of the reaction of the patriarchal Alpine shepherds against the encroachments of feudalism in their realm (Waldenses), partly an opposition to feudalism of the cities that had outgrown it. . . . We can omit, in this connection, the patriarchal heresy of the Waldenses, as well as the insurrection of the Swiss, which by form and contents, was a reactionary attempt at stemming the tide of historic development, and of a purely local importance. In the other two forms of medieval heresy, we find as early as the 12th century the precursors of the great division between the middle class and the peasant-plebian opposition which caused the collapse of the peasant war. This division is manifest throughout the later Middle Ages.

The heresy of the cities, which is the actual official heresy of the Middle Ages, directed itself primarily against the clergy, whose riches and political importance it attacked. In the very same manner as the bourgeoisie at present demands a "*gouvernement à bon marché*" [cheap government], so the middle class of medieval times demanded first of all an "*église à bon marché*" [cheap church]. Reactionary in form, as in every heresy which sees in the further development of church and dogma only a degeneration, the middle-class heresy demanded the restoration of

the ancient simple church constitution and the abolition of an exclusive class of priests. This cheap arrangement would eliminate the monks, the prelates, the Roman court, in brief, everything which was expensive for the church. In their attack against papacy, the cities, themselves republics although under the protection of monarchs, expressed for the first time in a general form the idea that the normal form of government for the bourgeoisie was the republic. Their hostility towards many a dogma and church law is partly explained by the foregoing and partly by their conditions. Why they were so bitter against celibacy, no one has given a better explanation than Boccaccio. . . . That the opposition against feudalism should appear here only as an opposition against religious feudalism, is easily understood when one remembers that, at that time, the cities were already a recognized estate sufficiently capable of fighting lay feudalism with its privileges either by force of arms or in the city assemblies.

Here, as in south France, in England and Bohemia, we find the lower nobility joining hands with the cities in their struggle against the clergy and in their heresies, a phenomenon due to the dependence of the lower nobility upon the cities and to the community of interests of both groups as against the princes and the prelates. The same phenomenon is found in the peasant war.

A totally different character was assumed by that heresy which was a direct expression of the peasant and plebeian demands, and which was almost always connected with an insurrection. This heresy, sharing all the demands of middle-class heresy relative to the clergy, the papacy, and the restoration of the ancient Christian church organization, went far beyond them. It demanded the restoration of ancient Christian equality among the members of the community, this to be recognized as a rule for the middle-class world as well. From the equality of the children of God it made the implication as to civil equality, and partly also as to equality of property. To make the nobility equal to the peasant, the patricians and the privileged middle class equal to the plebeians, to abolish serfdom, ground rents, taxes, privileges, and at least the most flagrant differences of property—these were demands put forth with more or less definiteness and regarded as naturally emanating from the ancient Christian doctrine. This peasant-plebeian heresy, in the fullness of feudalism, *e.g.*, among the Albigenes, hardly distinguishable from the middle-class opposition, grew in the

course of the 14th and 15th centuries to be a strongly defined party opinion appearing independently alongside the heresy of the middle class. This is the case with John Ball, preacher of the Wat Tyler insurrection in England alongside the Wycliffe movement.

The plebeians of that time were the only class outside of the existing official society. It was outside the feudal, as well as outside the middle-class organization. It had neither privileges nor property; it was deprived even of the possessions owned by peasant or petty bourgeois, burdened with crushing duties as much as they might be; it was deprived of property and rights in every respect; it lived in such a manner that it did not even come into direct contact with the existing institutions, which ignored it completely. It was a living symptom of the dissolution of the feudal and guild middle-class societies, and it was at the same time the first precursor of modern bourgeois society.

This position of the plebeians is sufficient explanation as to why the plebeian opposition of that time could not be satisfied with fighting feudalism and the privileged middle class alone; why, in fantasy, at least, it reached beyond modern bourgeois society then only in its inception; why, being an absolutely propertyless faction, it questioned institutions, views and conceptions common to every society based on division of classes. The chiliastic dream visions of ancient Christianity offered in this respect a very serviceable starting point. On the other hand, this reaching out beyond not only the present but also the future, could not help being violently fantastic. At the first practical application, it naturally fell back into narrow limits set by prevailing conditions. The attack on private property, the demand for community of possession and to resolve itself into a crude organization of charity; vague Christian equality could result in nothing but civil equality before the law; abolition of all officialdom transformed itself finally in the organization of republican governments elected by the people. Anticipation of communism by human fantasy was in reality anticipation of modern bourgeois conditions.

This anticipation of coming stages of historic development, forced in itself, but a natural outcome of the life conditions of the plebeian group, is first to be noted in Germany, in the teachings of Thomas Muenzer and his party.

—ENGELS, *The Peasant War in Germany* (1850), pp. 50-56.

THE RISE OF CAPITALISM

A. HISTORICAL PREREQUISITES FOR THE EMERGENCE OF CAPITALISM

As we have seen, the concept—the origin—of capital implies *money* as its starting point, and therefore it implies the existence of wealth in the form of money. It equally implies a derivation from circulation; capital appears as the *product* of circulation. Capital formation does not therefore arise from landed property (though it might arise from the agricultural tenant in so far as he is also a trader in farm products), nor from the guild (though this also provides a possibility) but from mercantile and usurious wealth. But the merchant and usurer only encounter the conditions which permit the purchase of free labor, once free labor has been detached from the objective conditions of its existence as a result of a historical process. At this point it also becomes possible to buy these *conditions* themselves. Under guild conditions, for instance, mere money (unless it is the money of guild masters) cannot purchase looms in order to put men to work on them; there are regulations determining how many looms a man may employ, etc. In short, the instrument of labor is still so intimately merged with living labor, appearing as the domain of living labor, that it does not truly circulate. What enables monetary wealth to turn into capital is, on the one hand, that it finds free laborers, and on the other, it finds means of subsistence, materials, etc., which would otherwise be in one form or another the *property* of the now objectiveless masses, and are also *free* and available for sale.

However, the other condition of labor—a certain craft skill, the existence of the instrument as a means of labor, etc.—is found *ready to hand* by capital in this preparatory or first period of capital. This is partly the result of the urban guild system, partly of domestic industry, or such industry as exists as an accessory to agriculture. The historic process is not the result of capital, but its prerequisite. By means of this process the capitalist then exerts himself as a (historical) middleman between landed property, or between any kind of property, and labor. History

ignores the sentimental illusions about capitalist and laborer forming an association, etc.; nor is there a trace of such illusions in the development of the concept of capital. Sporadically, *manufacture* may develop locally in a framework belonging to quite a different period, as in the Italian cities *side by side* with the guilds. But if capital is to be the generally dominant form of an epoch, its conditions must be developed not merely locally, but on a large scale. (This is compatible with the possibility that during the dissolution of the guilds individual guild masters may turn into industrial capitalists; however, in the nature of the phenomenon, this happens rarely. All in all, the entire guild system—both master and journeyman—dies out, where the capitalist and the laborer emerge.)

However, it is evident, and borne out by closer analysis of the historic epoch which we are now discussing, that the *age of dissolution* of the earlier modes of production and relations of the worker to the objective conditions of labor, is *simultaneously* an age in which *monetary wealth* has already developed to a certain extent, and also one in which it is rapidly growing and expanding, by means of the circumstances which accelerate this dissolution. Just as it is itself an agent of that dissolution, so that dissolution is the condition of its transformation into capital. But the *mere existence of monetary wealth*, even its conquest of a sort of supremacy, is not sufficient for this *dissolution to result in capital*. If it were, then ancient Rome, Byzantium, etc., would have concluded their history with free labor and capital, or rather, would have entered upon a new history. There the dissolution of the old relations of property was also tied to the development of monetary wealth—of commerce, etc. However, in fact the result of this dissolution was not industry, but the domination of countryside over city.

The *original formation of capital* does not, as is often supposed, proceed by the *accumulation* of food, tools, raw materials or, in short, of the *objective* conditions of labor detached from the soil and already fused with human labor. Not by means of capital creating the objective conditions of labor. Its *original formation* occurs simply because the historic process of the dissolution of an old mode of production allows value, existing in the form of *monetary wealth*, to *buy* the objective conditions of labor on one hand, to exchange the *living* labor of the now free workers for

money, on the other. All these elements are already in existence. What separates them out is a historic process, a process of dissolution, and it is *this* which enables money to turn into *capital*. In so far as money itself plays a part here, it is only to the extent that it is itself an extremely powerful agent of dissolution which intervenes in the process, and hence contributes to the creation of the *plucked*, objectiveless, *free laborers*. It is certainly not by *creating* the objective conditions of such laborers' existence, but rather by accelerating their loss of property.

For instance, when the great English landowners dismissed their retainers, who had consumed a share of their surplus produce of their land; when their farmers drove out the small cottagers, etc., then a doubly free mass of living labor power was thrown on to the *labor market*: free from the old relation of clientship, villeinage or service, but also free from all goods and chattels, from every real and objective form of existence, *free from all property*. Such a mass would be reduced either to the sale of its labor power or to beggary, vagabondage or robbery as its only source of income. History records the fact that it first tried beggary, vagabondage and crime, but was herded off this road on to the narrow path which led to the labor market by means of gallows, pillory and whip. . . . Conversely, the means of subsistence formerly consumed by the lords and their retainers, were now available for purchase by money, and money wished to purchase them in order through their instrumentality to purchase labor. Money had neither *created* nor *accumulated* these means of subsistence. They were already present, consumed and reproduced, before they were consumed and reproduced through the intervention of money. The only change was, that these means of production were now thrown on to the *exchange-market*. They had now been detached from their immediate connection with the mouths of the retainers, etc., and transformed from use values into exchange values, thus falling under the government and sovereignty of monetary wealth. The same applies to the instruments of labor. Monetary wealth neither invented nor manufactured spinning wheel and loom. But once spinners and weavers had been separated from their land, they and their wheels and looms came under the sway of monetary wealth, etc. *Capital unites the masses of hands and instruments which are already there. This and only this is what characterizes it. It brings*

them together under its sway. This is its *real accumulation*; the accumulation of laborers plus their instruments at given points. . . .

Historically, money is often transformed into capital in quite simple and obvious ways. Thus, the merchant sets to work a number of spinners and weavers, who formerly engaged in these activities as subsidiary occupations to their agricultural work, and turns a subsidiary occupation into a principal one, after which he has them under his control and sway as wage laborers. The next step is to remove them from their homes and to assemble them in a single house of labor. In this simple process it is evident that the merchant has prepared neither raw materials nor instruments nor means of subsistence for the weaver or the spinner. All he has done is gradually to confine them to one sort of labor, in which they are dependent on the *buyer*, the *merchant*, and thus eventually find themselves producing solely *for and by means of* him. Originally he has bought their labor merely by the purchase of their product. As soon as they confine themselves to the production of this exchange value, and are therefore obliged to produce immediate *exchange values*, and to exchange their labor entirely for money in order to go on living, they come under his domination. Finally, even the illusion of *selling* him their products, disappears. He purchases their labor and takes away first their property in the product, soon also their ownership of the instrument, unless he allows them the *illusion of ownership* in order to diminish his costs of production.

The original historical forms in which capital appears at first sporadically or *locally, side by side* with the old modes of production, but gradually bursting them asunder, make up *manufacture* in the proper sense of the word (not yet the factory). This arises where there is mass production for export—hence on the *basis of large-scale maritime and overland trade*, and in the centers of such trade, as in the Italian cities, Constantinople, the Flemish, Dutch cities, some Spanish ones as Barcelona, etc. Manufacture does not initially capture the so-called *urban crafts*, but the *rural subsidiary occupations*, spinning and weaving, the sort of work which least requires craft skill, technical training. . . .

We thus see that the transformation of money into capital presupposes a historic process which separates the objective conditions of labor, and makes them independent of and sets

them against the laborers. However, once capital and its process have come into being, they conquer all production and everywhere bring about and accentuate the separation between labor and property, labor and the objective conditions of labor.

— MARX, *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations* (1858), pp. 108-12; 115-18.

B. INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE IN THE TRANSITION TO CAPITALISM

The trading nations of ancient times existed like the gods of Epicurus in the intermediate worlds of the universe, or rather like the Jews in the pores of Polish society. The trade of the first independent flourishing merchant towns and trading nations rested as a pure carrying trade upon the barbarism of the producing nations, between whom they acted the middleman.

In the precapitalist stages of society commerce ruled industry. In modern society the reverse is true. Of course, commerce will have more or less of a counter-effect on the communities between which it is carried on. It will subordinate production more and more to exchange value by making luxuries and subsistence more dependent on sale than on the immediate use of the products. Thereby it dissolves the old relationships. It multiplies money circulation. It encompasses no longer merely the surplus of production, but bites deeper and deeper into the latter, and makes entire branches of production dependent upon it. Nevertheless this disintegrating effect depends very much on the nature of the producing community. . . .

Merchant's capital, when it holds a position of dominance, stands everywhere for a system of robbery, so that its development among the trading nations of old and modern times is always directly connected with plundering, piracy, kidnapping slaves, and colonial conquest, as in Carthage, Rome, and later among the Venetians, Portuguese, Dutch, etc.

The development of commerce and merchant's capital gives rise everywhere to the tendency towards production of exchange values, increases its volume, multiplies it, makes it cosmopolitan, and develops money into world-money. Commerce, therefore, has a more or less dissolving influence everywhere on the pro-

ducing organization, which it finds at hand and whose different forms are mainly carried on with a view to use value. To what extent it brings about a dissolution of the old mode of production depends on its solidity and internal structure. And whither this process of dissolution will lead, in other words, what new mode of production will replace the old, does not depend on commerce, but on the character of the old mode of production itself. In the ancient world the effect of commerce and the development of merchant's capital always resulted in a slave economy; depending on the point of departure, only in the transformation of a patriarchal slave system devoted to the production of immediate means of subsistence into one devoted to the production of surplus value. However, in the modern world, it results in the capitalist mode of production. It follows therefrom that these results spring in themselves from circumstances other than the development of merchant's capital.

It is the nature of things that as soon as town industry as such separates from agricultural industry, its products are from the outset commodities and thus require the mediation of commerce for their sale. The leaning of commerce towards the development of towns, and, on the other hand, the dependence of towns upon commerce, are so far natural. However, it depends on altogether different circumstances to what measure industrial development will go hand in hand with this development. Ancient Rome, in its later republican days, developed merchant's capital to a higher degree than ever before in the ancient world, without showing any progress in the development of crafts, while in Corinth and other Grecian towns in Europe and Asia Minor the development of commerce was accompanied by highly developed crafts. On the other hand, quite contrary to the growth of towns and attendant conditions, the trading spirit and the development of merchant's capital occur frequently among unsettled nomadic peoples.

There is no doubt—and it is precisely this fact which has led to wholly erroneous conceptions—that in the 16th and 17th centuries the great revolutions, which took place in commerce with the geographical discoveries and speeded the development of merchant's capital, constitute one of the principal elements in furthering the transition from the feudal to the capitalist mode of production. The sudden expansion of the world market, the

multiplication of circulating commodities, the competitive zeal of the European nations to possess themselves of the products of Asia and the treasures of America, and the colonial system—all contributed materially toward destroying the feudal fetters on production. However, in its first period—the manufacturing period—the modern mode of production developed only where the conditions for it had taken shape within the Middle Ages. Compare, for instance, Holland with Portugal. And when in the 16th, and partially still in the 17th, century the sudden expansion of commerce and emergence of a new world market overwhelmingly contributed to the fall of the old mode of production and the rise of capitalist production, this was accomplished conversely on the basis of the already existing capitalist mode of production. The world market itself forms the basis for this mode of production. On the other hand, the immanent necessity of this mode of production to produce on an ever-enlarged scale tends to extend the world market continually, so that it is not commerce in this case which revolutionizes industry, but industry which constantly revolutionizes commerce. Commercial supremacy itself is now linked with the prevalence to a greater or lesser degree of conditions for a large industry. Compare, for instance, England and Holland. The history of the decline of Holland as the ruling trading nation is the history of the subordination of merchant's capital to industrial capital. The obstacles presented by the internal solidity and organization of pre-capitalistic, national modes of production to the corrosive influence of commerce are strikingly illustrated in the intercourse of the English with India and China. The broad basis of the mode of production here is formed by the unity of small-scale agriculture and home industry, to which in India we should add the form of village communities built upon the common ownership of land, which, incidentally, was the original form in China as well. In India the English lost no time in exercising their direct political and economic power, as rulers and landlords, to disrupt these small economic communities. English commerce exerted a revolutionary influence on these communities and tore them apart only in so far as the low prices of its goods served to destroy the spinning and weaving industries, which were an ancient integrating element of this unity of industrial and agricultural production. And even so this work of

dissolution proceeds very gradually. And still more slowly in China, where it is not reinforced by direct political power. The substantial economy and saving in time afforded by the association of agriculture with manufacture put up a stubborn resistance to the products of the big industries, whose prices include the *faux frais* [incidental expenses] of the circulation process which pervades them. Unlike the English, Russian commerce, on the other hand, leaves the economic groundwork of Asiatic production untouched.

The transition from the feudal mode of production is twofold. The producer becomes merchant and capitalist, in contrast to the natural agricultural economy and the guild-bound handicrafts of the medieval urban industries. This is the really revolutionizing path. Or else, the merchant establishes direct sway over production. However much this serves historically as a stepping-stone—witness the English 17th-century clothier, who brings the weavers, independent as they are, under his control by selling their wool to them and buying their cloth—it cannot by itself contribute to the overthrow of the old mode of production, but tends rather to preserve and retain it as its precondition. The manufacturer in the French silk industry and in the English hosiery and lace industries, for example, was thus mostly but nominally a manufacturer until the middle of the 19th century. In point of fact, he was merely a merchant, who let the weavers carry on in their old unorganized way and exerted only a merchant's control, for that was for whom they really worked. This system presents everywhere an obstacle to the real capitalist mode of production and goes under with its development. Without revolutionizing the mode of production, it only worsens the condition of the direct producers, turns them into mere wage-workers and proletarians under conditions worse than those under the immediate control of capital, and appropriates their surplus labor on the basis of the old mode of production. . . .

In the Middle Ages, the merchant was merely one who, as Poppe rightly says, "transferred" the goods produced by guilds or peasants. The merchant becomes industrialist, or rather, makes craftsmen, particularly the small rural producers, work for him. Conversely, the producer becomes merchant. The master weaver, for instance, buys his wool or yarn himself and sells his cloth to the merchant, instead of receiving his wool from the

merchant piecemeal and working for him together with his journeymen. The elements of production pass into the production process as commodities bought by himself. And instead of producing for some individual merchant, or for specified customers, he produces for the world of trade. The producer is himself a merchant. Merchant's capital does no more than carry on the process of circulation. Originally, commerce was the precondition for the transformation of the crafts, the rural domestic industries, and feudal agriculture, into capitalist enterprises. . . .

As soon as manufacture gains sufficient strength, and particularly large-scale industry, it creates in its turn a market for itself, by capturing it through its commodities. At this point commerce becomes the servant of industrial production, for which continued expansion of the market becomes a vital necessity. Ever more extended mass production floods the existing market and thereby works continually for a still greater expansion of this market, for breaking out of its limits. What restricts this mass production is not commerce (in so far as it expresses the existing demand), but the magnitude of employed capital and the level of development of the productivity of labor. The industrial capitalist always has the world market before him, compares, and must constantly compare, his own cost-prices with the market prices at home, and throughout the world. In the earlier period such comparison fell almost entirely to the merchants, and thus secured the predominance of merchant's capital over industrial capital.

The first theoretical treatment of the modern mode of production—the mercantile system—proceeded necessarily from the superficial phenomena of the circulation process as individualized in the movements of merchant's capital, and therefore grasped only the appearance of matters. Partly because merchant's capital is the first free state of existence of capital in general. And partly because of the overwhelming influence which it exerted during the first revolutionizing period of feudal production—the genesis of modern production. The real science of modern economy only begins when the theoretical analysis passes from the process of circulation to the process of production.

—MARX, *Capital*, vol. III (1894), pp. 325-31.

C. PRELUDE TO THE BOURGEOIS REVOLUTION IN ENGLAND

In England, serfdom had practically disappeared in the last part of the 14th century. The immense majority of the population consisted then, and to a still larger extent in the 15th century, of free peasant proprietors, whatever was the feudal title under which their right of property was hidden. In the larger seignorial domains, the old bailiff, himself a serf, was displaced by the free farmer. The wage laborers of agriculture consisted partly of peasants, who utilized their leisure time by working on the large estates, partly of an independent special class of wage laborers, relatively and absolutely few in numbers. The latter also were practically at the same time peasant farmers, since, besides their wages, they had allotted to them arable land to the extent of four or more acres, together with their cottages. Besides they, with the rest of the peasants, enjoyed the usufruct of the common land, which gave pasture to their cattle, furnished them with timber, firewood, turf, etc. In all countries of Europe, feudal production is characterized by division of the soil amongst the greatest possible number of sub-feudatories. The might of the feudal lord, like that of the sovereign, depended not on the length of his rent roll, but on the number of his subjects, and the latter depended on the number of peasant proprietors. Although, therefore, the English land, after the Norman conquest, was distributed in gigantic baronies, one of which often included some 900 of the old Anglo-Saxon lordships, it was bestrewn with small peasant properties, only here and there interspersed with great seignorial domains. . . .

The prelude to the revolution that laid the foundation of the capitalist mode of production was played in the last third of the 15th, and the first decade of the 16th century. A mass of free proletarians was hurled on the labor market by the breaking-up of the bands of feudal retainers, who, as Sir James Steuart well says, "everywhere uselessly filled house and castle." Although the royal power, itself a product of bourgeois development, in its strife after absolute sovereignty forcibly hastened on the dissolution of these bands of retainers, it was by no means the sole cause of it. In insolent conflict with king and parliament, the

great feudal lords created an incomparably larger proletariat by the forcible driving of the peasantry from the land, to which the latter had the same feudal right as the lord himself, and by the usurpation of the common lands. The rapid rise of the Flemish wool manufactures, and the corresponding rise in the price of wool in England, gave the direct impulse to these evictions. The old nobility had been devoured by the great feudal wars. The new nobility was the child of its time, for which money was the power of all powers. Transformation of arable land into sheepwalks was, therefore, its cry. Harrison, in his "Description of England, prefixed to Holinshed's Chronicles," describes how the expropriation of small peasants is ruining the country. "What care our great encroachers?" The dwellings of the peasants and the cottages of the laborers were razed to the ground or doomed to decay. . . .

The process of forcible expropriation of the people received in the 16th century a new and frightful impulse from the Reformation, and from the consequent colossal spoliation of the church property. The Catholic church was, at the time of the Reformation, feudal proprietor of a great part of the English land. The suppression of the monasteries, etc., hurled their inmates into the proletariat. The estates of the church were to a large extent given away to rapacious royal favorites, or sold at a nominal price to speculating farmers and citizens, who drove out, *en masse*, the hereditary subtenants and threw their holdings into one. The legally guaranteed property of the poorer folk in a part of the church's tithes was tacitly confiscated. "Pauper ubique jacet" [paupers swarm everywhere], cried Queen Elizabeth, after a journey through England. In the 43rd year of her reign the nation was obliged to recognize pauperism officially by the introduction of a poor rate. "The authors of this law seem to have been ashamed to state the grounds of it, for [contrary to traditional usage] it has no preamble whatever." By the 16th of Charles I, ch. 4, it was declared perpetual, and in fact only in 1834 did it take a new and harsher form. These immediate results of the Reformation were not its most lasting ones. The property of the church formed the religious bulwark of the traditional conditions of landed property. With its fall these were no longer tenable.

Even in the last decade of the 17th century, the yeomanry, the

class of independent peasants, were more numerous than the class of farmers. They had formed the backbone of Cromwell's strength, and, even according to the confession of Macaulay, stood in favorable contrast to the drunken squires and to their servants, the country clergy, who had to marry their masters' cast-off mistresses. About 1750, the yeomanry had disappeared, and so had, in the last decade of the 18th century, the last trace of the common land of the agricultural laborer. We leave on one side here the purely economic causes of the agricultural revolution. We deal only with the forcible means employed.

After the restoration of the Stuarts, the landed proprietors carried, by legal means, an act of usurpation, effected everywhere on the Continent without any legal formality. They abolished the feudal tenure of land, *i.e.*, they got rid of all its obligations to the State, "indemnified" the State by taxes on the peasantry and the rest of the mass of the people, vindicated for themselves the rights of modern private property in estates to which they had only a feudal title, and, finally, passed those laws of settlement, which, *mutatis mutandis*, had the same effect on the English agricultural laborer, as the edict of the Tatar Boris Gudunov on the Russian peasantry.

The "Glorious Revolution" brought into power, along with William of Orange, the landlord and capitalist appropriators of surplus value. They inaugurated the new era by practicing on a colossal scale thefts of state lands, thefts that had been hitherto managed more modestly. These estates were given away, sold at a ridiculous figure, or even annexed to private estates by direct seizure. All this happened without the slightest observation of legal etiquette. The Crown lands thus fraudulently appropriated, together with the robbery of the church estates, as far as these had not been lost again during the republican revolution, form the basis of the today princely domains of the English oligarchy. The bourgeois capitalists favored the operation with the view, among others, to promoting free trade in land, to extending the domain of modern agriculture on the large farm system, and to increasing their supply of the free agricultural proletarians ready to hand. Besides, the new landed aristocracy was the natural ally of the bankocracy, of the newly-hatched *haute finance*, and of the large manufacturers, then depending on protective duties. The English bourgeoisie acted for its own interest

quite as wisely as did the Swedish bourgeoisie who, reversing the process, hand in hand with their economic allies, the peasantry, helped the kings in the forcible resumption of the Crown lands from the oligarchy. This happened since 1604 under Charles X and Charles XI.

Communal property – always distinct from the State property just dealt with – was an old Teutonic institution which lived on under cover of feudalism. We have seen how the forcible usurpation of this, generally accompanied by the turning of arable into pasture land, begins at the end of the 15th and extends into the 16th century. But, at that time, the process was carried on by means of individual acts of violence against which legislation, for a 150 years, fought in vain. The advance made by the 18th century shows itself in this, that the law itself becomes now the instrument of the theft of the people's land, although the large farmers make use of their little independent methods as well. The parliamentary form of the robbery is that of Acts for enclosures of commons, in other words, decrees by which the landlords grant themselves the people's land as private property, decrees of expropriation of the people. . .

In the 19th century, the very memory of the connection between the agricultural laborer and the communal property had, of course, vanished. To say nothing of more recent times, have the agricultural population received a farthing of compensation for the 3,511,770 acres of common land which between 1801 and 1831 were stolen from them and by parliamentary devices presented to the landlords by the landlords?

The last process of wholesale expropriation of the agricultural population from the soil is, finally, the so-called clearing of estates, *i.e.*, the sweeping men off them. All the English methods hitherto considered culminated in "clearing." As we saw in the picture of modern conditions given in a former chapter, where there are no more independent peasants to get rid of, the "clearing" of cottages begins; so that the agricultural laborers do not find on the soil cultivated by them even the spot necessary for their own housing. But what "clearing of estates" really and properly signifies, we learn only in the promised land of modern romance, the Highlands of Scotland. There the process is distinguished by its systematic character, by the magnitude of the scale on which it is carried out at one blow (in Ireland landlords

have gone to the length of sweeping away several villages at once; in Scotland areas as large as German principalities are dealt with), finally by the peculiar form of property, under which the embezzled lands were held. . . .

The spoliation of the church's property, the fraudulent alienation of the State domains, the robbery of the common lands, the usurpation of feudal and clan property, and its transformation into modern private property under circumstances of reckless terrorism, were just so many idyllic methods of primitive accumulation. They conquered the field for capitalistic agriculture, made the soil part and parcel of capital, and created for the town industries the necessary supply of a "free" and outlawed proletariat.

—MARX, *Capital*, vol. I (1867), pp. 717-24, 728, 732f.

D. FROM FEUDAL TO CAPITALIST COMMODITY PRODUCTION

Before capitalistic production, *i.e.*, in the Middle Ages, the system of petty industry obtained generally, based upon the private property of the laborers in their means of production; in the country, the agriculture of the small peasant, freeman or serf; in the towns, the handicrafts organized in guilds. The instruments of labor—land, agricultural implements, the workshop, the tool—were the instruments of labor of single individuals, adapted for the use of one worker, and, therefore, of necessity, small, dwarfish, circumscribed. But for this very reason they belonged, as a rule, to the producer himself. To concentrate these scattered, limited means of production, to enlarge them, to turn them into the powerful levers of production of the present day—this was precisely the historical role of capitalist production and of its upholder, the bourgeoisie. In the fourth section of *Capital* Marx has explained in detail, how since the 15th century this has been historically worked out through the three phases of simple cooperation, manufacture and modern industry. But the bourgeoisie, as is also shown there, could not transform these puny means of production into mighty productive forces without transforming them, at the same time, from means of production of the individual into *social* means of production only workable by a collectivity of men. The spinning wheel, the hand loom, the blacksmith's hammer, were replaced by the spinning machine, the power loom, the steam hammer; the individual workshop, by

the factory implying the cooperation of hundreds and thousands of workmen. In like manner, production itself changed from a series of individual into a series of social acts, and the products from individual to social products. The yarn, the cloth, the metal articles that now came out of the factory, were the joint product of many workers, through whose hands they had successively to pass before they were ready. No one person could say of them: "I made that; this is *my* product."

But where, in a given society, the fundamental form of production is that spontaneous division of labor which creeps in gradually and not upon any preconceived plan, there the products take on the form of *commodities*, whose mutual exchange, buying and selling, enable the individual producers to satisfy their manifold wants. And this was the case in the Middle Ages. The peasant, *e.g.*, sold to the artisan agricultural products and bought from him the products of handicraft. Into this society of individual producers, of commodity producers, the new mode of production thrust itself. In the midst of the old division of labor, grown up spontaneously and upon *no definite plan*, which had governed the whole of society, now arose division of labor upon a *definite plan*, as organized in the factory; side by side with *individual* production appeared *social* production. The products of both were sold in the same market, and, therefore, at prices at least approximately equal. But organization upon a definite plan was stronger than spontaneous division of labor. The factories working with the combined social forces of a collectivity of individuals produced their commodities far more cheaply than the individual small producers. Individual production succumbed in one department after another. Socialized production revolutionized all the old methods of production. But its revolutionary character was, at the same time, so little recognized that it was, on the contrary, introduced as a means of increasing and developing the production of commodities. When it arose, it found ready-made, and made liberal use of, certain machinery for the production and exchange of commodities: merchants' capital, handicraft, wage labor. Socialized production thus introducing itself as a new form of the production of commodities, it was a matter of course that under it the old forms of appropriation remained in full swing, and were applied to its products as well.

In the medieval stage of evolution of the production of com-

modities, the question as to the owner of the product of labor could not arise. The individual producer, as a rule, had, from raw material belonging to himself, and generally his own handiwork, produced it with his own tools, by the labor of his own hands or of his family. There was no need for him to appropriate the new product. It belonged wholly to him, as a matter of course. His property in the product was, therefore, based *upon his own labor*. Even where external help was used, this was, as a rule, of little importance, and very generally was compensated by something other than wages. The apprentices and journeymen of the guilds worked less for board and wages than for education, in order that they might become master craftsmen themselves.

Then came the concentration of the means of production and of the producers in large workshops and factories, their transformation into actual socialized means of production and socialized producers. But the socialized producers and means of production and their products were still treated, after this change, just as they had been before, i.e., as the means of production and the products of individuals. Hitherto, the owner of the instruments of labor had himself appropriated the product, because, as a rule, it was his own product and the assistance of others was the exception. Now the owner of the instruments of labor always appropriated to himself the product, although it was no longer *his* product but exclusively the product of the *labor of others*. Thus, the products now produced socially were not appropriated by those who had actually set in motion the means of production and actually produced the commodities, but by the *capitalists*. The means of production, and production itself, had become in essence socialized. But they were subjected to a form of appropriation which presupposes the private production of individuals, under which, therefore, everyone owns his own product and brings it to market. The mode of production is subjected to this form of appropriation, although it abolishes the conditions upon which the latter rests.

This contradiction, which gives to the new mode of production its capitalistic character, *contains the germ of the whole of the social antagonisms of today*. The greater the mastery obtained by the new mode of production over all important fields of production and in all manufacturing countries, the more it reduced in-

dividual production to an insignificant residuum, *the more clearly was brought out the incompatibility of socialized production with capitalistic appropriation.*

The first capitalists found, as we have said, alongside of other forms of labor, wage labor ready-made for them on the market. But it was exceptional, complementary, accessory, transitory wage labor. The agricultural laborer, though, upon occasion, he hired himself out by the day, had a few acres of his own land on which he could at all events live at a pinch. The guilds were so organized that the journeyman of today became the master of tomorrow. But all this changed, as soon as the means of production became socialized and concentrated in the hands of capitalists. The means of production, as well as the product, of the individual producer became more and more worthless; there was nothing left for him but to turn wage worker under the capitalist. Wage labor, aforesaid the exception and accessory, now became the sole remaining function of the worker. The wage worker for a time became a wage worker for life. The number of these permanent wage workers was further enormously increased by the breaking up of the feudal system that occurred at the same time, by the disbanding of the retainers of the feudal lords, the eviction of the peasants from their homesteads, etc. The separation was made complete between the means of production concentrated in the hands of the capitalists, on the one side, and the producers, possessing nothing but their labor-power, on the other. *The contradiction between socialized production and capitalistic appropriation manifested itself as the antagonism of proletariat and bourgeoisie.*

We have seen that the capitalistic mode of production thrust its way into a society of commodity producers, of individual producers, whose social bond was the exchange of their products. But every society based upon the production of commodities has this peculiarity: that the producers have lost control over their own social interrelations. Each man produces for himself with such means of production as he may happen to have, and for such exchange as he may require to satisfy his remaining wants. No one knows how much of his particular article is coming on the market, nor how much of it will be wanted. No one knows whether he will be able to make good his costs of production or even to sell his commodity at all. Anarchy reigns in socialized production.

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

In medieval society, especially in the earlier centuries, production was essentially directed toward satisfying the wants of the individual. It satisfied, in the main, only the wants of the producer and his family. Where relations of personal dependence existed, as in the country, it also helped to satisfy the wants of the feudal lord. In all this there was, therefore, no exchange; the products, consequently, did not assume the character of commodities. The family of the peasant produced almost everything it wanted: clothes and furniture, as well as means of subsistence. Only when it began to produce more than was sufficient to supply its own wants and the payments in kind to the feudal lord, only then did it also produce commodities. This surplus, thrown into socialized exchange and offered for sale, became commodities.

The artisans of the towns, it is true, had from the first to produce for exchange. But they, also, themselves supplied the greatest part of their own individual wants. They had gardens and plots of land. They turned their cattle out into the communal forest, which, also yielded them timber and firing. The women spun flax, wool, and so forth. Production for the purpose of exchange, production of commodities, was only in its infancy. Hence, exchange was restricted, the market narrow, the methods of production stable; there was local exclusiveness without, local unity within; the Mark* in the country; in the town, the guild.

But with the extension of the production of commodities, and especially with the introduction of the capitalist mode of produc-

*Here Engels refers to his work "The Mark."—*Ed.*

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

Finally, modern industry and the opening of the world market made the struggle universal, and at the same time gave it an unheard-of virulence. Advantages in natural or artificial conditions of production now decide the existence or nonexistence of individual capitalists, as well as of whole industries and countries. He that falls is remorselessly cast aside. It is the Darwinian struggle of the individual for existence transferred from nature to society with intensified violence. The conditions of existence natural to the animal appear as the final term of human development. The contradiction between socialized production and capitalistic appropriation now presents itself as *an antagonism between the organization of production in the individual workshop and the anarchy of production in society generally.*

—ENGELS, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (1880), MARX and ENGELS, *Selected Works* (1968), pp. 418-423.

E. GENESIS OF THE INDUSTRIAL CAPITALIST

The genesis of the industrial capitalist did not proceed in such a gradual way as that of the farmer. Doubtless many small guild-

masters, and yet more independent small artisans, or even wage laborers, transformed themselves into small capitalists, and (by gradually extending exploitation of wage labor and corresponding accumulation) into full-blown capitalists. In the infancy of capitalist production, things often happened as in the infancy of medieval towns, where the question, which of the escaped serfs should be master and which servant, was in great part decided by the earlier or later date of their flight. The snail's pace of this method corresponded in no wise with the commercial requirements of the new world-market that the great discoveries of the end of the 15th century created. But the middle ages had handed down two distinct forms of capital, which mature in the *monetary wealth*, to buy the objective conditions of labor on one hand, to exchange the *living* labor of the now free workers for capital *quand même* [of whatever kind]—usurer's capital and merchant's capital

The money capital formed by means of usury and commerce was prevented from turning into industrial capital, in the country by the feudal constitution, in the towns by the guild organization. These fetters vanished with the dissolution of feudal society, with the expropriation and partial eviction of the country population. The new manufactures were established at seaports, or at inland points beyond the control of the old municipalities and their guilds. Hence in England an embittered struggle of the corporate towns against these new industrial nurseries.

The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black skins, signalized the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief momenta of primitive accumulation. On their heels treads the commercial war of the European nations, with the globe for a theatre. It begins with the revolt of the Netherlands from Spain, assumes giant dimensions in England's Anti-Jacobin war, and is still going on in the opium wars against China.

The different momenta of primitive accumulation distribute themselves now, more or less in chronological order, particularly over Spain, Portugal, Holland, France and England. In England at the end of the 17th century, they arrive at a systematical combination, embracing the colonies, the national debt, the modern

mode of taxation, and the protectionist system. These methods depend in part on brute force, *e.g.*, the colonial system. But they all employ the power of the State, the concentrated and organized force of society, to hasten, hothouse, the process of transformation of the feudal mode of production into the capitalist mode, and to shorten the transition. Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one. It is itself an economic power.

—MARX, *Capital*, vol. I (1867), pp. 750f.

F. THE STRIFE BETWEEN WORKMAN AND MACHINE

The contest between the capitalist and the wage laborer dates back to the very origin of capital. It raged on throughout the whole manufacturing period. But only since the introduction of machinery has the workman fought against the instrument of labor itself, the material embodiment of capital. He revolts against this particular form of the means of production, as being the material basis of the capitalist mode of production.

In the 17th century nearly all Europe experienced revolts of the workpeople against the ribbon loom, a machine for weaving ribbons and trimmings, . . . This machine, which shook Europe to its foundations, was in fact the precursor of the mule and the power loom, and of the industrial revolution of the 18th century. It enabled a totally inexperienced boy, to set the whole loom with all its shuttles in motion, by simply moving a rod backwards and forwards, and in its improved form produced from 40 to 50 pieces at once.

About 1630, a wind-sawmill, erected near London by a Dutchman, succumbed to the excesses of the populace. Even as late as the beginning of the 18th century, sawmills driven by water overcame the opposition of the people, supported as it was by Parliament, only with great difficulty. No sooner had Everet in 1758 erected the first wool-shearing machine that was driven by waterpower, than it was set on fire by 100,000 people who had been thrown out of work. Fifty thousand workpeople, who had previously lived by carding wool, petitioned Parliament against Arkwright's scribbling mills and carding engines. The enormous destruction of machinery that occurred in the English manufacturing districts during the first 15 years of this century, chiefly caused by the employment of the power loom, and known as the

Luddite movement, gave the anti-Jacobin governments of Sidmouth, Castlereagh, and the like, a pretext for the most reactionary and forcible measures. It took both time and experience before the workpeople learnt to distinguish between machinery and its employment by capital, and to direct their attacks, not against the material instruments of production, but against the mode in which they are used.

The contests about wates in manufacture presuppose manufacture, and are in no sense directed against its existence. The opposition against the establishment of new manufactures, proceeds from the guilds and privileged towns, not from the workpeople. . .

The instrument of labor, when it takes the form of a machine, immediately becomes a competitor of the workman himself. The self-expansion of capital by means of machinery is thenceforward directly proportional to the number of the work-people, whose means of livelihood have been destroyed by that machinery. The whole system of capitalist production is based on the fact that the workman sells his labor power as a commodity. Division of labor specializes this labor power, by reducing it to skill in handling a particular tool. So soon as the handling of this tool becomes the work of a machine, then, with the use value, the exchange value too, of the workman's labor power vanishes; the workman becomes unsaleable, like paper money thrown out of currency by legal enactment. That portion of the working class, thus by machinery rendered superfluous, *i.e.*, no longer immediately necessary for the self-expansion of capital, either goes to the wall in the unequal contest of the old handicrafts and manufactures with machinery, or else floods all the more easily accessible branches of industry, swamps the labor market, and sinks the price of labor power below its value. It is impressed upon the workpeople, as a great consolation, first, that their sufferings are only temporary ("a temporary inconvenience"), secondly, that machinery acquires the mastery over the whole of a given field of production, only by degrees, so that the extent and intensity of its destructive effect is diminished. The first consolation neutralizes the second. When machinery seizes on an industry by degrees, it produces chronic misery among the operatives who compete with it. Where the transition is rapid, the effect is acute and felt by great masses. History discloses no

tragedy more horrible than the gradual extinction of the English handloom weavers, an extinction that was spread over several decades, and finally sealed in 1838. Many of them died of starvation, many with families vegetated for a long time on 2½d. a day. . . . For the rest, since machinery is continually seizing upon new fields of production, its temporary effect is really permanent. Hence, the character of independence and estrangement which the capitalist mode of production as a whole gives to the instruments of labor and to the product, as against the workman, is developed by means of machinery into a thorough antagonism. Therefore, it is with the advent of machinery that the workman for the first time brutally revolts against the instruments of labor.

The instrument of labor strikes down the laborer. This direct antagonism between the two comes out most strongly whenever newly introduced machinery competes with handicrafts or manufactures handed down from former times. But even in modern industry the continual improvement of machinery, and the development of the automatic system, has an analogous effect. . . .

But machinery not only acts as a competitor who gets the better of the workman, and is constantly on the point of making him superfluous. It is also a power inimical to him, and as such capital proclaims it from the roof tops and as such makes use of it. It is the most powerful weapon for repressing strikes, those periodical revolts of the working class against the autocracy of capital. According to Gaskell, the steam engine was from the very first an antagonist that enabled the capitalist to tread under foot the growing claims of the workmen, who threatened the newly born factory system with a crisis. It would be possible to write quite a history of the inventions, made since 1830, for the sole purpose of supplying capital with weapons against the revolts of the working class.

—MARX, *Capital*, vol. I (1867), pp. 427-37.

G. CLASSES AND IDEOLOGY IN THE TRANSITION TO CAPITALISM

When Europe emerged from the Middle Ages, the rising middle class of the towns constituted its revolutionary element. It had conquered a recognized position within mediæval feudal organization, but this position, also, had become too narrow for

its expansive power. The development of the middle class, the *bourgeoisie*, became incompatible with the maintenance of the feudal system; the feudal system, therefore, had to fall.

But the great international center of feudalism was the Roman Catholic Church. It united the whole of feudalized Western Europe, in spite of all internal wars, into one grand political system, opposed as much to the schismatic Greeks as to the Mohammedan countries. It surrounded feudal institutions with the halo of divine consecration. It had organized its own hierarchy on the feudal model, and, lastly, it was itself by far the most powerful feudal lord, holding, as it did, fully one third of the soil of the Catholic world. Before profane feudalism could be successfully attacked in each country and in detail, this, its sacred central organization, had to be destroyed.

Moreover, parallel with the rise of the middle class went on the great revival of science; astronomy, mechanics, physics, anatomy, physiology were again cultivated. And the bourgeoisie, for the development of its industrial production, required a science which ascertained the physical properties of natural objects and the modes of action of the forces of nature. Now up to then science had but been the humble handmaid of the Church, had not been allowed to overstep the limits set by faith, and for that reason had been no science at all. Science rebelled against the Church; the bourgeoisie could not do without science, and, therefore, had to join in the rebellion.

The above, though touching but two of the points where the rising middle class was bound to come into collision with the established religion, will be sufficient to show, first, that the class most directly interested in the struggle against the pretensions of the Roman Church was the bourgeoisie; and second, that every struggle against feudalism, at that time, had to take on a religious disguise, had to be directed against the Church in the first instance. But if the universities and the traders of the cities started the cry, it was sure to find, and did find, a strong echo in masses of the country people, the peasants, who everywhere had to struggle for their very existence with their feudal lords, spiritual and temporal.

The long fight of the bourgeoisie against feudalism culminated in three great decisive battles.

The first was what is called the Protestant Reformation in Ger-

many. The war cry raised against the Church by Luther was responded to by two insurrections of a political nature: first, that of the lower nobility under Franz von Sickingen (1523), then the great Peasants War, 1525. Both were defeated, chiefly in consequence of the indecision of the parties most interested, the burghers of the towns—an indecision into the causes of which we cannot here enter. From that moment the struggle degenerated into a fight between the local princes and the central power, and ended by blotting out Germany, for 200 years, from the politically active nations of Europe. The Lutheran Reformation produced a new creed indeed, a religion adapted to absolute monarchy. No sooner were the peasants of northeast Germany converted to Lutheranism than they were from free-men reduced to serfs.

But where Luther failed, Calvin won the day. Calvin's creed was one fit for the boldest of the bourgeoisie of his time. His predestination doctrine was the religious expression of the fact that in the commercial world of competition success or failure does not depend upon a man's activity or cleverness, but upon circumstances uncontrollable by him. It is not of him that willeth or of him that runneth, but of the mercy of unknown superior economic powers; and this was especially true at a period of economic revolution, when all old commercial routes and centers were replaced by new ones, when India and America were opened to the world, and when even the most sacred economic articles of faith—the value of gold and silver—began to totter and to break down. Calvin's church constitution was thoroughly democratic and republican; and where the kingdom of God was republicanized, could the kingdoms of this world remain subject to monarchs, bishops and lords? While German Lutheranism became a willing tool in the hands of princes, Calvinism founded a republic in Holland and active republican parties in England, and, above all, Scotland.

In Calvinism, the second great bourgeois upheaval found its doctrine ready cut and dried. This upheaval took place in England. The middle class of the town brought it on, and the yeomanry of the country districts fought it out. Curiously enough, in all the three great bourgeois risings, the peasantry furnishes the army that has to do the fighting; and the peasantry is just the class that, the victory once gained, is most surely ruined by

the economic consequences of that victory. A 100 years after Cromwell, the yeomanry of England had almost disappeared. Anyhow, had it not been for that yeomanry and for the *plebeian* element in the towns, the bourgeoisie alone would never have fought the matter out to the bitter end, and would never have brought Charles I to the scaffold. In order to secure even those conquests of the bourgeoisie that were ripe for gathering at the time, the revolution had to be carried considerably further—exactly as in 1793 in France and 1848 in Germany. This seems, in fact, to be one of the laws of evolution of bourgeois society.

Well, upon this excess of revolutionary activity there necessarily followed the inevitable reaction which in its turn went beyond the point where it might have maintained itself. After a series of oscillations, the new center of gravity was at last attained and became a new starting point. The grand period of English history, known to respectability under the name of “the Great Rebellion,” and the struggles succeeding it, were brought to a close by the comparatively puny event entitled by liberal historians, “the Glorious Revolution.”

The new starting point was a compromise between the rising middle class and the ex-feudal landowners. The latter, though called, as now, the aristocracy, had been long since on the way which led them to become what Louis Philippe in France became at a much later period, “the first bourgeois of the kingdom.” Fortunately for England, the old feudal barons had killed one another during the Wars of the Roses. Their successors, though mostly scions of the old families, had been so much out of the direct line of descent that they constituted quite a new body, with habits and tendencies far more bourgeois than feudal. They fully understood the value of money, and at once began to increase their rents by turning hundreds of small farmers out and replacing them by sheep. Henry VIII, while squandering the Church lands, created fresh bourgeois landlords by wholesale; the innumerable confiscations of estates, regranted to absolute or relative upstarts, and continued during the whole of the 17th century, had the same result. Consequently, ever since Henry VII, the English “aristocracy,” far from counteracting the development of industrial production, had, on the contrary, sought to indirectly profit thereby; and there had always been a section of the great landowners willing, from economical or

political reasons, to cooperate with the leading men of the financial and industrial bourgeoisie. The compromise of 1689 was, therefore, easily accomplished. The political spoils of "pelf and place" were left to the great landowning families, provided the economic interests of the financial, manufacturing and commercial middle class were sufficiently attended to. And these economic interests were at that time powerful enough to determine the general policy of the nation. There might be squabbles about matters of detail, but, on the whole, the aristocratic oligarchy knew too well that its own economic prosperity was irretrievably bound up with that of the industrial and commercial middle class.

From that time, the bourgeoisie was a humble, but still a recognized component of the ruling classes of England. With the rest of them, it had a common interest in keeping in subjection the great working mass of the nation. The merchant or manufacturer himself stood in the position of master, or, as it was until lately called, of "natural superior" to his clerks, his workpeople, his domestic servants. His interest was to get as much and as good work out of them as he could; for this end they had to be trained to proper submission. He was himself religious; his religion had supplied the standard under which he had fought the king and the lords; he was not long in discovering the opportunities this same religion offered him for working upon the minds of his natural inferiors, and making them submissive to the behests of the masters it had pleased God to place over them. In short, the English bourgeoisie now had to take a part in keeping down the "lower orders," the great producing mass of the nation, and one of the means employed for that purpose was the influence of religion.

—ENGELS, "Introduction to English Edition," *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (1892), MARX and ENGELS, *Selected Works* (1968), 387-90.

PART FOUR

CAPITALISM: ITS DRIVING FORCES AND CONTRADICTIONS

Capitalist production . . . more than any other mode of production, squanders human lives, or living labor, and not only blood and flesh, but also nerve and brain. Indeed, it is only by dint of the most extravagant waste of individual development that the development of the human race is at all safeguarded and maintained in the epoch of history immediately preceding the conscious reorganization of society.

—MARX, *Capital*, vol. III (1894), p. 88.

Introduction

THE MATERIAL in this section is taken in large measure from *Capital*, Marx's most famous work, in which his thought is most fully elaborated. In form and appearance *Capital* is an economic treatise — and indeed, comprising as it does three volumes of over 2,200 pages, it is not only an encyclopedic but a profound economic study. It is, in addition, a penetrating running commentary on the history of economic thought.

Yet it is far more than this. For Marx is concerned not only with the economics of capitalism, but with the system in its totality. He sees history, politics, sociology and philosophy as integral elements of economics, just as he sees economics as the bedrock of all social analysis. Because he was able to achieve this synthesis, Marx did two things never before accomplished by an economic scientist: he made clear the inner driving forces of

capitalism; and at the same time he showed how capitalism is only a particular stage in human history. This achievement, perhaps more than any other, gives Marx a place in the social sciences analogous to that of Copernicus and Darwin in the natural sciences.

Students of economic theory know that Marx's comprehensive analysis was a continuation of the work of the classical school—particularly Adam Smith and David Ricardo, who took for their subject not economics but *political economy* (a study in which economics and politics are seen as interacting aspects of social life). What Marx did was to carry the study of classical political economy to its logical—and revolutionary—conclusion. Interestingly, those economists who complain about Marx's introduction of “extraneous” matters into his economic writings do not raise the same objection to Smith and Ricardo. The reason, of course, is that the latter, basically capitalist in outlook, stopped short of the full implications of their own analysis. For them capitalism was an eternal, natural system, not a temporary epoch in history. Moreover, since they did not go beyond the bourgeois outlook, they were unable to unravel the mystery of surplus value, and thus could not explain fully what makes the wheels of capitalism turn.

There are those, such as Joseph Schumpeter, who acknowledge Marx's contribution as sociologist-historian-philosopher, but who contend that his economics is wrong. They view Marx, together with Smith, Ricardo and other classical economists, as outdated theorists who failed to explain what happens in the workaday world of business and whose ideas have no relevance to the sophisticated economic problems of contemporary society. Others, such as Robert Heilbroner, grant Marx a measure of prophetic acumen in foreseeing such features of capitalism as periodic crises and the growth of monopoly enterprises. But they dismiss his labor theory of value as a cumbersome and inaccurate explanation of the phenomena of the market. Further, seizing on alleged “flaws” in Marx's analysis, such as his conclusion that the rate of profit tends to fall or his discussion of the “absolute impoverishment” of the working class, they conclude that these so-called flaws prove that the entire structure of Marx's economic theory falls to the ground.

The validity of Marx's basic propositions—the laws of value,

surplus value, capitalist accumulation, and the like—is not dependent on the correctness of all his secondary or derivative formulations. In addition, the “errors” that some of Marx’s adversaries find in his work stem from the fact that developments in subsequent times and other places call for qualifications of some of Marx’s analyses. Further, a careful reading of *Capital* reveals that some of the alleged “flaws” are really only flaws in the understanding of Marx’s critics.*

From the mid-19th century until about a generation ago, academic economists—with few exceptions—simply rejected Marx out of hand. They found his analyses crude and irrelevant, if not totally incomprehensible. In part, their rejection was due to a lack of concern with the questions with which Marx dealt. Assuming the eternity of capitalism, they occupied themselves with working out formulas for the circulation of goods in an ideal “free enterprise” system—a system in which such unpleasant things as crisis or class struggle or monopoly were merely annoying aberrations.

Two events of the first half of this century—the Russian Socialist Revolution of 1917 and the economic crisis of the 1930s—shook the complacency of traditional economics and forced a confrontation with the ideas of Marx. A number of economists, among whom J. M. Keynes was the most prominent, began to turn to some of the central questions posed by Marx. (In doing so Keynes studiously avoided any mention of Marx or his writings.) They admitted that capitalism was not an automatic self-regulating system; that big business and monopoly were transforming 19th century rugged individualistic capitalism into something quite different; that the big corporations desperately needed state intervention in economic affairs if the entire system was not to collapse; that modern wars are very much related to imperialistic economic drives.

In the United States, despite the further expansion of capitalism, considerable effort has been put into combating Marx’s economic ideas. Alongside the old “refutations,” theories have

*A full discussion of these questions can be found in such works as Maurice Dobb’s *Political Economy and Capitalism* (New York, 1945), Rudolph Schlesinger’s *Marx, His Time and Ours* (London, 1950), Joseph Gillman’s *The Falling Rate of Profit* (New York, 1958), Paul Sweezy’s *The Theory of Capitalist Development* (New York, 1942).

been advanced to prove that we have undergone a "managerial revolution," in which power has silently passed from the big capitalist owners to a new class of managers and technical elite. We are told that a welfare state has taken power away from big business and we really now have a kind of socialism in our country in the form of "people's capitalism." A few years ago we were informed that poverty had become a thing of the past in our "affluent society"; more recently poverty has been "re-discovered" but it is now supposedly only marginal, existing in "pockets" of our ever-more-affluent society. Other economic and sociological theorists inform us that power is now equally shared by business, labor and government, and that this new equilibrium of "countervailing power" will keep our capitalism alive and healthy far into the foreseeable future. Such, in essence, are the latter-day "refutations" of Marx's *Capital*.

To be sure, there are non-Marxist scholars who see in our system today some of the features pointed out by Marx more than a century ago. Men like C. Wright Mills have warned of the death-grip of the "power-elite," and more recently G. William Domhoff, in *Who Rules America?* has brilliantly demonstrated that the United States has a small, powerful and clearly identifiable "governing class." J. K. Galbraith, who wrote about the "affluent society" and "countervailing power," now takes a more sober view in his *The Industrial State*. He talks about planning as a necessary replacement for the capitalist market, and about "excluding the capitalist from effective power" (of course, it is not to the working class that Galbraith would give power, but to a technocratic "Educational Scientific Estate"). He also thinks he sees a "convergence" of the capitalist and Soviet systems—a wishful idea increasingly popular among some liberals.

The excerpts from Marx, as well as from Engels and Lenin, presented in this section, although they are of necessity fragmentary and omit the elaborate technical structure of the argument of *Capital*, nevertheless show the basic pattern of Marxian economic thinking. They should enable the reader to see how this analysis stands up against the kind of criticism mentioned above.

Of course the capitalism Marx writes about is that which existed in England a century ago, and his conclusions and observations must be considered in that light. Marx, in economics as in

other areas, was not giving all answers for all time. What he did — and did with genius — was to describe and explain the driving forces of capitalism and to indicate the direction of its development. Since Marx wrote, some of his analyses have had to be extended to take into account new features, such as state monopoly capitalism, the coexistence of two economic systems, the problems of relations between socialist states, the need for varied patterns of economic programs in socialist countries at different levels of development, the problems of newly liberated countries in Asia and Africa. It is only natural that some of Marx's formulations have had to be further refined or qualified; some have been given differing interpretations; and others are being re-examined in the light of new problems and new knowledge.

The selections make clear the central proposition of Marx's socio-economic theory — namely, that relations of production are the foundation of every social economic formation. Under capitalism the primary social relation is that of capitalist and worker. Relations of production cannot of course be separated from the productive forces. The study of production relations entails the simultaneous study of the forces of production — the labor process, technology, division of labor, and cooperation.

In his study of capitalist society Marx begins with the commodity, which he holds is the basic *cell* of the capitalist organism. Examining the commodity historically and analytically, he demonstrates that commodity transactions — the buying and selling of goods — though they appear to be the movement of *things*, are in reality *relations between people* at a particular level of social production. The mistaking of the appearance for the reality of the commodity results in what Marx calls "commodity fetishism."

Proceeding to an examination of capitalist commodity production, Marx again insists that capital, though it appears to be money, or factories and raw material, or machinery and goods, is essentially a *social relation*. He traces the emergence of capital, dealing with the history of technology and social change. He shows that for capital to come into being there had to exist, on the one hand, a particular level of technology, and on the other, a particular social condition — namely, a mobile body of people, unhampered by ties to the soil or to feudal lords, and thus free to operate the capitalists' factories. In other words, capitalism had to have a modern working class.

Marx next analyzes the relations of worker and capitalist. He here makes his epochal discovery—the law of surplus value, which hinges on disclosing the crucial distinction between *labor* and *labor power*. Simultaneously, he deals with the growth of the working class in Europe, the conditions of factory workers and their struggles as capitalism develops at a rate and on a scale unprecedented in the evolution of mankind. The pages of *Capital* devoted to the history and life of the working class are among the most moving in all literature.

The capitalism of Marx's day had already manifested its cyclical character—its tendency to swing from boom to bust. While he did not deal with the subject systematically in any one particular place, Marx gave us brilliant insights into this phenomenon. His observations, taken in their totality, constitute the most adequate theory of crises to date. He saw crisis not as accidental or adventitious, but as inherent in the system itself and symptomatic of its fatal flaw—what he called its basic contradictions.

Perhaps the most impressive evidence of the validity of Marx's economic analysis is its previsioning of the way in which the "free enterprise" capitalism of his day would develop into the modern system of mammoth industrial and financial complexes, girding the globe and shaping the political establishments of the major capitalist countries. In Volume I, and more fully in Volume III, of *Capital*, Marx describes the "centralization and concentration" of capital and the role of what were called "stock companies." Building on Marx's foundation, Lenin made a major contribution to economics by elaborating his theory of imperialism, which has enormous contemporary significance. We include a selection from Lenin's classic work in this section.

The final excerpt deals briefly with the way in which capitalism prepares the way for socialism.

LABOR AND THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION

A. THE LABOR PROCESS

Labor is, in the first place, a process in which both man and nature participate, and in which man of his own accord starts, regulates, and controls the material reactions between himself and nature. He opposes himself to nature as one of her own forces, setting in motion arms and legs, head and hands, the natural forces of his body, in order to appropriate nature's productions in a form adapted to his own wants. By thus acting on the external world and changing it, he at the same time changes his own nature. He develops his slumbering powers and compels them to act in obedience to his sway. We are not now dealing with those primitive instinctive forms of labor that remind us of the mere animal. An immeasurable interval of time separates the state of things in which a man brings his labor power to market for sale as a commodity, from that state in which human labor was still in his first instinctive stage. We presuppose labor in a form that stamps it as exclusively human. A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality. At the end of every labor process, we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the laborer at its commencement. He not only effects a change of form in the material on which he works, but he also realizes a purpose of his own that gives the law to his *modus operandi*, and to which he must subordinate his will. And this subordination is no mere momentary act. Besides the exertion of the bodily organs, the process demands that, during the whole operation, the workman's will be steadily in consonance with his purpose. This means close attention. The less he is attracted by the nature of the work, and the mode in which it is carried on, and the less, therefore, he enjoys it as something which gives play to his bodily and mental powers, the more close his attention is forced to be.

The elementary factors of the labor-process are (1) the personal activity of man, *i.e.*, work itself, (2) the subject of that work, and (3) its instruments.

The soil (and this, economically speaking, includes water) in the virgin state in which it supplies man with necessities or the means of subsistence ready to hand, exists independently of him, and is the universal subject of human labor. All those things which labor merely separates from immediate connection with their environment are subjects of labor spontaneously provided by nature. Such are fish which we catch and take from their element, water, timber which we fell in the virgin forest, and ores which we extract from their veins. If, on the other hand, the subject of labor has, so to say, been filtered through previous labor, we call it raw material; such is ore already extracted and ready for washing. All raw material is the subject of labor, but not every subject of labor is raw material; it can only become so, after it has undergone some alteration by means of labor.

An instrument of labor is a thing, or a complex of things, which the laborer interposes between himself and the subject of his labor, and which serves as the conductor of his activity. He makes use of the mechanical, physical and chemical properties of some substances in order to make other substances subservient to his aims. Leaving out of consideration such ready-made means of subsistence as fruits, in gathering which a man's own limbs serve as the instruments of his labor, the first thing of which the laborer possesses himself is not the subject of labor but its instrument. Thus nature becomes one of the organs of his activity, one that he annexes to his own bodily organs, adding stature to himself in spite of the Bible. As the earth is his original larder, so too it is his original tool house. It supplies him, for instance, with stones for throwing, grinding, pressing, cutting, etc. The earth itself is an instrument of labor, but when used as such in agriculture implies a whole series of other instruments and a comparatively high development of labor. No sooner does labor undergo the least development, than it requires specially prepared instruments. Thus in the oldest caves we find stone implements and weapons. In the earliest period of human history domesticated animals, *i.e.*, animals which have been bred for the purpose, and have undergone modifications by means of labor, play the chief part as instruments of labor along with specially

prepared stones, wood, bones and shells. The use and fabrication of instruments of labor, although existing in the germ among certain species of animals, is specifically characteristic of the human labor process, and Franklin therefore defines man as a tool-making animal. Relics of by gone instruments of labor possess the same importance for the investigation of extinct economical forms of society, as do fossil bones for the determination of extinct species of animals. It is not the articles made, but how they are made, and by what instruments, that enables us to distinguish different economic epochs.

—MARX, *Capital*, vol. I (1867), pp. 177-180.

B. CLIMATE, GEOGRAPHY AND LABOR PRODUCTIVITY

Apart from the degree of development, greater or less, in the form of social production, the productiveness of labor is fettered by physical conditions. These are all referable to the constitution of man himself (race, etc.), and to surrounding nature. The external physical conditions fall into two great economic classes, (1) natural wealth in means of subsistence, *i.e.*, a fruitful soil, waters teeming with fish, etc., and (2), natural wealth in the instruments of labor, such as waterfalls, navigable rivers, wood, metal, coal, etc. At the dawn of civilization, it is the first class that turns the scale; at a higher stage of development, it is the second. Compare, for example, England with India, or in ancient times, Athens and Corinth with the shores of the Black Sea.

The fewer the number of natural wants imperatively calling for satisfaction, and the greater the natural fertility of the soil and the favorableness of the climate, so much less is the labor-time necessary for the maintenance and reproduction of the producer. So much greater therefore can be the excess of his labor for others over his labor for himself. Diodorus long ago remarked this in relation to the ancient Egyptians. "It is altogether incredible how little trouble and expense the bringing up of their children causes them. They cook for them the first simple food at hand; they also give them the lower part of the papyrus stem to eat, so far as it can be roasted in the fire, and the roots and stalks of marsh plants, some raw, some boiled and roasted. Most of the children go without shoes and unclothed, for the air is mild, Hence a child, until he is grown up, costs his

parents not more, on the whole, than 20 drachmas. It is this, chiefly, which explains why the population of Egypt is so numerous, and, therefore, why so many great works can be undertaken." Nevertheless the grand structures of ancient Egypt are less due to the extent of its population than to the large proportion of it that was freely disposable. Just as the individual laborer can do more surplus labor in proportion as his necessary labor time is less, so with regard to the working population. The smaller the part of it which is required for the production of the necessary means of subsistence, so much the greater is the part that can be set to do other work.

Capitalist production once assumed then, all other circumstances remaining the same, and given the length of the working day, the quantity of surplus labor will vary with the physical conditions of labor, especially with the fertility of the soil. But it by no means follows from this that the most fruitful soil is the most fitted for the growth of the capitalist mode of production. This mode is based on the dominion of man over nature. Where nature is too lavish, she "keeps him in hand, like a child in leading-strings." She does not impose upon him any necessity to develop himself. It is not the tropics with their luxuriant vegetation, but the temperate zone, that is the mother country of capital. It is not the mere fertility of the soil, but the differentiation of the soil, the variety of its natural products, the changes of the seasons, which form the physical basis for the social division of labor, and which, by changes in the natural surroundings, spur man on to the multiplication of his wants, his capabilities, his means and modes of labor. It is the necessity of bringing a natural force under the control of society, of economizing, of appropriating or subduing it on a large scale by the work of man's hand, that first plays the decisive part in the history of industry. Examples are the irrigation works in Egypt, Lombardy, Holland, or India and Persia where irrigation by means of artificial canals not only supplies the soil with the water indispensable to it, but also carries down to it, in the shape of sediment from the hills, mineral fertilizers. The secret of the flourishing state of industry in Spain and Sicily under the dominion of the Arabs lay in their irrigation works.

Favorable natural conditions alone give us only the possibility, never the reality, of surplus labor, nor, consequently, of

surplus value and a surplus product. The result of difference in the natural conditions of labor is this, that the same quantity of labor satisfies, in different countries, a different mass of requirements, consequently, that under circumstances in other respects analogous, the necessary labor time is different. These conditions affect surplus-labor only as natural limits, *i.e.*, by fixing the points at which labor for others can begin. In proportion as industry advances, these natural limits recede. In the midst of our West-European society, where the laborer purchases the right to work for his own livelihood only by paying for it in surplus labor, the idea easily takes root that it is an inherent quality of human labor to furnish a surplus product. But consider, for example, an inhabitant of the eastern islands of the Asiatic Archipelago, where sago grows wild in the forests. "When the inhabitants have convinced themselves, by boring a hole in the tree, that the pith is ripe, the trunk is cut down and divided into several pieces, the pith is extracted, mixed with water and filtered: it is then quite fit for use as sago. One tree commonly yields 300 pounds, and occasionally 500 to 600 pounds. There, then, people go into the forests, and cut bread for themselves, just as with us they cut firewood" (F. Schouw, *Die Erde, die Pflanzen und der Mensch*, 2nd. ed., p. 148) Suppose now such an eastern bread-cutter requires 12 working hours a week for the satisfaction of all his wants. Nature's direct gift to him is plenty of leisure time. Before he can apply this leisure time productively for himself, a whole series of historical events is required; before he spends it in surplus labor for strangers, compulsion is necessary. If capitalist production were introduced, the honest fellow would perhaps have to work six days a week, in order to appropriate to himself the product of one working day. The bounty of nature does not explain why he would then have to work six days a week, or why he must furnish five days of surplus labor. It explains only why his necessary labor time would be limited to one day a week. But in no case would his surplus product arise from some occult quality inherent in human labor.

Thus, not only does the historically developed social productiveness of labor, but also its natural productiveness, appear to be productiveness of the capital with which that labor is incorporated.

—MARX, *Capital*, vol. I (1867), pp. 512-15.

C. THE ROLE OF TIME IN PRODUCTION

Given social production, the allocation of time naturally remains of the essence. The less time society requires to produce wheat, cattle, etc., the more time it gains for other production, material or intellectual. Just as in the case of a single individual, the all-sidedness of society's development, of its enjoyment, and of its activity depends on the saving of time. The economy of time, this is what all economy dissolves itself into—in the last analysis. Society must purposefully apportion its time to realize an output corresponding to its total needs, just as an individual must properly apportion his time to acquire knowledge in appropriate proportions or to satisfy different demands on his energy. Economy of time as well as planned allocation of working time to different branches of production thus constitutes the first economic law under conditions of social production.

—MARX, *Grundrisse der Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie* (Rohentwurf) 1857-1858 (Berlin, 1953), p. 89.

[2]

COMMODITY PRODUCTION

A. THE NATURE OF COMMODITIES

The wealth of those societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails, presents itself as "an immense accumulation of commodities," its unit being a single commodity. Our investigation must therefore begin with the analysis of a commodity.

A commodity is, in the first place, an object outside us, a thing that by its properties satisfies human wants of some sort or another. The nature of such wants, whether, for instance, they spring from the stomach or from fancy, makes no difference. Neither are we here concerned to know how the object satisfies these wants, whether directly as means of subsistence, or indirectly as means of production.

Every useful thing, as iron, paper, etc., may be looked at from the two points of view of quality and quantity. It is an assemblage of many properties, and may therefore be of use in various ways.

To discover the various uses of things is the work of history. So also is the establishment of socially recognized standards of measure for the quantities of these useful objects. The diversity of these measures has its origin partly in the diverse nature of the objects to be measured, partly in convention.

The utility of a thing makes it a use value. But this utility is not a thing of air. Being limited by the physical properties of the commodity, it has no existence apart from that commodity. A commodity, such as iron, corn, or a diamond, is therefore, so far as it is a material thing, a use value, something useful. This property of a commodity is independent of the amount of labor required to appropriate its useful qualities. When treating of use value, we always assume to be dealing with definite quantities, such as dozens of watches, yards of linen, or tons of iron. The use values of commodities furnish the material for a special study, that of the commercial knowledge of commodities. Use values become a reality only by use or consumption: they also constitute the substance of all wealth, whatever may be the social form of that wealth. In the form of society we are about to consider, they are, in addition, the material depositories of exchange value.

Exchange value, at first sight, presents itself as a quantitative relation, as the proportion in which values in use of one sort are exchanged for those of another sort, a relation constantly changing with time and place. Hence exchange value appears to be something accidental and purely relative, and consequently an intrinsic value, *i.e.*, an exchange value that is inseparably connected with, inherent in commodities, seems a contradiction in terms.

—MARX, *Capital*, vol. I (1867), pp. 35f.

B. MAN USES NATURE TO CHANGE IT

Wherever the want of clothing forced them to it, the human race made clothes for thousands of years, without a single man becoming a tailor. But coats and linen, like every other element of material wealth that is not the spontaneous produce of nature must invariably owe their existence to a special productive activity, exercised with a definite aim, an activity that appropriates particular nature-given materials to particular human wants. So far therefore as labor is a creator of use value, is useful labor,

it is a necessary condition, independent of all forms of society, for the existence of the human race; it is an eternal nature-imposed necessity, without which there can be no material exchanges between man and nature, and therefore no life.

The use values, coat, linen, etc., *i.e.*, the bodies of commodities, are combinations of two elements – matter and labor. If we take away the useful labor expended upon them, a material substratum is always left, which is furnished by nature without the help of man. The latter can work only as nature does, that is by changing the form of matter. Nay more, in this work of changing the form he is constantly helped by natural forces. We see, then, that labor is not the only source of material wealth, of use values produced by labor. As William Petty puts it, labor is its father and the earth its mother.

– MARX, *Capital*, vol. I (1867), pp. 42f.

C. COMMODITIES: A HISTORICAL CATEGORY

One thing, however, is clear – nature does not produce on the one side owners of money or commodities, and on the other men possessing nothing but their own labor power. This relation has no natural basis, neither is its social basis one that is common to all historical periods. It is clearly the result of a past historical development, the product of many economical revolutions, of the extinction of a whole series of older forms of social production.

So, too, the economical categories, already discussed by us, bear the stamp of history. Definite historical conditions are necessary that a product may become a commodity. It must not be produced as the immediate means of subsistence of the producer himself. Had we gone further, and inquired under what circumstances all, or even the majority of products take the form of commodities, we should have found that this can only happen with production of a very specific kind, capitalist production. Such an inquiry, however, would have been foreign to the analysis of commodities. Production and circulation of commodities can take place, although the great mass of the objects produced are intended for the immediate requirements of their producers, are not turned into commodities, and consequently social production is not yet by a long way dominated in its length and breadth by exchange value. The appearance of products as

commodities presupposes such a development of the social division of labor, that the separation of use value from exchange value, a separation which first begins with barter, must already have been completed. But such a degree of development is common to many forms of society, which in other respects present the most varying historical features. On the other hand, if we consider money, its existence implies a definite stage in the exchange of commodities. The particular functions of money which it performs, either as the mere equivalent of commodities, or as means of circulation, or means of payment, as hoard or as universal money, point, according to the extent and relative preponderance of the one function or the other, to very different stages in the process of social production. Yet we know by experience that a circulation of commodities relatively primitive, suffices for the production of all these forms. Otherwise with capital. The historical conditions of its existence are by no means given with the mere circulation of money and commodities. It can spring into life only when the owner of the means of production and subsistence meets in the market with the free laborer selling his labor power. And this one historical condition comprises a world's history. Capital, therefore, announces from its first appearance a new epoch in the process of social production.

—MARX, *Capital*, vol. I (1867), pp. 169f.

D. COMMODITIES AND MONEY IN HISTORY

In the direct barter of products, each commodity is directly a means of exchange to its owner, and to all other persons an equivalent, but that only in so far as it has use value for them. At this stage, therefore, the articles exchanged do not acquire a value form independent of their own use value, or of the individual needs of the exchangers. The necessity for a value form grows with the increasing number and variety of the commodities exchanged. The problem and the means of solution arise simultaneously. Commodity owners never equate their own commodities to those of others, and exchange them on a large scale, without different kinds of commodities belonging to different owners being exchangeable for, and equated as values to, one and the same special article. Such last-mentioned article, by becoming the equivalent of various other commodities, acquires

at once, though within narrow limits, the character of a general social equivalent. This character comes and goes with the momentary social acts that called it into life. In turns and transiently it attaches itself first to this and then to that commodity. But with the development of exchange it fixes itself firmly and exclusively to particular sorts of commodities, and becomes crystallized by assuming the money form. The particular kind of commodity to which it sticks is at first a matter of accident. Nevertheless there are two circumstances whose influence is decisive. The money form attaches itself either to the most important articles of exchange from outside, and these in fact are primitive and natural forms in which the exchange value of home products finds expression; or else it attaches itself to the object of utility that forms, like cattle, the chief portion of indigenous alienable wealth. Nomad races are the first to develop the money form, because all their worldly goods consist of moveable objects and are therefore directly alienable; and because their mode of life, by continually bringing them into contact with foreign communities, solicits the exchange of products. Man has often made man himself, under the form of slaves, serve as the primitive material of money, but has never used land for that purpose. Such an idea could only spring up in a bourgeois society already well developed. It dates from the last third of the 17th century, and the first attempt to put it in practice on a national scale was made a century afterwards, during the French bourgeois revolution.

In proportion as exchange bursts its local bonds, and the value of commodities more and more expands into an embodiment of human labor in the abstract, in the same proportion the character of money attaches itself to commodities that are by Nature fitted to perform the social functions of a universal equivalent. Those commodities are the precious metals.

—MARX, *Capital*, vol. I (1867), pp. 88f.

E. THE GREED FOR GOLD

With the possibility of holding and storing up exchange value in the shape of a particular commodity, arises also the greed for gold. Along with the extension of circulation, increases the power of money, that absolutely social form of wealth ever ready for use. "Gold is a wonderful thing! Whoever possesses it is lord

of all he wants. By means of gold one can even get souls into Paradise." (Columbus in his letter from Jamaica, 1503.) Since gold does not disclose what has been transformed into it, everything, commodity or not, is convertible into gold. Everything becomes salable and buyable. The circulation becomes the great social retort into which everything is thrown, to come out again as a gold-crystal. Not even are the bones of saints, and still less are more delicate *res sacrosanctæ, extra commercium hominum* able to withstand this alchemy.* Just as every qualitative difference between commodities is extinguished in money, so money, on its side, like the radical leveler that it is, does away with all distinctions.† But money itself is a commodity, an external object, capable of becoming the private property of any individual. Thus social power becomes the private power of private persons. The ancients therefore denounced money as subversive of the economic and moral order of things. Modern society, which, soon after its birth, pulled Plutus by the hair of his head from the bowels of the earth, greets gold as its Holy Grail, as the glittering incarnation of the very principle of its own life.

*Henry III., most Christian king of France, robbed cloisters of their relics, and turned them into money. It is well known what part the despoiling of the Delphic Temple, by the Phocians, played in the history of Greece. Temples with the ancients served as the dwellings of the gods of commodities. They were "sacred banks." With the Phoenicians, a trading people *par excellence*, money was the transmuted shape of everything. It was, therefore, quite in order that the virgins, who, at the feast of the Goddess of Love, gave themselves up to strangers, should offer to the goddess the piece of money they received.

† "Gold, yellow, glittering, precious gold!

Thus much of this, will make black white; foul, fair;
 Wrong, right; base, noble; old, young; coward, valiant.
 . . . What this, you gods? Why, this
 Will lug your priests and servants from your sides;
 Pluck stout men's pillows from below their heads;
 This yellow slave
 Will knit and break religions; bless the accurs'd;
 Make the hoar leprosy ador'd; place thieves,
 And give them title, knee and approbation,
 With senators on the bench; this is it,
 That makes the wappen'd widow wed again:
 . . . Come damned earth,
 Thou common whore of mankind."

(Shakespeare: *Timon of Athens*.)

A commodity, in its capacity of a use value, satisfies a particular want, and is a particular element of material wealth. But the value of a commodity measures the degree of its attraction for all other elements of material wealth, and therefore measures the social wealth of its owner. To a barbarian owner of commodities, and even to a West-European peasant, value is the same as value form, and therefore, to him the increase in his hoard of gold and silver is an increase in value. It is true that the value of money varies, at one time in variation in its own value, at another, in consequence of a change in the values of commodities. But this, on the one hand, does not prevent 200 ounces of gold from still containing more value than 100 ounces, nor, on the other hand, does it hinder the actual metallic form of this article from continuing to be the universal equivalent form of all other commodities, and the immediate social incarnation of all human labor. The desire after hoarding is in its very nature insatiable. In its qualitative aspect, or formally considered, money has no bounds to its efficacy, *i.e.*, it is the universal representative of material wealth, because it is directly convertible into any other commodity. But, at the same time, every actual sum of money is limited in amount, and, therefore, as a means of purchasing, has only a limited efficacy. This antagonism between the quantitative limits of money and its qualitative boundlessness, continually acts as a spur to the hoarder in his Sisyphus-like labor of accumulating. It is with him as it is with a conqueror who sees in every new country annexed, only a new boundary.

In order that gold may be held as money, and made to form a hoard, it must be prevented from circulating, or from transforming itself into a means of enjoyment. The hoarder, therefore, makes a sacrifice of the lusts of the flesh to his gold fetish. He acts in earnest up to the Gospel of abstention. On the other hand, he can withdraw from circulation no more than what he has thrown into it in the shape of commodities. The more he produces, the more he is able to sell. Hard work, saving and avarice, are, therefore, his three cardinal virtues, and to sell much and buy little the sum of his political economy.

—MARX, *Capital*, vol. 1 (1867), pp. 131-33.

F. THE FETISHISM OF COMMODITIES

A commodity is therefore a mysterious thing, simply because in it the social character of men's labor appears to them as an

objective character stamped upon the product of that labor; because the relation of the producers to the sum total of their own labor is presented to them as a social relation, existing not between themselves, but between the products of their labor. This is the reason why the products of labor become commodities, social things whose qualities are at the same time perceptible and imperceptible by the senses. In the same way the light from an object is perceived by us not as the subjective excitation of our optic nerve, but as the objective form of something outside the eye itself. But, in the act of seeing, there is at all events, an actual passage of light from one thing to another, from the external object to the eye. There is a physical relation between physical things. But it is different with commodities. There, the existence of the things as commodities, and the value relation between the products of labor which stamps them as commodities, have absolutely no connection with their physical properties and with the material relations arising therefrom. There it is a definite social relation between men, that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things. In order, therefore, to find an analogy, we must have recourse to the mist-enveloped regions of the religious world. In that world the productions of the human brain appear as independent beings endowed with life, and entering into relation both with one another and the human race. So it is in the world of commodities with the products of men's hands. This I call the Fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labor, so soon as they are produced as commodities, and which is therefore inseparable from the production of commodities.

—MARX, *Capital*, vol. I (1867), p. 72.

G. FETISHISM AND BOURGEOIS POLITICAL ECONOMISTS

The life process of society, which is based on the process of material production, does not strip off its mystical veil until it is treated as production by freely associated men, and is consciously regulated by them in accordance with a settled plan. This, however, demands for society a certain material groundwork or set of conditions of existence which in their turn are the spontaneous product of a long and painful process of development.

Political economy has indeed analyzed, however incompletely, value and its magnitude, and has discovered what lies beneath

these forms. But it has never once asked the question why labor is represented by the value of its product and labor-time by the magnitude of that value. These formulas, which bear stamped upon them in unmistakable letters, that they belong to a state of society, in which the process of production has the mastery over man, instead of being controlled by him, such formulas appear to the bourgeois intellect to be as much a self-evident necessity imposed by nature as productive labor itself. Hence forms of social production that preceded the bourgeois form, are treated by the bourgeoisie in much the same way as the Fathers of the Church treated pre-Christian religions.

To what extent some economists are misled by the fetishism inherent in commodities, or by the objective appearance of the social characteristics of labor, is shown, amongst other ways, by the dull and tedious quarrel over the part played by nature in the formation of exchange value. Since exchange value is a definite social manner of expressing the amount of labor bestowed upon an object, nature has no more to do with it than it has in fixing the course of exchange.

The mode of production in which the product takes the form of a commodity, or is produced directly for exchange, is the most general and most embryonic form of bourgeois production. It therefore makes its appearance at an early date in history, though not in the same predominating and characteristic manner as nowadays. Hence its fetish character is comparatively easy to be seen through. But when we come to more concrete forms, even this appearance of simplicity vanishes. Whence arose the illusions of the monetary system? To it gold and silver, when serving as money, did not represent a social relation between producers, but were natural objects with strange social properties. And modern economy, which looks down with such disdain on the monetary system, does not its superstition come out as clear as noonday, whenever it treats of capital? How long is it since economy discarded the physiocratic illusion, that rents grow out of the soil and not out of society?

—MARX, *Capital*, vol. I (1867), pp. 80-83.

WHAT IS CAPITAL?

A. THE STARTING POINT OF CAPITALIST PRODUCTION

The capitalist system presupposes the complete separation of the laborers from all property in the means by which they can realize their labor. As soon as capitalist production is once on its own legs, it not only maintains this separation, but reproduces it on a continually extending scale. The process, therefore, that clears the way for the capitalist system, can be none other than the process which takes away from the laborer the possession of his means of production; a process that transforms, on the one hand, the social means of subsistence and of production into capital, on the other, the immediate producers into wage laborers. The so-called primitive accumulation, therefore, is nothing else than the historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production. It appears as primitive, because it forms the prehistoric stage of capital and of the mode of production corresponding with it.

The economic structure of capitalistic society has grown out of the economic structure of feudal society. The dissolution of the latter set free the elements of the former.

The immediate producer, the laborer, could only dispose of his own person after he had ceased to be attached to the soil and ceased to be the slave, serf, or bondman of another. To become a free seller of labor power, who carries his commodity wherever he finds a market, he must further have escaped from the regime of the guilds, their rules for apprentices and journeymen, and the impediments of their labor regulations. Hence, the historical movement which changes the producers into wage workers, appears, on the one hand, as their emancipation from serfdom and from the fetters of the guilds, and this side alone exists for our bourgeois historians. But, on the other hand, these new freedmen became sellers of themselves only after they had been robbed of all their own means of production, and of all the guarantees of existence afforded by the old feudal arrangements. And the history of this, their expropriation, is written in the annals of mankind in letters of blood and fire.

The industrial capitalists, these new potentates, had on their part not only to displace the guild masters of handicrafts, but also the feudal lords, the possessors of the sources of wealth. In this respect their conquest of social power appears as the fruit of a victorious struggle both against feudal lordship and its revolting prerogatives, and against the guilds and the fetters they laid on the free development of production and the free exploitation of man by man. The *chevaliers d'industrie*, however, only succeeded in supplanting the chevaliers of the sword by making use of events of which they themselves were wholly innocent. They have risen by means as vile as those by which the Roman freedman once on a time made himself the master of his *patronus*.

The starting point of the development that gave rise to the wage laborer as well as the the capitalist, was the servitude of the laborer. The advance consisted in a change of form of this servitude, in the transformation of feudal exploitation into capitalist exploitation. To understand its march, we need not go back very far. Although we come across the first beginnings of capitalist production as early as the 14th or 15th century, sporadically, in certain towns of the Mediterranean, the capitalistic era dates from the 16th century. Wherever it appears, the abolition of serfdom has been long effected, and the highest development of the Middle Ages, the existence of sovereign towns, has been long on the wane.

In the history of primitive accumulation, all revolutions are epoch-making that act as levers for the capitalist class in course of formation; but, above all, those moments when great masses of men are suddenly and forcibly torn from their means of subsistence, and hurled as free and "unattached" proletarians on the labor market. The expropriation of the agricultural producer, of the peasant, from the soil, is the basis of the whole process. The history of this expropriation, in different countries, assumes different aspects, and runs through its various phases in different orders of succession, and at different periods. In England alone, which we take as our example, has it the classic form.

—MARX, *Capital*, vol. I (1867), pp. 714-16.

B. CAPITALIST COMMODITY PRODUCTION

The same conditions which give rise to the basic condition of capitalist production, the existence of a class of wage workers,

facilitate the transition of all commodity production to capitalist commodity production. As capitalist production develops, it has a disintegrating, resolvent effect on all older forms of production, which, designed mostly to meet the direct needs of the producer, transform only the excess produced into commodities. Capitalist production makes the sale of products the main interest, at first apparently without affecting the mode of production itself. Such was for instance the first effect of capitalist world commerce on such nations as the Chinese, Indians, Arabs, etc. But, secondly, wherever it takes root capitalist production destroys all forms of commodity production which are based either on the self-employment of the producers, or merely on the sale of the excess product as commodities. Capitalist production first makes the production of commodities general and then, by degrees, transforms all commodity production into capitalist commodity production.

Whatever the social form of production, laborers and means of production always remain factors of it. But in a state of separation from each other either of these factors can be such only potentially. For production to go on at all they must unite. The specific manner in which this union is accomplished distinguishes the different economic epochs of the structure of society from one another. In the present case, the separation of the free worker from his means of production is the starting-point given, and we have seen how and under what conditions these two elements are united in the hands of the capitalist, namely, as the productive mode of existence of his capital. The actual process which the personal and material creators of commodities enter upon when thus brought together, the process of production, becomes therefore itself a function of capital, the capitalist process of production, the nature of which has been fully analyzed in the first book of this work. Every enterprise engaged in commodity production becomes at the same time an enterprise exploiting labor power. But only the capitalist production of commodities has become an epoch-making mode of exploitation, which, in the course of its historical development, revolutionizes, through the organization of the labor-process and the enormous improvement of technique, the entire economic structure of society, in a manner eclipsing all former epochs.

—MARX, *Capital*, vol. II (1885), pp. 34f.

C. CAPITAL A SOCIAL RELATION

Capital, also, is a social relation of production. *It is a bourgeois production relation*, a production relation of bourgeois society. Are not the means of subsistence, the instruments of labor, the raw materials of which capital consists, produced and accumulated under given social conditions, in definite social relations? Are they not utilized for new production under given social conditions, in definite social relations? And is it not just this definite social character which turns the products serving for new production into *capital*?

Capital consists not only of means of subsistence, instruments of labor and raw materials, not only of material products; it consists just as much of *exchange values*. All the products of which it consists are *commodities*. Capital is, therefore, not only a sum of material products; it is a sum of commodities, of exchange values, of *social magnitudes*...

How, then, does any amount of commodities, of exchange value, become capital?

By maintaining and multiplying itself as an independent social *power*, that is, as the power of *a portion of society*, by means of its *exchange for direct, living labor power*. The existence of a class which possesses nothing but its capacity to labor is a necessary prerequisite of capital.

It is only the domination of accumulated, past, materialized labor over direct, living labor that turns accumulated labor into capital.

Capital does not consist in accumulated labor serving living labor as a means for new production. It consists in living labor serving accumulated labor as a means for maintaining and multiplying the exchange value of the latter.

—MARX, *Wage-Labor and Capital* (1849), MARX and ENGELS, *Selected Works* (1968), pp. 81f.

D. CLASSICAL POLITICAL ECONOMY AND THE CONCEPT, VALUE OF LABOR POWER

Classical political economy borrowed from everyday life the category “price of labor” without further criticism, and then simply asked the question, how is this price determined? It soon recognized that the change in the relations of demand and sup-

ply explained in regard to the price of labor, as of all other commodities, nothing except its changes, *i.e.*, the oscillations of the market price above or below a certain mean. If demand and supply balance, the oscillation of prices ceases, all other conditions remaining the same. But then demand and supply also cease to explain anything. The price of labor, at the moment when demand and supply are in equilibrium, is its natural price, determined independently of the relation of demand and supply. And how this price is determined, is just the question. Or a larger period of oscillations in the market price is taken, *e.g.*, a year, and they are found to cancel one the other, leaving a mean average quantity, a relatively constant magnitude. This had naturally to be determined otherwise than by its own compensating variations. This price which always finally predominates over the accidental market prices of labor and regulates them, this "necessary price" (physiocrats) or "natural price" of labor (Adam Smith) can, as with all other commodities, be nothing else than its value expressed in money. In this way political economy expected to penetrate athwart the accidental prices of labor, to the value of labor. As with other commodities, this value was determined by the cost of production. But what is the cost of production—of the laborer, *i.e.*, the cost of producing or reproducing the laborer himself? This question unconsciously substituted itself in political economy for the original one; for the search after the cost of production of labor as such turned in a circle and never left the spot. What economists therefore call value of labor, is in fact the value of labor power, as it exists in the personality of the laborer, which is as different from its function, labor, as a machine is from the work it performs. Occupied with the difference between the market price of labor and its so-called value, with the relation of this value to the rate of profit, and to the values of the commodities produced by means of labor, etc., they never discovered that the course of the analysis had led not only from the market prices of labor to its presumed value, but had led to the resolution of this value of labor itself into the value of labor power. Classical economy never arrived at a consciousness of the results of its own analysis; it accepted uncritically the categories "value of labor," "natural price of labor," etc., as final and as adequate expressions for the value relation under considera-

tion, and was thus led, as will be seen later, into inextricable confusion and contradiction, while it offered to the vulgar economists a secure basis of operations for their shallowness, which on principle worships appearances only.

—MARX, *Capital*, vol. I (1867), pp. 537f.

E. MACHINERY: THE TECHNICAL BASIS OF MODERN CAPITALISM

A radical change in the mode of production in one sphere of industry involves a similar change in other spheres. This happens at first in such branches of industry as are connected together by being separate phases of a process, and yet are isolated by the social division of labor, in such a way, that each of them produces an independent commodity. Thus spinning by machinery made weaving by machinery a necessity, and both together made the mechanical and chemical revolution that took place in bleaching, printing, and dyeing, imperative. So too, on the other hand, the revolution in cotton-spinning called forth the invention of the gin, for separating the seeds from the cotton fiber; it was only by means of this invention that the production of cotton became possible on the enormous scale at present required. But more especially, the revolution in the modes of production of industry and agriculture made necessary a revolution in the general conditions of the social process of production, *i.e.*, in the means of communication and of transport. In a society whose pivot, to use an expression of Fourier, was agriculture on a small scale, with its subsidiary domestic industries, and the urban handicrafts, the means of communication and transport were so utterly inadequate to the productive requirements of the manufacturing period, with its extended division of social labor, its concentration of the instruments of labor, and of the workmen, and its colonial markets, that they became in fact revolutionized. In the same way the means of communication and transport handed down from the manufacturing period soon became unbearable trammels on modern industry, with its feverish haste of production, its enormous extent, its constant flinging of capital and labor from one sphere of production into another, and its newly-created connections with the markets of the whole world. Hence, apart from the radical changes introduced in the construction of sailing ves-

sels, the means of communication and transport became gradually adapted to the modes of production of mechanical industry, by the creation of a system of river steamers, railways, ocean steamers, and telegraphs. But the huge masses of iron that had now to be forged, to be welded, to be cut, to be bored, and to be shaped, demanded, on their part, cyclopean machines, for the construction of which the methods of the manufacturing period were utterly inadequate.

Modern industry had therefore itself to take in hand the machine, its characteristic instrument of production, and to construct machines by machines. It was not until it did this, that it built up for itself a fitting technical foundation, and stood on its own feet. Machinery, simultaneously with the increasing use of it, in the first decades of this century, appropriated, by degrees, the fabrication of machines proper. But it was only during the decade preceding 1866, that the construction of railways and ocean steamers on a stupendous scale called into existence the cyclopean machines now employed in the construction of prime movers.

—MARX, *Capital*, vol. I (1867), pp. 383-85.

F. MODERN INDUSTRY AND AGRICULTURE

In the sphere of agriculture, modern industry has a more revolutionary effect than elsewhere, for this reason, that it annihilates the peasant, that bulwark of the old society, and replaces him by the wage laborer. Thus the desire for social changes, and the class antagonisms are brought to the same level in the country as in the towns. The irrational, old-fashioned methods of agriculture are replaced by scientific ones. Capitalist production completely tears asunder the old bond of union which held together agriculture and manufacture in their infancy. But at the same time it creates the material conditions for a higher synthesis in the future, *viz.*, the union of agriculture and industry on the basis of the more perfected forms they have each acquired during their temporary separation. Capitalist production, by collecting the population in great centers, and causing an ever-increasing preponderance of town population, on the one hand concentrates the historical motive power of society; on the other hand, it disturbs the circulation of matter between man and the soil, *i.e.*, prevents the return to the soil of its elements consumed

by man in the form of food and clothing; it therefore violates the conditions necessary to lasting fertility of the soil. By this action it destroys at the same time the health of the town laborer and the intellectual life of the rural laborer. But while upsetting the naturally grown conditions for the maintenance of that circulation of matter, it imperiously calls for its restoration as a system, as a regulating law of social production, and under a form appropriate to the full development of the human race. In agriculture as in manufacture, the transformation of production under the sway of capital, means, at the same time, the martyrdom of the producer; the instrument of labor becomes the means of enslaving, exploiting and impoverishing the laborer; the social combination and organization of labor processes is turned into an organized mode of crushing out the workman's individual vitality, freedom and independence. The dispersion of the rural laborers over larger areas breaks their power of resistance while concentration increases that of the town operatives. In modern agriculture, as in the urban industries, the increased productiveness and quantity of the labor set in motion are bought at the cost of laying waste and consuming by disease labor power itself. Moreover, all progress in capitalistic agriculture is a progress in the art, not only of robbing the laborer, but of robbing the soil; all progress in increasing the fertility of the soil for a given time, is a progress towards ruining the lasting sources of that fertility. The more a country starts its development on the foundation of modern industry, like the United States, for example, the more rapid is this process of destruction. Capitalist production, therefore, develops technology, and the combining together of various processes into a social whole, only by sapping the original sources of all wealth — the soil and the laborer.

—MARX, *Capital*, vol. I (1867), pp. 505-07.

G. REVOLUTIONARY CHARACTER OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY

Modern industry rent the veil that concealed from men their own social process of production, and that turned the various, spontaneously divided branches of production into so many riddles, not only to outsiders, but even to the initiated. The principle which it pursued, of resolving each process into its constituent movements, without any regard to their possible

execution by the hand of man, created the new modern science of technology. The varied, apparently unconnected, and petrified forms of the industrial processes now resolved themselves into so many conscious and systematic applications of natural science to the attainment of given useful effects. Technology also discovered the few main fundamental forms of motion, which, despite the diversity of the instruments used, are necessarily taken by every productive action of the human body; just as the science of mechanics sees in the most complicated machinery nothing but the continual repetition of the simple mechanical powers.

Modern industry never looks upon and treats the existing form of a process as final. The technical basis of that industry is therefore revolutionary, while all earlier modes of production were essentially conservative. 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 laborer, and in the social combinations of the labor process. At the same time, it thereby also revolutionizes the division of labor within the society, and incessantly launches masses of capital and of work people from one branch of production to another. But if modern industry, by its very nature, therefore necessitates variation of labor, fluency of function, universal mobility of the laborer, on the other hand, in its capitalistic form, it reproduces the old division of labor with its ossified particularizations. We have seen how this absolute contradiction between the technical necessities of modern industry, and the social character inherent in its capitalistic form, dispels all fixity and security in the situation of the laborer; how it constantly threatens, by taking away the instruments of labor, to snatch from his hands his means of subsistence, and, by suppressing his detail function, to make him superfluous. We have seen, too, how this antagonism vents its rage in the creation of that monstrosity, an industrial reserve army, kept in misery in order to be always at the disposal of capital; in the incessant human sacrifices from among the working class, in the most reckless squandering of labor power, and in the devastation caused by a social anarchy which turns every economic progress into a social calamity. This is the negative side. But if, on the one hand, variation of work at present imposes itself after the man-

ner 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 recognizing, as a fundamental law of production, variation of work, consequently fitness of the laborer 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 life long 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 labors, 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*, vol. 1 (1867), pp. 486-88.

H. THE CAPITALIST IS "PERSONIFIED CAPITAL"

Except as personified capital, the capitalist has no historical value, and no right to that historical existence, which, to use an expression of the witty Lichnowsky, "hasn't got no date." And so far only is the necessity for his own transitory existence implied in the transitory necessity for the capitalist mode of production. But, so far as he is personified capital, it is not values in use and the enjoyment of them, but exchange value and its augmentation, that spur him into action. Fanatically bent on making value expand itself, he ruthlessly forces the human race to produce for production's sake; he thus forces the development of the productive powers of society, and creates those material conditions, which alone can form the real basis of a higher form of society, a society in which the full and free development of every individual forms the ruling principle. Only as personified capital is the capitalist respectable. As such, he shares with the miser the passion for wealth as wealth. But that which in the miser is a mere idiosyncrasy, is, in the capitalist, the effect of the social mechanism, of which he is but one of the wheels. Moreover, the development of capitalist production makes it constantly necessary to keep increasing the amount of the capital

laid out in a given industrial undertaking, and competition makes the immanent laws of capitalist production to be felt by each individual capitalist, as external coercive laws. It compels him to keep constantly extending his capital, in order to preserve it, but extend it he cannot, except by means of progressive accumulation.

So far, therefore, as his actions are a mere function of capital—endowed as capital is, in his person, with consciousness and a will—his own private consumption is a robbery perpetrated on accumulation, just as in bookkeeping by double entry, the private expenditure of the capitalist is placed on the debtor side of his account against his capital. To accumulate is to conquer the world of social wealth, to increase the mass of human beings exploited by him, and thus to extend both the direct and the indirect sway of the capitalist.

But original sin is at work everywhere. As capitalist production, accumulation, and wealth, become developed, the capitalist ceases to be the mere incarnation of capital. He has a fellow-feeling for his own Adam, and his education gradually enables him to smile at the rage for asceticism, as a mere prejudice of the old-fashioned miser. While the capitalist of the classical type brands individual consumption as a sin against his function, and an “abstinence” from accumulating, the modernized capitalist is capable of looking upon accumulation as “abstinence” from pleasure.

“Two souls, alas, do dwell within his breast;
The one is ever parting from the other.”*

At the historical dawn of capitalist production—and every capitalist upstart has personally to go through this historical stage—avarice, and desire to get rich, are the ruling passions. But the progress of capitalist production not only creates a world of delights; it lays open, in speculation and the credit system, a thousand sources of sudden enrichment. When a certain stage of development has been reached, a conventional degree of prodigality, which is also an exhibition of wealth, and consequently a source of credit, becomes a business necessity to the “unfortunate” capitalist. Luxury enters into capital’s expenses of repre-

*Goethe’s “Faust.”

sentation. Moreover, the capitalist gets rich, not like the miser, in proportion to his personal labor and restricted consumption, but at the same rate as he squeezes out the labor power of others, and enforces on the laborer abstinence from all life's enjoyments. Although, therefore, the prodigality of the capitalist never possesses the bona fide character of the open-handed feudal lord's prodigality, but, on the contrary, has always lurking behind it the most sordid avarice and the most anxious calculation, yet his expenditure grows with his accumulation, without the one necessarily restricting the other. But along with this growth, there is at the same time developed in his breast a Faustian conflict between the passion for accumulation and the desire for enjoyment.

— MARX, *Capital*, vol. I (1867), pp. 592-94.

I. THE INDUSTRIAL MANAGER UNDER CAPITALISM

The capitalist mode of production has brought matters to a point where the work of supervision, entirely divorced from the ownership of capital, is always readily obtainable. It has, therefore, come to be useless for the capitalist to perform it himself. An orchestra conductor need not own the instruments of his orchestra, nor is it within the scope of his duties as conductor to have anything to do with the "wages" of the other musicians. Cooperative factories furnish proof that the capitalist has become no less redundant as a functionary in production as he himself, looking down from his high perch, finds the big landowner redundant. Inasmuch as the capitalist's work does not originate in the purely capitalistic process of production, and hence does not cease on its own when capital ceases; inasmuch as it does not confine itself solely to the function of exploiting the labor of others; inasmuch as it therefore originates from the social form of the labor process, from combination and cooperation of many in pursuance of a common result, it is just as independent of capital as that form itself as soon as it has burst its capitalistic shell. To say that this labor is necessary as capitalistic labor, or as a function of the capitalist, only means that the *vulgus* is unable to conceive the forms developed in the lap of capitalist production, separate and free from their anti-theoretical capitalist character. The industrial capitalist is a worker, compared to the money capitalist, but a worker in the sense of

capitalist, i.e., an exploiter of the labor of others. The wage which he claims and pockets for this labor is exactly equal to the appropriated quantity of another's labor and depends directly upon the rate of exploitation of this labor, in so far as he undertakes the effort required for exploitation; it does not, however, depend on the degree of exertion that such exploitation demands, and which he can shift to a manager for moderate pay. After every crisis there are enough ex-manufacturers in the English factory districts who will supervise, for low wages, what were formerly their own factories in the capacity of managers of the new owners, who are frequently their creditors.

The wages of management both for the commercial and industrial manager are completely isolated from the profits of enterprise in the cooperative factories of laborers, as well as in capitalist stock companies. The separation of wages of management from profits of enterprise, purely accidental at other times, is here constant. In a cooperative factory the antagonistic nature of the labor of supervision disappears, because the manager is paid by the laborers instead of representing capital counterposed to them. Stock companies in general—developed with the credit system—have an increasing tendency to separate this work of management as a function from the ownership of capital, be it self-owned or borrowed. Just as the development of bourgeois society witnessed a separation of the functions of judges and administrators from landownership, whose attributes they were in feudal times. But since, on the one hand, the mere owner of capital, the money capitalist, has to face the functioning capitalist, while money capital itself assumes a social character with the advance of credit, being concentrated in banks and loaned out by them instead of its original owners, and since, on the other hand, the mere manager who has no title whatever to the capital, whether through borrowing it or otherwise, performs all the real functions pertaining to the functioning capitalist as such, only the functionary remains and the capitalist disappears as superfluous from the production process.

—MARX, *Capital*, vol. III (1894), pp. 386-88.

THE WORKING CLASS AND CAPITALISM

A. THE BUYING AND SELLING OF LABOR POWER

By labor power or capacity for labor is to be understood the aggregate of those mental and physical capabilities existing in a human being, which he exercises whenever he produces a use value of any description.

But in order that our owner of money may be able to find labor power offered for sale as a commodity, various conditions must first be fulfilled. The exchange of commodities of itself implies no other relations of dependence than those which result from its own nature. On this assumption, labor power can appear upon the market as a commodity, only if, and so far as, its possessor, the individual whose labor power it is, offers it for sale, or sells it, as a commodity. In order that he may be able to do this, he must have it at his disposal, must be the untrammelled owner of his capacity for labor, *i.e.*, of his person. He and the owner of money meet in the market, and deal with each other as on the basis of equal rights, with this difference alone, that one is buyer, the other seller; both, therefore, equal in the eyes of the law. The continuance of this relation demands that the owner of the labor power should sell it only for a definite period, for if he were to sell it rump and stump, once for all, he would be selling himself, converting himself from a free man into a slave, from an owner of a commodity into a commodity. He must constantly look upon his labor power as his own property, his own commodity, and this he can only do by placing it at the disposal of the buyer temporarily, for a definite period of time. By this means alone can he avoid renouncing his rights of ownership over it.

The second essential condition to the owner of money finding labor power in the market as a commodity is this—that the laborer instead of being in the position to sell commodities in which his labor is incorporated, must be obliged to offer for sale as a commodity that very labor power, which exists only in his living self.

—MARX, *Capital*, vol. I (1867), pp. 170f.

B. HOW THE VALUE OF LABOR POWER IS DETERMINED

The value of labor power is determined, as in the case of every other commodity, by the labor time necessary for the production, and consequently the reproduction, of this special article. So far as it has value, it represents no more than a definite quantity of the average labor of society incorporated in it. Labor power exists only as a capacity, or power of the living individual. Its production consequently presupposes his existence. Given the individual, the production of labor power consists in his reproduction of himself or his maintenance. For his maintenance he requires a given quantity of the means of subsistence. Therefore the labor time requisite for the production of labor power reduces itself to that necessary for the production of those means of subsistence; in other words, the value of labor power is the value of the means of subsistence necessary for the maintenance of the laborer. Labor power, however, becomes a reality only by its exercise; it sets itself in action only by working. But thereby a definite quantity of human muscle, nerve, brain, etc., is wasted, and these require to be restored. This increased expenditure demands a larger income. If the owner of labor power works today, tomorrow he must again be able to repeat the same process in the same conditions as regards health and strength. His means of subsistence must therefore be sufficient to maintain him in his normal state as a laboring individual. His natural wants, such as food, clothing, fuel, and housing, vary according to the climatic and other physical conditions of his country. On the other hand, the number and extent of his so-called necessary wants, as also the modes of satisfying them, are themselves the product of historical development, and depend therefore to a great extent on the degree of civilization of a country, more particularly on the conditions under which, and consequently on the habits and degree of comfort in which, the class of free laborers has been formed. In contradistinction therefore to the case of other commodities, there enters into the determination of the value of labor power a historical and moral element. Nevertheless, in a given country, at a given period, the average quantity of the means of subsistence necessary for the laborer is practically known.

—MARX, *Capital*, vol. 1 (1867), pp. 170f.

C. COMPETITION AND THE WORKING CLASS

Competition is the most complete expression of the battle of all against all which rules in modern civil society. This battle, a battle for life, for existence, for everything, in case of need a battle of life and death, is fought not between the different classes of society only, but also between the individual members of these classes. Each is in the way of the other, and each seeks to crowd out all who are in his way, and to put himself in their place. The workers are in constant competition among themselves as the members of the bourgeoisie among themselves. The power-loom weaver is in competition with the handloom weaver, the unemployed or ill-paid handloom weaver with him who has work or is better paid, each trying to supplant the other. But this competition of the workers among themselves is the worst side of the present state of things in its effect upon the worker, the sharpest weapon against the proletariat in the hands of the bourgeoisie. Hence the effort of the workers to nullify this competition by associations, hence the hatred of the bourgeoisie towards these associations, and its triumph in every defeat which befalls them.

The proletarian is helpless; left to himself, he cannot live a single day. The bourgeoisie has gained a monopoly of all means of existence in the broadest sense of the word. What the proletarian needs, he can obtain only from this bourgeoisie, which is protected in its monopoly by the power of the state. The proletarian is, therefore, in law and in fact, the slave of the bourgeoisie, which can decree his life or death. It offers him the means of living, but only for an "equivalent" for his work. It even lets him have the appearance of acting from a free choice, of making a contract with free, unconstrained consent, as a responsible agent who has attained his majority.

Fine freedom, where the proletarian has no other choice than that of either accepting the conditions which the bourgeoisie offers him, or of starving, of freezing to death, of sleeping naked among the beasts of the forests! A fine "equivalent" valued at pleasure by the bourgeoisie! And if one proletarian is such a fool as to starve rather than agree to the equitable propositions of the bourgeoisie, his "natural superiors," another is easily found in his place; there are proletarians enough in the world, and not all so insane as to prefer dying to living.

Here we have the competition of the workers among themselves. If *all* the proletarians announced their determination to starve rather than work for the bourgeoisie, the latter would have to surrender its monopoly. But this is not the case—is, indeed, a rather impossible case—so that the bourgeoisie still thrives. To this competition of the worker there is but one limit; no worker will work for less than he needs to subsist. If he must starve, he will prefer to starve in idleness rather than in toil. True, this limit is relative; one needs more than another, one is accustomed to more comfort than another; the Englishman who is still somewhat civilized, needs more than the Irishman who goes in rags, eats potatoes and sleeps in a pigsty. But that does not hinder the Irishman's competing with the Englishman, and gradually forcing the rate of wages, and with it the Englishman's level of civilization, down to the Irishman's level. Certain kinds of work require a certain grade of civilization, and to these belong almost all forms of industrial occupation; hence the interest of the bourgeoisie requires in this case that wages should be high enough to enable the workman to keep himself upon the required plane.

—ENGELS, *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845), pp. 109-11.

D. MACHINERY AND THE PROLONGATION OF THE WORKING DAY

Machinery sweeps away every moral and natural restriction on the length of the working day. Hence, too, the economical paradox, that the most powerful instrument for shortening labor time, becomes the most unfailing means for placing every moment of the laborer's time and that of his family, at the disposal of the capitalist for the purpose of expanding the value of his capital. "If," dreamed Aristotle, the greatest thinker of antiquity, "if every tool, when summoned, or even of its own accord, could do the work that befits it, just as the creations of Daedalus moved of themselves, or the tripods of Hephaestos went of their own accord to their sacred work, if the weavers' shuttles were to weave of themselves, then there would be no need either of apprentices for the master workers, or of slaves for the lords." And Antipatros, a Greek poet of the time of Cicero, hailed the invention of the waterwheel for grinding

corn, an invention that is the elementary form of all machinery, as the giver of freedom to female slaves, and the bringer back of the golden age. Oh! those heathens! They understood, as the learned Bastiat, and before him the still wiser MacCulloch have discovered, nothing of political economy and Christianity. They did not, for example, comprehend that machinery is the surest means of lengthening the working day. They perhaps excused the slavery of one on the ground that it was a means to the full development of another. But to preach slavery of the masses, in order that a few crude and half-educated parvenus might become "eminent spinners," "extensive sausage makers," and "influential shoeblack dealers," to do this, they lacked the bump of Christianity.

—MARX, *Capital*, vol. I (1867), pp. 408-09.

E. WORKING CLASS LEGISLATION AND THE CONTRADICTIONS OF CAPITALISM

If the general extension of factory legislation to all trades for the purpose of protecting the working class both in mind and body has become inevitable, on the other hand, as we have already pointed out, that extension hastens on the general conversion of numerous isolated small industries into a few combined industries carried on upon a large scale; it therefore accelerates the concentration of capital and the exclusive predominance of the factory system. It destroys both the ancient and the transitional forms, behind which the dominion of capital is still in part concealed, and replaces them by the direct and open sway of capital; but thereby it also generalizes the direct opposition to this sway. While in each individual workshop it enforces uniformity, regularity, order, and economy, it increases by the immense spur which the limitation and regulation of the working day give to technical improvement, the anarchy and the catastrophes of capitalist production as a whole, the intensity of labor, and the competition of machinery with the laborer. By the destruction of petty and domestic industries it destroys the last resort of the "redundant population," and with it the sole remaining safety valve of the whole social mechanism. By maturing the material conditions, and the combination on a social scale of the processes of production, it matures the contradictions and antagonisms of the capitalist form of production,

and thereby provides, along with the elements for the formation of a new society, the forces for exploding the old one.

—MARX, *Capital*, vol. I (1867), p. 503.

F. ALIENATION AND CAPITALIST ACCUMULATION

Within the capitalist system all methods for raising the social productiveness of labor are brought about at the cost of the individual laborer; all means for the development of production transform themselves into means of domination over, and exploitation of, the producers; they mutilate the laborer into a fragment of a man, degrade him to the level of an appendage of a machine, destroy every remnant of charm in his work and turn it into a hated toil; they estrange from him the intellectual potentialities of the labor process in the same proportion as science is incorporated in it as an independent power; they distort the conditions under which he works, subject him during the labor process to a despotism the more hateful for its meanness; they transform his lifetime into working time, and drag his wife and child beneath the wheels of the juggernaut of capital. But all methods for the production of surplus value are at the same time methods of accumulation; and every extension of accumulation becomes again a means for the development of those methods. It follows therefore that in proportion as capital accumulates, the lot of the laborer, be his payment high or low, must grow worse. The law, finally, that always equilibrates the relative surplus population, or industrial reserve army, to the extent and energy of accumulation, this law rivets the laborer to capital more firmly than the wedges of Vulcan did Prometheus to the rock. It establishes an accumulation of misery, corresponding with accumulation of capital. Accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole, *i.e.*, on the side of the class that produces its own product in the form of capital.

—MARX, *Capital*, vol. I (1867), p. 645.

G. HOUSING AND THE WORKING CLASS

The so-called housing shortage, which plays such a great role in the press nowadays, does not consist in the fact that the work-

ing class generally lives in bad, overcrowded and unhealthy dwellings. *This* shortage is not something peculiar to the present; it is not even one of the sufferings peculiar to the modern proletariat in contradistinction to all earlier oppressed classes. On the contrary, all oppressed classes in all periods suffered more or less uniformly from it. In order to make an end of *this* housing shortage there is only *one* means: to abolish altogether the exploitation and oppression of the working class by the ruling class. What is meant today by housing shortage is the peculiar intensification of the bad housing conditions of the workers as the result of the sudden rush of population to the big towns; a colossal increase in rents, a still further aggravation of overcrowding in the individual houses, and, for some, the impossibility of finding a place to live in at all. And *this* housing shortage gets talked of so much only because it does not limit itself to the working class but has affected the petty bourgeoisie also.

The housing shortage from which the workers and part of the petty bourgeoisie suffer in our modern big cities is one of the numerous *smaller*, secondary evils which result from the present-day capitalist mode of production. It is not at all a direct result of the exploitation of the worker *as* a worker by the capitalists. This exploitation is the basic evil which the social revolution strives to abolish by abolishing the capitalist mode of production.

The growth of the big modern cities gives the land in certain areas, particularly in those which are centrally situated, an artificial and often colossally increasing value; the buildings erected on these areas depress this value, instead of increasing it, because they no longer correspond to the changed circumstances. They are pulled down and replaced by others. This takes place above all with workers' houses which are situated centrally and whose rents, even with the greatest overcrowding, can never, or only very slowly, increase above a certain maximum. They are pulled down and in their stead shops, warehouses and public buildings are erected. Through its Haussmann in Paris, Bonapartism exploited this tendency tremendously for swindling and private enrichment. But the spirit of Haussmann has also been abroad in London, Manchester, Liverpool, and seems to feel itself just as much at home in Berlin and Vienna. The result is that the workers are forced out of the center of the towns towards the outskirts; that workers' dwellings, and small dwell-

ings in general, become rare and expensive and often altogether unobtainable, for under these circumstances the building industry, which is offered a much better field for speculation by more expensive houses, builds workers' dwellings only by way of exception.

This housing shortage therefore certainly hits the worker harder than it hits any more prosperous class, but it is just as little an evil which burdens the working class exclusively as the cheating of the shopkeeper, and it must, as far as the working class is concerned, when it reaches a certain level and attains a certain permanency, similarly find a certain economic adjustment. . . .

It is the essence of bourgeois socialism to want to maintain the basis of all the evils of present-day society and at the same time to want to abolish the evils themselves . . . [Dr. Sax] is of the opinion that "by improving the housing of the working classes it would be possible successfully to remedy the material and spiritual misery which has been described, and thereby—by a radical improvement of the housing conditions *alone*—to raise the greater part of these classes out of the morass of their often hardly human conditions of existence to the pure heights of material and spiritual well-being." . . .

Whence then comes the housing shortage? How did it arise? As a good bourgeois, Dr. Sax is not supposed to know that it is a necessary product of the bourgeois social order; that it cannot fail to be present in a society in which the great masses of the workers are exclusively dependent upon wages, that is to say, on the sum of foodstuffs necessary for their existence and for the propagation of their kind; in which improvements of the existing machinery continually throw masses of workers out of employment; in which violent and regularly recurring industrial vacillations determine on the one hand the existence of a large reserve army of unemployed workers, and on the other hand drive large masses of the workers temporarily unemployed onto the streets; in which the workers are crowded together in masses in the big towns, at a quicker rate than dwellings come into existence for them under existing conditions; in which, therefore, there must always be tenants even for the most infamous pigsties; and in which finally the house owner in his capacity as capitalist has not only the right, but, in view of the

competition, to a certain extent also the duty of ruthlessly making as much out of his property in house rent as he possibly can. In such a society the housing shortage is no accident; it is a necessary institution and it can be abolished together with all its effects on health, etc., only if the whole social order from which it springs is fundamentally refashioned. . . .

On its own admission . . . the bourgeois solution of the housing question has come to grief — it has come to grief owing to the *antithesis of town and country*. And with this we have arrived at the kernel of the problem. The housing question can only be solved when society has been sufficiently transformed for a start to be made towards abolishing the antithesis between town and country, which has been brought to an extreme point by present-day capitalist society. Far from being able to abolish this antithesis, capitalist society on the contrary is compelled to intensify it day by day. On the other hand the first modern utopian socialists, Owen and Fourier, already correctly recognized this. In their model plans the antithesis between town and country no longer exists. Consequently there takes place exactly the contrary of that which Herr Sax contends; it is not the solution of the housing question which simultaneously solves the social question, but only by the solution of the social question, that is, by the abolition of the capitalist mode of production, is the solution of the housing question made possible. To want to solve the housing question while at the same time desiring to maintain the modern big cities is an absurdity. The modern big cities, however, will be abolished only by the abolition of the capitalist mode of production, and when this is once on the way then there will be quite other things to do than supplying each worker with a little house for his own possession. . . .

Capital does not desire to abolish the housing shortage even if it could; this has now been completely established. There remain, therefore, only two other expedients, self-help on the part of the workers and state assistance. . . .

In reality the bourgeoisie has only *one* method of solving the housing question after *its* fashion — that is to say, of solving it in such a way that the solution continually reproduces the question anew. This method is called "*Hausmann*."

By the term "*Hausmann*" I do not mean merely the specifically Bonapartist manner of the Parisian Hausmann —

breaking long, straight and broad streets through the closely-built workers' quarters and erecting big luxurious buildings on both sides of them, the intention thereby, apart from the strategic aim of making barricade fighting more difficult, being also to develop a specifically Bonapartist building trades' proletariat dependent on the government and to turn the city into a pure luxury city. By "Hausmann" I mean the practice which has now become general of making breaches in the working-class quarters of our big towns, and particularly in those which are centrally situated, quite apart from whether this is done from considerations of public health and for beautifying the town, or owing to the demand for big centrally situated business premises, or owing to traffic requirements, such as the laying down of railways, streets, etc. No matter how different the reasons may be, the result is everywhere the same: the scandalous alleys and lanes disappear to the accompaniment of lavish self-praise from the bourgeoisie on account of this tremendous success, but they appear again immediately somewhere else and often in the immediate neighborhood.

In *The Condition of the Working Class in England* I gave a description of Manchester as it looked in 1843 and 1844. Since then the construction of railways through the center of the town, the laying out of new streets, and the erection of great public and private buildings have broken through, laid bare and improved some of the worst districts described in my book, others have been abolished altogether, but many of them are still, apart from the fact that official sanitary inspection has since become stricter, in the same state or in an even worse state of dilapidation than they were then. On the other hand, however, thanks to the enormous extension of the town, whose population has increased since then by more than half, districts which were at that time still airy and clean are now just as excessively built upon, just as dirty and overcrowded as the most ill-famed parts of the town formerly were....

This is a striking example of how the bourgeoisie solves the housing question in practice. The breeding places of disease, the infamous holes and cellars in which the capitalist mode of production confines our workers night after night, are not abolished; they are merely *shifted elsewhere!* The same economic necessity which produced them in the first place, produces them

in the next place also. As long as the capitalist mode of production continues to exist, it is folly to hope for an isolated solution of the housing question or of any other social question affecting the fate of the workers. The solution lies in the abolition of the capitalist mode of production and the appropriation of all the means of life and labor by the working class itself.

—ENGELS, *The Housing Question* (1872), pp. 21-23, 46f, 54, 63, 74f, 77.

[5]

CAPITALIST CRISIS

A. "THE REAL BARRIER OF CAPITALIST PRODUCTION IS CAPITAL ITSELF"

The *real barrier* of capitalist production is *capital itself*. It is that capital and its self-expansion appear as the starting and the closing point, the motive and the purpose of production; that production is only production for *capital* and not vice versa, the means of production are not mere means for a constant expansion of the living process of the *society* of producers. The limits within which the preservation and self-expansion of the value of capital resting on the expropriation and pauperization of the great mass of producers can alone move — these limits come continually into conflict with the methods of production employed by capital for its purposes, which drive towards unlimited extension of production, towards production as an end in itself, towards unconditional development of the social productivity of labor. The means — unconditional development of the productive forces of society — comes continually into conflict with the limited purpose, the self-expansion of the existing capital. The capitalist mode of production is, for this reason, a historical means of developing the material forces of production and creating an appropriate world market and is, at the same time, a continual conflict between this its historical task and its own corresponding relations of social production.

—MARX, *Capital*, vol. III (1894), p. 250.

B. ECONOMIC CRISIS AND CAPITALIST CONTRADICTIONS

We have seen that the ever-increasing perfectibility of modern machinery is, by the anarchy of social production, turned into a compulsory law that forces the individual industrial capitalist always to improve his machinery, always to increase its productive force. The bare possibility of extending the field of production is transformed for him into a similar compulsory law. The enormous expansive force of modern industry, compared with which that of gases is mere child's play, appears to us now as a *necessity* for expansion, both qualitative and quantitative, that laughs at all resistance. Such resistance is offered by consumption, by sales, by the markets for the products of modern industry. But the capacity for extension, extensive and intensive, of the markets is primarily governed by quite different laws that work much less energetically. The extension of the markets cannot keep pace with the extension of production. The collision becomes inevitable, and as this cannot produce any real solution so long as it does not break in pieces the capitalist mode of production, the collisions become periodic. Capitalist production has begotten another "vicious circle."

As a matter of fact, since 1825, when the first general crisis broke out, the whole industrial and commercial world, production and exchange among all civilized peoples and their more or less barbaric hangers-on, are thrown out of joint about once every ten years. Commerce is at a standstill, the markets are glutted, products accumulate, as multitudinous as they are unsalable, hard cash disappears, credit vanishes, factories are closed, the mass of the workers are in want of the means of subsistence because they have produced too much of the means of subsistence; bankruptcy follows upon bankruptcy, execution upon execution. The stagnation lasts for years; productive forces and products are wasted and destroyed wholesale, until the accumulated mass of commodities finally filters off, more or less depreciated in value, until production and exchange gradually begins to move again. Little by little the pace quickens. It becomes a trot. The industrial trot breaks into a canter, the canter in turn grows into the headlong gallop of a perfect steeplechase of industry, commercial credit, and speculation which finally, after breakneck leaps, ends where it began — in the ditch of a crisis. And so over and over again. We have now, since the year

1825, gone through this five times, and at the present moment (1877) we are going through it for the sixth time. And the character of these crises is so clearly defined that Fourier hit all of them off when he described the first as "*crise pléthorique*," a crisis from plethora.

In these crises, the contradiction between socialized production and capitalist appropriation ends in a violent explosion. The circulation of commodities is, for the time being, stopped. Money, the means of circulation, becomes a hindrance to circulation. All the laws of production and circulation of commodities are turned upside down. The economic collision has reached its apogee. *The mode of production is in rebellion against the mode of exchange.*

The fact that the socialized organization of production within the factory has developed so far that it has become incompatible with the anarchy of production in society, which exists side by side with and dominates it, is brought home to the capitalists themselves by the violent concentration of capital that occurs during crises, through the ruin of many large, and a still greater number of small, capitalists. The whole mechanism of the capitalist mode of production breaks down under the pressure of the productive forces, its own creations. It is no longer able to turn all this mass of means of production into capital. They lie fallow, and for that very reason the industrial reserve army must also lie fallow. Means of production, means of subsistence, available laborers, all the elements of production and of general wealth, are present in abundance. But "abundance becomes the source of distress and want" (Fourier), because it is the very thing that prevents the transformation of the means of production and subsistence into capital. For in capitalistic society the means of production can only function when they have undergone a preliminary transformation into capital, into the means of exploiting human labor power. The necessity of this transformation into capital of the means of production and subsistence stands like a ghost between these and the workers. It alone prevents the coming together of the material and personal levers of production; it alone forbids the means of production to function, the workers to work and live. On the one hand, therefore, the capitalistic mode of production stands convicted of its own incapacity to further direct these productive forces. On the

other, these productive forces themselves, with increasing energy, press forward to the removal of the existing contradiction, to the abolition of their quality as capital, to the *practical recognition of their character as social productive forces*.

—ENGELS, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (1880), MARX and ENGELS, *Selected Works* (1968), pp. 424-26.

C. THE PATH LEADING TOWARD CRISIS

If we conceive society as being not capitalistic but communistic, there will be no money capital at all in the first place, nor the disguises cloaking the transactions arising on account of it. The question then comes down to the need of society to calculate beforehand how much labor, means of production, and means of subsistence it can invest, without detriment, in such lines of business as, for instance, the building of railways, which do not furnish any means of production or subsistence, nor produce any useful effect for a long time, a year or more, while they extract labor, means of production and means of subsistence from the total annual production. In capitalist society however where social reason always asserts itself only *post festum* great disturbances may and must constantly occur. On the one hand pressure is brought to bear on the money market, while on the other, an easy money market calls such enterprises into being *en masse*, thus creating the very circumstances which later give rise to pressure on the money market. Pressure is brought to bear on the money market, since large advances of money-capital are constantly needed here for long periods of time. And this regardless of the fact that industrialists and merchants throw the money capital necessary to carry on their business into speculative railway schemes, etc., and make it good by borrowing in the money market.

On the other hand there is pressure on society's available productive capital. Since elements of productive capital are for ever being withdrawn from the market and only an equivalent in money is thrown on the market in their place, the effective demand rises without itself furnishing any element of supply. Hence a rise in the prices of productive materials as well as means of subsistence. To this must be added that stockjobbing is a regular practice and capital is transferred on a large scale.

A band of speculators, contractors, engineers, lawyers, etc., enrich themselves. They create a strong demand for articles of consumption on the market, wages rising at the same time. So far as foodstuffs are involved, agriculture too is stimulated. But as these foodstuffs cannot be suddenly increased in the course of the year, their import grows, just as that of exotic foods in general (coffee, sugar, wine, etc.) and of articles of luxury. Hence excessive imports and speculation in this line of import business. Meanwhile, in those branches of industry in which production can be rapidly expanded (manufacture proper, mining, etc.), climbing prices give rise to sudden expansion soon followed by collapse. The same effect is produced in the labor market, attracting great numbers of the latent relative surplus population, and even of the employed laborers, to the new lines of business. In general such large-scale undertakings as railways withdraw a definite quantity of labor power from the labor market, which can come only from such lines of business as agriculture, etc., where only strong lads are needed. This still continues even after the new enterprises have become established lines of business and the migratory working class needed for them has already been formed, as for instance in the case of a temporary rise above the average in the scale of railway construction. A portion of the reserve army of laborers which kept wages down, is absorbed. A general rise in wages ensues, even in the hitherto well-employed sections of the labor market. This lasts until the inevitable crash again releases the reserve army of labor and wages are once more depressed to their minimum and lower.

— MARX, *Capital*, vol. II (1894), pp. 315f.

D. WHAT IS “OVERPRODUCTION”?

The word *overproduction* in itself leads to error. So long as the most urgent needs of a great part of society are not satisfied, or *only* its most immediate needs, there can naturally be absolutely no talk of an *overproduction of products* — in the sense that the mass of products would be excessive in relation to the need for them. What must be said is the opposite: that in this sense, on the basis of capitalist production, there is constant *underproduction*. The limit of production is the *capitalist's profit*, and not at all the *need of the producers*. But overproduction of *products* and overproduction of commodities are two completely different things. . . .

Ricardo saw, from the passages of Adam Smith which he quotes, approves and therefore repeats, that the limitless “desire” for all kinds of use values is constantly satisfied, on the basis of a state of things in which the mass of producers remains more or less restricted to necessities, in which this very considerable mass of producers remains more or less excluded from the consumption of wealth—in so far as wealth oversteps the circle of the necessary means of subsistence.

—MARX, *Theories of Surplus Value* (1905-1910), p. 406.

E. CRISIS AND “UNDERCONSUMPTION”

It is sheer tautology to say that crises are caused by the scarcity of effective consumption or of effective consumers. The capitalist system does not know any other modes of consumption than effective ones, except that of *sub forma pauperis* or of the swindler. That commodities are unsalable means only that no effective purchasers have been found for them, *i.e.*, consumers (since commodities are bought in the final analysis for productive or individual consumption). But if one were to attempt to give this tautology the semblance of a more profound justification by saying that the working class receives too small a portion of its own and the evil would be remedied as soon as it receives a larger share of it and its wages increase in consequence, one could only remark that crises are always prepared by precisely a period in which wages rise generally and the working class actually gets a larger share of that part of the annual product which is intended for consumption. From the point of view of these advocates of sound and “simple”(!) common sense, such a period should rather remove the crisis. It appears, then, that capitalist production comprises conditions independent of good or bad will, conditions which permit the working class to enjoy that relative prosperity only momentarily, and at that always as the harbinger of a coming crisis.

—MARX, *Capital*, vol. II (1894), pp. 410f.

F. ON THE APOLOGETIC DENIAL OF CRISIS

The apologetic phrases used to deny crises are important from this aspect—that they always prove the opposite of what they set out to prove. In order to deny crises, they assert unity where there is opposition and contradiction. This is important

in so far as it can be said: they prove that, if the contradictions which they daydream out of existence in fact did not exist, then too no crises would exist. But in fact crisis exists, because those contradictions exist. Every reason which they advance against crisis is a contradiction daydreamed away—therefore a real contradiction, therefore a cause of crisis. The desire to daydream contradictions out of the way is at the same time the expression of contradictions that are really present, but which they vainly desire *should* not exist.

—MARX, *Theories of Surplus Value* (1905-1910), pp. 396f.

G. CONTRADICTIONS ARISING FROM THE GROWTH OF TECHNOLOGY AND THE CONCENTRATION OF CAPITAL

A development of productive forces which would diminish the absolute number of laborers, *i.e.*, enable the entire nation to accomplish its total production in a shorter time span, would cause a revolution, because it would put the bulk of the population out of the running. This is another manifestation of the specific barrier of capitalist production, showing also that capitalist production is by no means an absolute form for the development of the productive forces and for the creation of wealth, but rather that at a certain point it comes into collision with this development. This collision appears partly in periodical crises, which arise from the circumstance that now this and now that portion of the laboring population becomes redundant under its old mode of employment. The limit of capitalist production is the excess time of the laborers. The absolute spare time gained by society does not concern it. The development of productivity concerns it only in so far as it increases the surplus labor time of the working class, not because it decreases the labor time for material production in general. It moves thus in a contradiction.

We have seen that the growing accumulation of capital implies its growing concentration. Thus grows the power of capital, the alienation of the conditions of social production personified in the capitalist from the real producers. Capital comes more and more to the fore as a social power, whose agent is the capitalist. This social power no longer stands in any possible relation to that which the labor of a single individual can create. It becomes an alienated, independent, social power, which

stands opposed to society as an object, and as an object that is the capitalist's source of power. The contradiction between the general social power into which capital develops, on the one hand, and the private power of the individual capitalists over these social conditions of production, on the other, becomes ever more irreconcilable, and yet contains the solution of the problem, because it implies at the same time the transformation of the conditions of production into general, common, social, conditions. This transformation stems from the development of the productive forces under capitalist production, and from the ways and means by which this development takes place.

—MARX, *Capital*, vol. III (1894), pp. 263f.

[6]

MONOPOLY AND IMPERIALISM

A. THE DEVELOPMENT OF MONOPOLY

This rebellion of the productive forces, as they grow more and more powerful, against their quality as capital, this stronger and stronger command that their social character shall be recognized, forces the capitalist class itself to treat them more and more as social productive forces, so far as this is possible under capitalist conditions. The period of industrial high pressure, with its unbounded inflation of credit, not less than the crash itself, by the collapse of great capitalist establishments, tends to bring about that form of the socialization of great masses of means of production which we meet with in the different kinds of joint-stock companies. Many of these means of production and of distribution are, from the outset, so colossal that, like the railways, they exclude all other forms of capitalistic exploitation. At a further stage of evolution this form also becomes insufficient. The producers on a large scale in a particular branch of industry in a particular country unite in a trust, a union for the purpose of regulating production. They determine the total amount to be produced, parcel it out among themselves, and thus enforce the selling price fixed beforehand. But trusts of this kind, as soon as business becomes bad,

are generally liable to break up, and on this very account compel a yet greater concentration of association. The whole of the particular industry is turned into one gigantic joint-stock company; internal competition gives place to the internal monopoly of this one company. This has happened in 1890 with the English alkali production, which is now, after the fusion of 48 large works, in the hands of one company, conducted upon a single plan, and with a capital of £6,000,000.

In the trusts, freedom of competition changes into its very opposite—into monopoly; and the production without any definite plan of capitalistic society capitulates to the production upon a definite plan of the invading socialistic society. Certainly this is so far still to the benefit and advantage of the capitalists. But in this case the exploitation is so palpable that it must break down. No nation will put up with production conducted by trusts, with so barefaced an exploitation of the community by a small band of dividend mongers.

In any case, with trusts or without, the official representative of capitalist society—the state—will ultimately have to undertake the direction of production. This necessity for conversion into state property is felt first in the great institutions for intercourse and communication—the post office, the telegraphs, the railways.

If the crises demonstrate the incapacity of the bourgeoisie for managing any longer modern productive forces, the transformation of the great establishments for production and distribution into joint-stock companies, trusts and state property shows how unnecessary the bourgeoisie are for that purpose. All the social functions of the capitalist are now performed by salaried employees. The capitalist has no further social function than that of pocketing dividends, tearing off coupons, and gambling on the stock exchange, where the different capitalists despoil one another of their capital. At first the capitalistic mode of production forces out the workers. Now it forces out the capitalists, and reduces them, just as it reduced the workers, to the ranks of the surplus population, although not immediately into those of the industrial reserve army.

—ENGELS, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (1880), pp. 426-28.

B. EARLY FORMS OF MONOPOLY

[The results of the formation of stock companies are]:

(1) An enormous expansion of the scale of production and of enterprises, that was impossible for individual capitals. At the same time, enterprises that were formerly government enterprises become public.

(2) The capital, which in itself rests on a social mode of production and presupposes a social concentration of means of production and labor power, is here directly endowed with the form of social capital (capital of directly associated individuals) as distinct from private capital, and its undertakings assume the form of social undertakings as distinct from private undertakings. It is the abolition of capital as private property within the framework of capitalist production itself.

(3) Transformation of the actually functioning capitalist into a mere manager, administrator of other people's capital, and of the owner of capital into a mere owner, a mere money capitalist. Even if the dividends which they receive include the interest and the profit of enterprise, i.e., the total profit (for the salary of the manager is, or should be, simply the wage of a specific type of skilled labor, whose price is regulated in the labor market like that of any other labor), this total profit is henceforth received only in the form of interest, i.e., as mere compensation for owning capital that now is entirely divorced from the function in the actual process of reproduction, just as this function in the person of the manager is divorced from ownership of capital. Profit thus appears (no longer only that portion of it, the interest, which derives its justification from the profit of the borrower) as a mere appropriation of the surplus labor of others, arising from the conversion of means of production into capital, i.e., from their alienation *vis-à-vis* the actual producer, from their antithesis as another's property to every individual actually at work in production, from manager down to the last day laborer. In stock companies the function is divorced from capital ownership, hence also labor is entirely divorced from ownership of means of production and surplus labor. This result of the ultimate development of capitalist production is a necessary transitional phase towards the reconversion of capital into the property of producers, although no longer as the private prop-

erty of the individual producers, but rather as the property of associated producers, as outright social property. On the other hand, the stock company is a transition toward the conversion of all functions in the reproduction process which still remain linked with capitalist property, into mere functions of associated producers, into social functions.

Before we go any further, there is still the following economically important fact to be noted: since profit here assumes the pure form of interest, undertakings of this sort are still possible if they yield bare interest, and this is one of the causes, stemming the fall of the general rate of profit, since such undertakings, in which the ratio of constant capital to the variable is so enormous, do not necessarily enter into the equalization of the general rate of profit.

[Since Marx wrote the above, new forms of industrial enterprises have developed, as we know, representing the second and third degree of stock companies. The daily growing speed with which production may be enlarged in all fields of large-scale industry today, is offset by the ever-greater slowness with which the market for these increased products expands. What the former turns out in months can scarcely be absorbed by the latter in years. Add to this the protective tariff policy, by which every industrial country shuts itself off from all others, particularly from England, and also artificially increases domestic production capacity. The results are a general chronic overproduction, depressed prices, falling and even wholly disappearing profits; in short, the old boasted freedom of competition has reached the end of its tether and must itself announce its obvious, scandalous bankruptcy. And in every country this is taking place through the big industrialists of a certain branch joining in a cartel for the regulation of production. A committee fixes the quantity to be produced by each establishment and is the final authority for distributing the incoming orders. Occasionally even international cartels were established, as between the English and German iron industries. But even this form of association in production did not suffice. The antagonism of interests between the individual firms broke through it only too often, restoring competition. This led in some branches, where the scale of production permitted, to the concentration of the entire production of that branch of industry in one big joint-

stock company under single management. This has been repeatedly effected in America; in Europe the biggest example so far is the United Alkali Trust, which has brought all British alkali production into the hands of a single business firm. The former owners of the more than 30 individual plants have received shares for the appraised value of their entire establishments, totalling about £5 million, which represent the fixed capital of the trust. The technical management remains in the same hands as before, but business control is concentrated in the hands of the general management. The floating capital, totalling about £1 million, was offered to the public for subscription. The total capital is, therefore, £6 million. Thus, in this branch, which forms the basis of the whole chemical industry, competition has been replaced by monopoly in England, and the road has been paved, most gratifyingly, for future expropriation by the whole of society, the nation. — F. Engels]

This is the abolition of the capitalist mode of production within the capitalist mode of production itself, and hence a self-dissolving contradiction, which *prima facie* represents a mere phase of transition to a new form of production. It manifests itself as such a contradiction in its effects. It establishes a monopoly in certain spheres and thereby requires state interference. It reproduces a new financial aristocracy, a new variety of parasites in the shape of promoters, speculators and simply nominal directors; a whole system of swindling and cheating by means of corporation promotion, stock issuance and stock speculation. It is private production without the control of private property.

Aside from the stock company business, which represents the abolition of capitalist private industry on the basis of the capitalist system itself and destroys private industry as it expands and invades new spheres of production, credit offers to the individual capitalist, or to one who is regarded a capitalist, absolute control within certain limits over the capital and property of others and thereby over the labor of others. The control over social capital, not the individual capital of his own, gives him control of social labor. The capital itself, which a man really owns or is supposed to own in the opinion of the public, becomes purely a basis for the superstructure of credit. This is particularly true of wholesale commerce, through which the greatest portion of the social product passes. All standards of mea-

surement, all excuses more or less still justified under capitalist production, disappear here. What the speculating wholesale merchant risks is social property, not *his own*. Equally sordid becomes the phrase relating the origin of capital to savings, for what he demands is that *others* should save for him. Just as all France recently saved up one and a half billion francs for the Panama Canal swindlers. In fact, a description of the entire Panama swindle is here correctly anticipated, fully 20 years before it occurred. — F. E.] The other phrase concerning abstention is squarely refuted by his luxury, which is now itself a means of credit. Conceptions which have some meaning on a less developed stage of capitalist production become quite meaningless here. Success and failure both lead here to a centralization of capital, and thus to expropriation on the most enormous scale. Expropriation extends here from the direct producers to the smaller and the medium-sized capitalists themselves. It is the point of departure for the capitalist mode of production; its accomplishment is the goal of this production. In the last instance, it aims at the expropriation of the means of production from all individuals. With the development of social production the means of production cease to be means of private production and products of private production, and can thereafter be only means of production in the hands of associated producers, *i.e.*, the latter's social property, much as they are their social products. However, this expropriation appears within the capitalist system in a contradictory form, as appropriation of stock still remains ensnared in the trammels of capitalism; more the aspect of pure adventurers. Since property here exists in the form of stock, its movement and transfer become purely a result of gambling on the stock exchange, where the little fish are swallowed by the sharks and the lambs by the stock-exchange wolves. There is antagonism against the old form in the stock companies, in which social means of production appear as private property; but the conversion to the form of stock still remains ensnared in the trammels of capitalism; hence, instead of overcoming the antithesis between the character of wealth as social and as private wealth, the stock companies merely develop it in a new form.

— MARX, *Capital*, vol. III (1894), pp. 436-440.

C. THE PLACE OF IMPERIALISM IN HISTORY

The economic quintessence of imperialism is monopoly capitalism. This very fact determines its place in history, for monopoly that grew up on the basis of free competition, and precisely out of free competition, is the transition from the capitalist system to a higher social-economic order. We must take special note of the four principal forms of monopoly, or the four principal manifestations of monopoly capitalism, which are characteristic of the epoch under review.

Firstly, monopoly arose out of the concentration of production at a very advanced stage of development. This refers to the monopolist capitalist combines, cartels, syndicates and trusts. We have seen the important part that these play in modern economic life. At the beginning of the 20th century, monopolies acquired complete supremacy in the advanced countries. And although the first steps towards the formation of the cartels were first taken by countries enjoying the protection of high tariffs (Germany, America), Great Britain, with her system of free trade, was not far behind in revealing the same basic phenomenon, namely, the birth of monopoly out of the concentration of production.

Secondly, monopolies have accelerated the capture of the most important sources of raw materials, especially for the coal and iron industries, which are the basic and most highly cartelized industries in capitalist society. The monopoly of the most important sources of raw materials has enormously increased the power of big capital, and has sharpened the antagonism between cartelized and non-cartelized industry.

Thirdly, monopoly has sprung from the banks. The banks have developed from modest intermediary enterprises into the monopolists of finance capital. Some three or five of the biggest banks in each of the foremost capitalist countries have achieved the "personal union" of industrial and bank capital, and have concentrated in their hands the disposal of thousands upon thousands of millions which form the greater part of the capital and income of entire countries. A financial oligarchy, which throws a close net of relations of dependence over all the economic and political institutions of contemporary bourgeois

society without exception—such is the most striking manifestation of this monopoly.

Fourthly, monopoly has grown out of colonial policy. To the numerous “old” motives of colonial policy, finance capital has added the struggle for the sources of raw materials, for the export of capital, for “spheres of influence,” *i.e.*, for spheres for profitable deals, concessions, monopolist profits and so on; in fine, for economic territory in general. When the colonies of the European powers in Africa, for instance, comprised only one-tenth of that territory (as was the case in 1876), colonial policy was able to develop by methods other than those of monopoly—by the “free grabbing” of territories, so to speak. But when nine-tenths of Africa had been seized (approximately by 1900), when the whole world had been divided up, there was inevitably ushered in a period of colonial monopoly and, consequently, a period of particularly intense struggle for the division and the redivision of the world.

The extent to which monopolist capital has intensified all the contradictions of capitalism is generally known. It is sufficient to mention the high cost of living and the oppression of the cartels. This intensification of contradictions constitutes the most powerful driving force of the transitional period of history, which began from the time of the definite victory of world finance capital.

Monopolies, oligarchy, the striving for domination instead of the striving for liberty, the exploitation of an increasing number of small or weak nations by an extremely small group of the richest or most powerful nations—all these have given birth to those distinctive characteristics of imperialism which compel us to define it as parasitic or decaying capitalism. More and more prominently there emerges, as one of the tendencies of imperialism, the creation of the “bondholding” (rentier) state, the usurer state, in which the bourgeoisie lives on the proceeds of capital exports and by “clipping coupons.” It would be a mistake to believe that this tendency to decay precludes the possibility of the rapid growth of capitalism. It does not. In the epoch of imperialism, certain branches of industry, certain strata of the bourgeoisie and certain countries betray, to a more or less degree, one or other of these tendencies. On the whole, capitalism is growing far more rapidly than before. But this growth is not only becoming more and more uneven in general;

its unevenness also manifests itself, in particular, in the decay of the countries which are richest in capital (such as England). . . .

In its turn, this finance capital which has grown so rapidly is not unwilling (precisely because it has grown so quickly) to pass onto a more "tranquil" possession of colonies which have to be seized — and not only by peaceful methods — from richer nations. In the United States, economic development in the last decades has been even more rapid than in Germany, and *for this very reason* the parasitic character of modern American capitalism has stood out with particular prominence. On the other hand, a comparison of, say, the republican American bourgeoisie with the monarchist Japanese or German bourgeoisie shows that the most pronounced political distinctions diminish to an extreme degree in the epoch of imperialism — not because they are unimportant in general, but because in all these cases we are discussing a bourgeoisie which has definite features of parasitism.

The receipt of high monopoly profits by the capitalists in one of the numerous branches of industry, in one of numerous countries, etc., makes it economically possible for them to corrupt certain sections of the working class, and for a time a fairly considerable minority, and win them to the side of the bourgeoisie of a given industry or nation against all the others. The intensification of antagonisms between imperialist nations for the division of the world increases this striving. And so there is created that bond between imperialism and opportunism, which revealed itself first and most clearly in England, owing to the fact that certain features of imperialist development were observable there much earlier than in other countries. . . .

From all that has been said in this book on the economic nature of imperialism, it follows that we must define it as capitalism in transition, or, more precisely, as moribund capitalism. It is very instructive in this respect to note that the bourgeois economists, in describing modern capitalism, frequently employ terms like "interlocking," "absence of isolation," etc.; "in conformity with their functions and course of development," banks are "not purely private business enterprises; they are more and more outgrowing the sphere of purely private business regulation." And this very Riesser, who uttered the words just quoted, declares with all seriousness that the "prophecy" of the Marxists concerning "socialization" has "not come true"!

What then does this word "interlocking" express? It merely expresses the most striking feature of the process going on before our eyes. It shows that the observer counts the separate trees, but cannot see the wood. It slavishly copies the superficial, the fortuitous, the chaotic. It reveals the observer as one who is overwhelmed by the mass of raw material and is utterly incapable of appreciating its meaning and importance. Ownership of shares and relations between owners of private property "interlock in a haphazard way." But the underlying factor of this interlocking, its very base, is the changing social relations of production. When a big enterprise assumes gigantic proportions, and, on the basis of exact computation of mass data, organizes according to plan the supply of primary raw materials to the extent of two-thirds, or three-fourths of all that is necessary for tens of millions of people; when the raw materials are transported to the most suitable place of production, sometimes hundreds or thousands of miles away, in a systematic and organized manner; when a single center directs all the successive stages of work right up to the manufacture of numerous varieties of finished articles; when these products are distributed according to a single plan among tens and hundreds of millions of consumers (as in the case of the distribution of oil in America and Germany by the American "oil trust")—then it becomes evident that we have socialization of production, and not mere "interlocking"; that private economic relations and private property relations constitute a shell which is no longer suitable for its contents, a shell which must inevitably begin to decay if its destruction be delayed by artificial means; a shell which may continue in a state of decay for a fairly long period (particularly if the cure of the opportunist abscess is protracted), but which will inevitably be removed.

—LENIN, *Imperialism* (1916, published 1917), pp. 123-27.

CAPITALISM PREPARES THE CONDITIONS
FOR COMMUNISM

What does the primitive accumulation of capital, *i.e.*, its historical genesis, resolve itself into? In so far as it is not immediate transformation of slaves and serfs into wage laborers, and therefore a mere change of form, it only means the expropriation of the immediate producers, *i.e.*, the dissolution of private property based on the labor of its owner. Private property, as the antithesis to social, collective property, exists only where the means of labor and the external conditions of labor belong to private individuals. But according as these private individuals are laborers or not laborers, private property has a different character. The numberless shades, that it at first sight presents, correspond to the intermediate stages lying between these two extremes. The private property of the laborer in his means of production is the foundation of petty industry, whether agricultural, manufacturing, or both; petty industry, again, is an essential condition for the development of social production and of the free individuality of the laborer himself. Of course, this petty mode of production exists also under slavery, serfdom, and other states of dependence. But it flourishes, it lets loose its whole energy, it attains its adequate classical form, only where the laborer is the private owner of his own means of labor set in action by himself: the peasant of the land which he cultivates, the artisan of the tool which he handles as a virtuoso. This mode of production presupposes parcelling of the soil, and scattering of the other means of production. As it excludes the concentration of these it excludes cooperation, division of labor within each separate process of production, the control over, and the productive application of, the forces of nature by society, and the free development of the social productive powers. It is compatible only with a system of production, and a society, moving within narrow and more or less primitive bounds. To perpetuate it would be, as Pecqueur rightly says, "to decree universal mediocrity." At a certain stage of development it brings forth the material agencies for its own dissolution. From that moment new forces and new passions spring up in the

bosom of society; but the old social organization fetters them and keeps them down. It must be annihilated; it is annihilated. Its annihilation, the transformation of the individualized and scattered means of production into socially concentrated ones, of the pigmy property of the many into the huge property of the few, the expropriation of the great mass of the people from the soil, from the means of subsistence, and from the means of labor, this fearful and painful expropriation of the mass of the people forms the prelude to the history of capital. It comprises a series of forcible methods, of which we have passed in review only those that have been epoch-making as methods of the primitive accumulation of capital. The expropriation of the immediate producers was accomplished with merciless vandalism, and under the stimulus of passions the most infamous, the most sordid, the pettiest, the most meanly odious. Self-earned private property, that is based, so to say, on the fusing together of the isolated, independent laboring individual with the conditions of his labor, is supplantation of the nominally free labor of others, *i.e.*, on wage labor.

As soon as this process of transformation has sufficiently decomposed the old society from top to bottom, as soon as the laborers are turned into proletarians, their means of labor into capital, as soon as the capitalist mode of production stands on its own feet, then the further socialization of labor and further transformation of the land and other means of production into socially exploited and, therefore, common means of production, as well as the further expropriation of private proprietors, takes a new form. That which is now to be expropriated is no longer the laborer working for himself, but the capitalist exploiting many laborers. This expropriation is accomplished by the action of the immanent laws of capitalistic production itself, by the centralization of capital. One capitalist always kills many. Hand in hand with this centralization, or this expropriation of many capitalists by few, develop, on an ever-extending scale, the cooperative form of the labor process, the conscious technical application of science, the methodical cultivation of the soil, the transformation of the instruments of labor into instruments of labor only usable in common, the economizing of all means of production by their use as the means of production of combined, socialized labor, the entanglement of all peoples in the net of

the world market, and with this, the international character of the capitalistic regime. Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolize all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working class, a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organized by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with, and under it. Centralization of the means of production and socialization of labor at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated.

The capitalist mode of appropriation, the result of the capitalist mode of production, produces capitalist private property. This is the first negation of individual private property, as founded on the labor of the proprietor. But capitalist production begets, with the inexorability of a law of nature, its own negation. It is the negation of negation. This does not reestablish private property for the producer, but gives him individual property based on the acquisitions of the capitalist era: *i.e.*, on cooperation and the possession in common of the land and of the means of production.

The transformation of scattered private property, arising from individual labor, into capitalist private property is, naturally, a process, incomparably more protracted, violent and difficult, than the transformation of capitalistic private property, already practically resting on socialized production, into socialized property. In the former case, we had the expropriation of the mass of the people by a few usurpers; in the latter, we have the expropriation of a few usurpers by the mass of the people.

—MARX, *Capital*, vol. I (1867), pp. 761-64.

PART FIVE

SOCIAL REVOLUTION: TOWARD A SOCIALIST SOCIETY

Revolutions are the locomotives of history.

—MARX, *The Class Struggles in France* (1850), p. 120.

Throughout the whole of Europe the existing political situation is the product of revolution. The legal basis, historic right, legitimacy, have been everywhere riddled through and through a thousand times or entirely overthrown. But it is in the nature of all parties or classes which have come to power through revolution, to demand that the new basis of right created by the revolution should also be unconditionally recognized and regarded as holy. The right to revolution did exist—otherwise the present rulers would not be rightful—but from now onwards it is to exist no more.

—ENGELS, Letter to Bebel (1884), *Selected Correspondence*, pp. 427-30.

Do not say that social movement excludes political movement. There is never a political movement which is not at the same time social.

It is only in an order of things in which there are no more classes and class antagonisms that social evolutions will cease to be political revolutions.

—MARX, *Poverty of Philosophy* (1847), p. 177.

Introduction

THROUGHOUT THEIR wide-ranging studies of history and the events of their own day, Marx and Engels gave detailed attention to the theoretical and practical problems of politics and revolution. From these analyses they derived a theory of the state and revolution. Lenin, under the new conditions of the imperialist stage of capitalism, greatly enriched and extended this theory, making it the foundation of the Russian Revolution he led. Since Lenin's time further revolutionary experiences and events have added still newer elements.

Marx was the first to project a theory of revolution from a materialist and scientific point of view. Even the best of earlier approaches to this question (for example, Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws* or Thomas Paine's *The Rights of Man*) based themselves on some version of an ideal "human nature" to which government is supposed to conform, or else, like Rousseau, they posited a mythical "social contract" between an abstract "government" and an equally abstract "people." Revolution, it was believed, was necessitated by the violation of the "contract" by the government or by its failure to conform to "human nature." Marx took the subject out of this realm of abstraction and placed it where it belonged—on the ground of real people living in real society. Once this was done, it was possible to arrive at an accurate understanding of the nature of the state, the meaning of social revolution, and the related political questions.

Marxist theory begins with the recognition that social revolutions are neither aberrations nor accidents—they are of the essence of social movement. Knowing that no social formation is permanent, Marxism does not look on revolutions as calamitous interruptions of the slow, peaceful evolution of the status quo—as do most social thinkers. Rather it sees revolution as a fact of political life. This of course does not mean that Marxism is *blindly for* revolution, as many people are *blindly against* it. Marxism's view of revolution is sober, analytical and positive. It seeks to understand revolutions. When it recognizes that their time is ripe, Marxism tries to help them get started; and once they are under way, it tries to make their progress as fruitful and painless as possible. How it approaches such problems is illus-

trated by the struggle Marx conducted against a faction of dogmatic and voluntaristic revolutionaries in 1850. Characterizing their views at a meeting of the central committee of the Communist League, Marx declared: "The minority substitutes dogmatism for the standpoint of criticism, and idealism for materialism. It treats *pure will* as the motive power of revolution instead of the actual conditions."

Pivotal in the Marxist analysis is its definition of the state. Viewing the subject both historically and theoretically, Marx and Engels saw that traditional distinctions—like monarchy, aristocracy, republic—are superficial. They dug beneath the question of forms and found that the state, like other social institutions, must be explained in terms of the class nature of the society in which it exists. No matter how much it might appear to stand above or outside of classes, the state is a product of class society. Its distinctive quality is that it is a special organization of force, and its essential function is to maintain and perpetuate the existing social relations—which in concrete terms means the supremacy of the ruling class over other classes. Thus, from the Marxist point of view, all states in capitalist societies are fundamentally "dictatorships of the bourgeoisie," as all socialist states must be fundamentally "dictatorships of the proletariat."

This, of course, is a bare and schematic formulation. The nature of particular states at particular junctures in history is influenced by a large variety of circumstances. States, like other institutions, are susceptible to the ebb and flow of the class struggle. But despite all qualifications, the Marxist definition of the state is the best available foundation for understanding political phenomena. Without it, political analysis of daily events must of necessity be limited, and a true assessment of revolutions and other major political upheavals becomes impossible.

The material presented here shows how the Marxist theory of the state evolved. Beginning with the general statements in such early works as *The German Ideology* and *The Communist Manifesto*, the theory expanded as Marx and Engels drew conclusions from the 1848 revolutions and the Bonapartist *coup d'état* of 1851. By 1871, after the experience of the Paris Commune, Marx was able to spell out the full implications of his theory of the state and revolution. It was on this analysis that

Lenin based his thinking and action. When he returned to Russia in April 1917, he had the theoretical foundation for assessing the significance of the Soviets (councils of workers, farmers and soldiers) which had sprung up in the Revolution of 1905 but now reappeared on a grander scale. The Marxist theory of the state enabled the Bolsheviks to advance the slogan "All Power to the Soviets"—a slogan sound in theory and destined in practice to bring about the world's first successful socialist revolution. Since 1917 all socialist revolutions have, each in their own way, built on the Marxist theory of the state.

Intimately related to the question of the state is the nature and role of democracy. People brought up in the bourgeois tradition have been inclined to view democracy as an absolute principle, an ideal form of political organization. Marxism approaches the problem differently. For Marxists, democracy, far from being an ideal which originates in the minds of men, is rooted in concrete social existence.

A materialist study of history demonstrates that as the technological base of society expanded, there was a corresponding tendency to draw broader sections of the population into political participation. Thus the maritime slave-economy society of ancient Athens evolved a democracy of slave-owners. The city-states of feudal Europe created a somewhat broader democratic system, suited to the particular class and technological conditions then prevailing. When capitalism developed, with its wide-ranging need for "free" wage laborers and "free" trade, there emerged a variety of forms of bourgeois democracy, encompassing much wider elements of the people and including a complex pattern of rights and privileges. When socialism was established in a number of countries, various forms of proletarian democracy came into being.

Marxism analyzes democracy in class and historical terms. Since all developed societies until now have been class societies, the democracies they have worked out have all been limited, both in extent and in quality, by the nature of their class rule. In general, capitalism has brought a broadening of democracy as compared with the feudalism that preceded it, and socialism has similarly broadened the base of the society out of which it emerged. Naturally, levels of democracy vary considerably from one country to another (even within the same economic

system), depending on technological, historical, traditional and cultural factors; and there can be setbacks as well as advances (for example, fascism in Germany, Italy, etc.).

Marx viewed the state and democracy as historically relative phenomena. Looking into the future, he envisioned a time when a highly developed world-wide system of socialist peoples will create the material foundations for the "withering away" of the state. Under such circumstances, he foresaw, democracy will be so greatly expanded that its very quality will be transformed.

While he recognized that democracy "can never be higher than the economic structure of society and its cultural development conditioned thereby,"* Marx, and Lenin after him, stressed the importance of constantly striving to achieve the broadest democracy attainable within a particular society. They saw this effort as essential for the working class and socialist movements under capitalism. They also saw it as a major task "in the first phase of the communist society... when it has just emerged after prolonged pangs from capitalist society."†

In this section there is a presentation of the Marxist position on war. Here again Marxism starts with a class analysis. Marx wrote about the major wars of his day in terms of the periodically erupting struggles of the various sections of the bourgeoisie. Lenin, who lived at a time when the major capitalist states had already passed into the monopoly-imperialist stage, showed how the wars of this epoch inevitably tend to take on a global character. He further demonstrated how these imperialist wars are related to the questions of socialist and national liberation revolutions. His teachings on imperialist war, the working class and the colonial world are, half a century later, among the most relevant aspects of Marxist theory.

Lenin also broke new ground in elaborating a modern theory of the national and colonial question. In Marx's day the national question referred chiefly to the subjugated central European nations locked into the archaic Austro-Hungarian and tsarist empires, while the colonial question had not yet attained the prominence reached in the imperialist era. In the 20th century the problem of national liberation and self-determination has

*"Critique of the Gotha Program," *Selected Works* (1968), p. 324.

†*Ibid.*

exploded into one of the most important questions of contemporary politics, affecting every continent of the globe and often taking the center of the world political stage. Here again Lenin's teachings are of great significance.

A further selection of Lenin's writings included in this section concern some theoretical aspects of the building of socialism.

Still another major element in the Marxist theory of revolution is sometimes called "working class strategy and tactics." Marx, Engels and Lenin wrote copiously on this subject, and a considerable part of what they had to say has such timeliness that one often feels they are writing today.

What class or classes can lead a revolution? How do class conflicts develop prior to a revolution, and how do they express themselves in a revolution? If the working class leads a revolution, what class alliances are possible, and under what circumstances? What is the relation of *nation* to *class*, of *class* to *party*, of *leader* to *masses*? What are the ingredients of a revolutionary situation? What is the role of force? of violence? This is only a small sampling of the topics discussed in this section.

The world we live in today is much further advanced on the road to revolutionary social transformation than that of Marx and Engels, or even of Lenin. The area of capitalist influence has narrowed drastically—despite the imposing economic and military strength of the United States and other imperialist powers. A third of the earth's population and a quarter of its territory is socialist. Large parts of the continents of Asia, Africa and South America, no longer docile colonial appendages of the advanced industrial states, seethe with anti-imperialist and national liberation ferment. Within the capitalist countries, economic and political problems multiply and unrest grows, attesting to the irrepressible class conflict which Marx pointed to as the basic contradiction of the system.

In these conditions a host of new questions have arisen, differing in form and sometimes in substance from those that previous generations of socialists and revolutionaries faced. They touch, for example, on such fundamental problems as: the relation of revolution to peaceful coexistence in the nuclear age; the role and forms of anti-imperialist struggle in the neo-colonialist areas; the characteristics and strategic position of the modern working class under monopoly capitalism; the place

in the revolutionary struggle of such groups as student youth, women and oppressed minorities within imperialist countries (the Blacks in the United States, for example). The countries of the socialist world face a special set of problems, such as relations among socialist states and revolutionary parties, the complex questions arising from different levels and different rates of economic and social development, and the like.

It is the role of Marxist theory to help find the answers to such questions. It should be clear to anyone that specific answers, worked out in mechanical detail, are not supplied in the writings of Marx, Engels or Lenin — although the reader will be surprised at how apt and relevant to current problems many of the excerpts in this section are. What is provided by these selections on the strategy and tactics of social revolution is the *theoretical foundation* for answering the great political questions of our time. Where other theories obscure the true significance of social developments or illuminate them only partially, Marxism presents a body of underlying principles, a unifying doctrine, capable — more than any other body of ideas — of giving meaning to fragmented events and pointing to viable solutions. Its contribution, above all, is to provide a perspective, a sense of direction, a goal.

[1]

WHAT IS SOCIALIST REVOLUTION?

A. PRODUCTIVE FORCES AND SOCIAL REVOLUTIONS

From the conception of history we have sketched we obtain these further conclusions: (1) In the development of productive forces there comes a stage at which productive forces and means of intercourse are called into existence, which, under the existing relationships, only cause mischief, and which are no longer productive but destructive forces (machinery and money); and connected with this a class is called forth, which has to bear all the burdens of society without enjoying its advantages, which, ousted from society, is forced into the most decided

antagonism to all other classes; a class which forms the majority of all members of society, and from which emanates the consciousness of the necessity of a fundamental revolution, the communist consciousness, which may, of course, arise among the other classes too through the contemplation of the situation of this class. (2) The conditions under which definite productive forces can be applied, are the conditions of the rule of a definite class of society, whose social power, deriving from its property, has its practical-idealistic expression in each case in the form of the state; and, therefore, every revolutionary struggle is directed against a class, which till then has been in power. (3) In all revolutions up till now the mode of activity always remained unscathed and it was only a question of a different distribution of this activity, a new distribution of labor to other persons, whilst the communistic revolution is directed against the preceding *mode* of activity, does away with *labor*, and abolishes the rule of all classes with the classes themselves, because it is carried through by the class which no longer counts as a class in society, is not recognized as a class, and is in itself the expression of the dissolution of all classes, nationalities, etc., within present society; and (4) both for the production on a mass scale of this communist consciousness, and for the success of the cause itself, the alteration of men on a mass scale is necessary, an alteration which can only take place in a practical movement, a *revolution*; this revolution is necessary, therefore, not only because the ruling class cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because the class *overthrowing* it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society anew.

—MARX and ENGELS, *The German Ideology* (1846), pp. 68f.

B. THE NATURE OF SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

Since the historical appearance of the capitalist mode of production, the appropriation by society of all the means of production has often been dreamed of, more or less vaguely, by individuals, as well as by sects, as the ideal of the future. But it could become possible, could become a historical necessity, only when the actual conditions for its realization were there. Like every other social advance, it becomes practicable, not by men understanding that the existence of classes is in contra-

diction 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 labor only yields a produce which but slightly exceeds that barely necessary for the existence of all; so long, therefore, as labor engages all or almost all the time of the great majority of the members of society—so long, of necessity, this society is divided into classes. Side by side with the great majority, exclusively bond slaves to labor, arises a class freed from directly productive labor, which looks after the general affairs of society: the direction of labor, state business, law, science, art, etc. It is, therefore, the law of division of labor that lies at the basis of the division into classes. But this does not prevent this division into classes from being carried out by means of violence and robbery, trickery and fraud. It does not prevent the ruling class, once having the upper hand, from consolidating its power at the expense of the working class, from turning its social leadership into an intensified exploitation of the masses.

But if, upon this showing, division into classes has a certain historical justification, it has this only for a given period, only under given social conditions. It was based upon the insufficiency of production. It will be swept away by the complete development of modern productive forces. And, in fact, the abolition of classes in society presupposes a degree of historical evolution at which the existence, not simply of this or that particular ruling class, but of any ruling class at all, and, therefore, the existence of class distinction itself has become an obsolete anachronism. It presupposes, therefore, the development of production carried out to a degree at which appropriation of the means of production and of the products, and, with this, of political domination, of the monopoly of culture, and of intellectual leadership by a particular class of society, has become not only superfluous but economically, politically, intellectually, a hindrance to development. . . .

With the seizing of the means of production by society, production of commodities is done away with, and, simultaneously, the mastery of the product over the producer. Anarchy in social

production is replaced by systematic, definite organization. The struggle for individual existence disappears. Then for the first time man, in a certain sense, is finally marked off from the rest of the animal kingdom, and emerges from mere animal conditions of existence into really human ones. The whole sphere of the conditions of life which environ man, and which have hitherto ruled man, now comes under the dominion and control of man, who for the first time becomes the real, conscious lord of nature, because he has now become master of his own social organization. The laws of his own social action, hitherto standing face to face with man as laws of nature foreign to, and dominating him, will then be used with full understanding, and so mastered by him. Man's own social organization, hitherto confronting him as necessity imposed by nature and history, now becomes the result of his own free action. The extraneous objective forces that have hitherto governed history pass under the control of man himself. Only from that time will man himself, more and more consciously, make his own history—only from that time will the social causes set in movement by him have, in the main and in a constantly growing measure, the results intended by him. It is the ascent of man from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom.

—ENGELS, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (1880), MARX and ENGELS, *Selected Works* (1968), pp. 430-32.

C. ALL PREVIOUS REVOLUTIONS THOSE OF A MINORITY

All revolutions up to the present day have resulted in the displacement of one definite class rule by another; all ruling classes up till now have been only minorities as against the ruled mass of the people. A ruling minority was thus overthrown; another minority seized the helm of state and remodeled the state apparatus in accordance with its own interests. This was on every occasion the minority group, able and called to rule by the degree of economic development, and just for that reason, and only for that reason, it happened that the ruled majority either participated in the revolution on the side of the former or else passively acquiesced in it. But if we disregard the concrete content of each occasion, the common form of all these revolutions was that they were minority revolutions. Even where the

majority took part, it did so – whether wittingly or not – only in the service of a minority; but because of this, or simply because of the passive, unresisting attitude of the majority, this minority acquired the appearance of being the representative of the whole people.

As a rule, after the first great success, the victorious minority became divided; one half was pleased with what had been gained, the other wanted to go still further, and put forward new demands, which, to a certain extent at least, were also in the real or apparent interests of the great mass of the people. In individual cases these more radical demands were realized, but often only for the moment; the more moderate party again gained the upper hand, and what had eventually been won was wholly or partly lost again; the vanquished shrieked of treachery, or ascribed their defeat to accident. But in truth the position was mainly this: the achievements of the first victory were only safeguarded by the second victory of the more radical party; this having been attained, and, with it, what was necessary for the moment, the radicals and their achievements vanished once more from the stage.

– ENGELS, “Introduction,” *The Class Struggles in France* (1894), pp. 14f.

D. WORKING CLASS LIBERATION AND CLASSLESS SOCIETY

An oppressed class is the vital condition for every society founded on the antagonism of classes. The emancipation of the oppressed class thus implies necessarily the creation of a new society. For the oppressed class to be able to emancipate itself it is necessary that the productive powers already acquired and the existing social relations should no longer be capable of existing side by side. Of all the instruments of production, the greatest productive power is the revolutionary class itself. The organization of revolutionary elements as a class supposes the existence of all the productive forces which could be engendered in the bosom of the old society.

Does this mean that after the fall of the old society there will be a new class domination culminating in a new political power? No.

The condition for the emancipation of the working class is the abolition of every class, just as the condition for the libera-

tion of the third estate, of the bourgeois order, was the abolition of all estates and all orders.

The working class, in the course of its development, will substitute for the old civil society an association which will exclude classes and their antagonism, and there will be no more political power properly so-called, since political power is precisely the official expression of antagonism in civil society.

Meanwhile the antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is a struggle of class against class, a struggle which carried to its highest expression is a total revolution. Indeed, is it at all surprising that a society founded on the opposition of classes should culminate in brutal *contradiction*, the shock of body against body, as its final *dénouement*?

Do not say that social movement excludes political movement. There is never a political movement which is not at the same time social.

It is only in an order of things in which there are no more classes and class antagonisms that *social evolutions* will cease to be *political revolutions*. Till then, on the eve of every general reshuffling of society, the last word of social science will always be:

“*Le combat ou la mort; la lutte sanguinaire ou le néant. C'est ainsi que la question est invinciblement posée.*”* — George Sand

— MARX, *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1847), pp. 173-75.

E. “EVERYTHING SEEMS PREGNANT WITH ITS CONTRARY.”

The so-called revolutions of 1848 were but poor incidents, small fractures and fissures in the dry crust of European society. However, they denounced the abyss. Beneath the apparently solid surface, they betrayed oceans of liquid matter, only needing expansion to rend into fragments continents of hard rock. Noisily and confusedly they proclaimed the emancipation of the proletariat, *i.e.*, the secret of the 19th century, and of the revolution of that century. The social revolution, it is true, was no novelty invented in 1848. Steam, electricity and the self-acting mule were revolutions of a rather more dangerous character than even Citizens Barbès, Raspail, and Blanqui! But, although the atmosphere in which we live weighs upon everyone with a

*“Combat or death; bloody struggle or extinction. It is thus that the question is inexorably put.”

20,000-pound force, do you feel it? No more than European society before 1848 felt the revolutionary atmosphere enveloping it and pressing it from all sides. There is one great fact characteristic of this our 19th century, a fact which no party dares deny. On the one hand there have started into life industrial and scientific forces which no epoch of former human history had ever suspected. On the other hand there exist symptoms of decay, far surpassing the horrors recorded of the latter times of the Roman Empire. In our days, everything seems pregnant with its contrary. Machinery, gifted with the wonderful power of shortening and fructifying human labor, we behold starving and overworking it. The newfangled sources of wealth, by some strange, weird spell, are turned into sources of want. The victories of art seem bought by the loss of character. At the same pace that mankind masters nature, man seems to become enslaved to other men or to his own infamy. Even the pure life of science seems unable to shine but on the dark background of ignorance. All our invention and progress seem to result in endowing material forces with intellectual life, and in stultifying human life into a material force. This antagonism between modern industry and science, on the one hand, and modern misery and dissolution, on the other hand; this antagonism between the productive forces and the social relations of our epoch is a fact, palpable, overwhelming, and not to be controverted. Some may wail over it; others may wish to get rid of modern arts, in order to get rid of modern conflicts. Or they may imagine that so signal a progress in industry wants to be completed by as signal a regress in politics. For our part, we do not mistake the shape of the shrewd spirit that continues to mark all these contradictions. We know that if the newfangled forces of society are to work satisfactorily, they need only be mastered by newfangled men—and such are the workingmen. They are as much the invention of modern times as machinery itself. In the signs that bewilder the middle class, the aristocracy, and the poor prophets of regression, we recognize our old friend Robin Goodfellow, the old mole that can work in the earth so fast, that worthy pioneer—the revolution. The English workingmen are the firstborn sons of modern industry. Certainly, then, they will not be the last to aid the social revolution produced by that industry—a revolution which

means the emancipation of their class all over the world, which is as universal as capitalist rule and wage slavery. I know the heroic struggles the English working class has gone through since the middle of the last century; struggles not the less glorious because they are shrouded in obscurity and burked by middle-class historians. To take vengeance for the misdeeds of the ruling class there existed in the Middle Ages in Germany a secret tribunal called the *Vehmgericht*. If a red cross was seen marked on a house, people knew that its owner was doomed by the *Vehm*. All the houses of Europe are now marked by the mysterious red cross. History is the judge; its executioner, the proletarian.

—MARX, "A Speech in London" (1856), MARX and ENGELS, *Selected Correspondence*, pp. 90f.

F. REVOLUTIONARY THEORY THE CONDITION FOR A REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

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

The first is that our party is only in the process of formation, its features are only just becoming outlined, and it has not yet completely settled its reckoning with other tendencies in revolutionary thought which threaten to divert the movement from the proper path. Indeed, in very recent times we have observed (as Axelrod long ago warned the Economists would happen) a revival of non-social-democratic revolutionary tendencies. Under such circumstances, what at first sight appears to be an "unimportant" mistake may give rise to most deplorable consequences, and only the shortsighted would consider factional disputes and strict distinction of shades to be inopportune and superfluous. The fate of Russian Social-Democracy for many, many years to come may be determined by the strengthening of one or the other "shade."

The second reason is that the social-democratic movement is essentially an international movement. This does not mean merely that we must combat national chauvinism. It means also

that a movement that is starting in a young country can be successful only on the condition that it assimilates the experience of other countries. In order to assimilate this experience, it is not sufficient merely to be acquainted with it, or simply to transcribe the latest resolutions. A critical attitude is required towards this experience, and ability to subject it to independent tests. Only those who realize how much the modern labor movement has grown in strength will understand what a reserve of theoretical forces and political (as well as revolutionary) experience is required to fulfill this task.

The third reason is that the national tasks of Russian Social-Democracy are such as have never confronted any other Socialist party in the world. Farther on we shall deal with the political and organizational duties which the task of emancipating the whole people from the yoke of autocracy imposes upon us. At the moment, we wish merely to state that the *role of vanguard can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by an advanced theory*. . . .

We said that *there could not yet be* social-democratic consciousness among the workers. This consciousness could only be brought to them from without. The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness, i.e., it may itself realize the necessity for combining in unions, to fight against the employers and to strive to compel the government to pass necessary labor legislation, etc.

The theory of socialism, however, grew out of the philosophic, historical and economic theories that were elaborated by the educated representatives of the propertied classes, the intellectuals. The founders of modern scientific socialism, Marx and Engels, themselves belonged to the bourgeois intelligentsia. Similarly, in Russia, the theoretical doctrine of social-democracy arose quite independently of the spontaneous growth of the labor movement; it arose as a natural and inevitable outcome of the development of ideas among the revolutionary socialist intelligentsia. At the time of which we are speaking, i.e., the middle of the nineties, this doctrine not only represented the completely formulated program of the Emancipation of Labor group but had already won the adhesion of the majority of the revolutionary youth in Russia.

Hence, simultaneously we had both the spontaneous awaken-

ing of the masses of the workers—the awakening to conscious life and struggle, and the striving of the revolutionary youth, armed with the social-democratic theories, to reach the workers. In this connection it is particularly important to state the oft-forgotten (and comparatively little-known) fact that the early social-democrats of that period *zealously carried on economic agitation* (being guided in this by the really useful instructions contained in the pamphlet *Agitation* that was still in manuscript) but they did not regard this as their sole task. On the contrary, *right from the very beginning* they brought up the general historical tasks of Russian Social-Democracy, and particularly the task of overthrowing the autocracy.

—LENIN, *What Is To Be Done?* (1902), pp. 28-33.

[2]

THEORY OF THE STATE

A. ORIGINS OF THE STATE

The three main forms in which the state arises on the ruins of the gentile constitution have been examined in detail above. Athens provides the purest, classic form; here the state springs directly and mainly out of the class oppositions which develop within gentile society itself. In Rome, gentile society becomes a closed aristocracy in the midst of the numerous *plebs* who stand outside it, and have duties but no rights; the victory of *plebs* breaks up the old constitution based on kinship, and erects on its ruins the state, into which both the gentile aristocracy and the *plebs* are soon completely absorbed. Lastly, in the case of the German conquerors of the Roman Empire, the state springs directly out of the conquest of large foreign territories, which the gentile constitution provides no means of governing. But because this conquest involves neither a serious struggle with the original population nor a more advanced division of labor; because conquerors and conquered are almost on the same level of economic development, and the economic basis of society remains therefore as before—for these reasons the gentile

constitution is able to survive for many centuries in the altered, territorial form of the Mark constitution and even for a time to rejuvenate itself in a feebler shape in the later noble and patrician families, and indeed in peasant families, as in Ditmarschen.

The state is therefore by no means a power imposed on society from without; just as little is it "the reality of the moral idea," "the image and the reality of reason," as Hegel maintains. Rather, it is a product of society at a particular stage of development; it is the admission that this society has involved itself in insoluble self-contradiction and is cleft into irreconcilable antagonisms which it is powerless to exorcise. But in order that these antagonisms, classes with conflicting economic interests, shall not consume themselves and society in fruitless struggle, a power, apparently standing above society, has become necessary to moderate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of "order"; and this power, arisen out of society, but placing itself above it and increasingly alienating itself from it, is the state.

In contrast to the old gentile organization, the state is distinguished firstly by the grouping of its members *on a territorial basis*. The old gentile bodies, formed and held together by ties of blood, had become inadequate largely because they presupposed that the gentile members were bound to one particular locality, whereas this had long ago ceased to be the case. The territory was still there, but the people had become mobile. The territorial division was therefore taken as the starting point and the system introduced by which citizens exercised their public rights and duties where they took up residence, without regard to gens or tribe. This organization of the citizens of the state according to domicile is common to all states. To us, therefore, this organization seems natural; but, hard and protracted struggles were necessary before it was able in Athens and Rome to displace the old organization founded on kinship.

The second distinguishing characteristic is the institution of a *public force* which is no longer immediately identical with the people's own organization of themselves as an armed power. This special public force is needed because a self-acting armed organization of the people has become impossible since their cleavage into classes. The slaves also belong to the population:

as against the 365,000 slaves, the 90,000 Athenian citizens constitute only a privileged class. The people's army of the Athenian democracy confronted the slaves as an aristocratic public force, and kept them in check; but to keep the citizens in check as well, a police force was needed. This public force exists in every state; it consists not merely of armed men, but also of material appendages, prisons and coercive institutions of all kinds, of which gentile society knew nothing. It may be very insignificant, practically negligible, in societies with still undeveloped class antagonisms and living in remote areas, as at times and places in the United States of America. But it becomes stronger in proportion as the class antagonisms within the state become sharper and as adjoining states grow larger and more populous. It is enough to look at Europe today, where class struggle and rivalry in conquest have brought the public power to a pitch that it threatens to devour the whole of society and even the state itself.

In order to maintain this public power, contributions from the state citizens are necessary—*taxes*. These were completely unknown to gentile society. We know more than enough about them today. With advancing civilization, even taxes are not sufficient; the state draws drafts on the future, contracts loans, *state debts*. Our old Europe can tell a tale about these, too.

In possession of the public power and the right of taxation, the officials now present themselves as organs of society standing *above* society. The free, willing respect accorded to the organs of the gentile constitution is not enough for them, even if they could have it. Representatives of a power which estranges them from society, they have to be given prestige by means of special decrees, which invest them with a peculiar sanctity and inviolability. The lowest police officer of the civilized state has more "authority" than all the organs of gentile society put together; but the mightiest prince and the greatest statesman or general of civilization might envy the humblest of the gentile chiefs the unforced and unquestioned respect accorded to him. For the one stands in the midst of society; the other is forced to pose as something outside and above it.

As the state arose from the need to keep class antagonisms in check, but also arose in the thick of the fight between the classes, it is normally the state of the most powerful, economi-

cally ruling class, which by its means becomes also the politically ruling class, and so acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class. The ancient state was, above all, the state of the slave owners for holding down the slaves, just as the feudal state was the organ of the nobility for holding down the peasant serfs and bondsmen, and the modern representative state is the instrument for exploiting wage labor by capital. Exceptional periods, however, occur when the warring classes are so nearly equal in forces that the state power, as apparent mediator, acquires for the moment a certain independence in relation to both. This applies to the absolute monarchy of the 17th and 18th centuries, which balances the nobility and the bourgeoisie against one another; and to the Bonapartism of the First and particularly of the Second French Empire, which played off the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie against the proletariat. The latest achievement in this line, in which ruler and ruled look equally comic, is the new German Empire of the Bismarckian nation; here the capitalists and the workers are balanced against one another and both of them fleeced for the benefit of the decayed Prussian cabbage junkers.

Further, in most historical states the rights conceded to citizens are graded on a property basis, whereby it is directly admitted that the state is an organization for the protection of the possessing class against the non-possessing class. This is already the case in the Athenian and Roman property classes. Similarly in the medieval feudal state, in which the extent of political power was determined by the extent of landownership. Similarly, also, in the electoral qualifications in modern parliamentary states. This political recognition of property differences is, however, by no means essential. On the contrary, it marks a low stage in the development of the state. The highest form of the state, the democratic republic, which in our modern social conditions becomes more and more an unavoidable necessity and is the form of state in which alone the last decisive battle between proletariat and bourgeoisie can be fought out—the democratic republic no longer officially recognizes differences of property. Wealth here employs its power indirectly, but all the more surely. It does this in two ways: by plain corruption of officials, of which America is the classic example,

and by an alliance between the government and the stock exchange, which is effected all the more easily the higher the state debt mounts and the more the joint-stock companies concentrate in their hands not only transport but also production itself, and themselves have their own center in the stock exchange.

— ENGELS, *The Origin of the Family* (1884), pp. 154-58.

B. THE STATE: FIRST IDEOLOGICAL POWER OVER MANKIND

In modern history at least it is therefore proved that all political struggles are class struggles, and all class struggles for emancipation, in the last resort, despite their necessarily political form—for every class struggle is a political struggle—turn ultimately on the question of economic emancipation. Therefore, here at least, the state—the political order—is the subordinate, and civil society—the realm of economic relations—the decisive element. The traditional conception, to which Hegel, too, pays homage, saw in the state the determining element, and in civil society the element determined by it. Appearances correspond to this. As all the driving forces of the actions of any individual person must pass through his brain, and transform themselves into motives of his will in order to set him into action, so also all the needs of civil society—no matter which class happens to be the ruling one—must pass through the will of the state in order to secure general validity in the form of laws. That is the formal aspect of the matter—the one which is self-evident. The question arises, however, what is the content of this merely formal *will*—of the individual as well as of the state—and whence is this content derived? Why is just this intended and not something else? If we inquire into this we discover that in modern history the will of the state is, on the whole, determined by the changing needs of civil society, by the supremacy of this or that class, in the last resort, by the development of the productive forces and relations of exchange. . . .

The state presents itself to us as the first ideological power over mankind. Society creates for itself an organ for the safeguarding of its general interests against internal and external attacks. This organ is the state power. Hardly come into being, this organ makes itself independent in regard to society; and,

indeed, the more so, the more it becomes the organ of a particular class, the more it directly enforces the supremacy of that class. The fight of the oppressed class against the ruling class becomes necessarily a political fight, a fight first of all against the political dominance of this class. The consciousness of the interconnection between this political struggle and its economic roots becomes dulled and can be lost altogether. While this is not altogether the case with the participants, it almost always happens with the historians. Of the ancient sources on the struggles within the Roman Republic only Appian tells us clearly and distinctly what was at issue in the last resort—namely, landed property.

But once the state has become an independent power in regard to society, it produces forthwith a further ideology. It is indeed only among professional politicians, theorists of constitutional law and jurists of private law, that the connection with economic facts gets completely lost. Since in each particular case the economic facts must assume the form of juristic motives in order to receive legal sanction; and since, in so doing, consideration of course has to be paid to the whole legal system already in operation, the consequence is that the juristic form is made everything and the economic content nothing. Public law and private law are treated as independent spheres, each having its own independent historical development, each being capable of and needing a systematic presentation by the thoroughgoing elimination of all inner contradictions.

Still higher ideologies, that is, such as are still further removed from the material, economic basis, take the form of philosophy and religion. Here the interconnection between the ideas and their material condition of existence becomes more and more complicated, more and more obscured by intermediate links. But the interconnection exists. Just as the whole Renaissance period from the middle of the 15th century was an essential product of the towns and therefore of the bourgeoisie so also was the subsequently newly awakened philosophy. Its content was in essence only the philosophical expression of the thoughts corresponding to the development of the small and middle bourgeoisie into a big bourgeoisie. Among last century's Englishmen and Frenchmen who in many cases were just as much political economists as philosophers, this is clearly evident.

—ENGELS, *Ludwig Feuerbach* (1888), pp. 52-56.

C. DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

“Present-day society” is capitalist society, which exists in all civilized countries, more or less free from medieval admixture, more or less modified by the special historical development of each country and 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, it is 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 civilized countries, in spite of their manifold 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 features in common. In this sense it is possible to speak of the “present-day state,” in contrast to the future in which its present root, bourgeois society, will have died away.

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 the present functions of the state? This question can only be answered scientifically and one does not get a flea-hop nearer to the problem by a thousand-fold 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. There corresponds to this also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*.

—MARX, *Critique of the Gotha Program* (1875), p. 16.

D. “THE STATE IS A SPECIAL ORGANIZATION OF FORCE”

The state is a special organization of force; it is the organization of violence for the suppression of some class. What class must the proletariat suppress? Naturally, the exploiting class only, *i.e.*, the bourgeoisie. The toilers need the state only to overcome the resistance of the exploiters, and only the proletariat can direct this suppression and bring it to fulfilment, for the proletariat is the only class that is thoroughly revolutionary, the only class that can unite all the toilers and the exploited in the struggle against the bourgeoisie, in completely displacing it.

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

The petty-bourgeois democrats, these sham socialists who have substituted for the class struggle dreams of harmony between classes, imagined even the transition to socialism in a dreamy fashion—not in the form of the overthrow of the rule of the exploiting class, but in the form of the peaceful submission of the minority to a majority conscious of its aims. This petty-bourgeois utopia, indissolubly connected with the idea of the state's being above classes, in practice led to the betrayal of the interests of the toiling classes, as was shown, for example, in the history of the French revolutions of 1848 and 1871, and in the participation of "Socialists" in bourgeois cabinets in England, France, Italy and other countries at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries.

Marx fought all his life against this petty-bourgeois Socialism—now reborn in Russia in the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties. He carried his analysis of the class struggle logically right to the doctrine of political power, the doctrine of the state.

The overthrow of bourgeois rule can be accomplished only by the proletariat, as the particular class, which, by the economic conditions of its existence, is being prepared for this work and is provided both with the opportunity and the power to perform it. While the capitalist class breaks up and atomizes the peasantry and all the petty-bourgeois strata, it welds together, unites and organizes the town proletariat. Only the proletariat—by virtue of its economic role in large-scale production—is capable of leading *all* the toiling and exploited masses, who are exploited, oppressed, crushed by the bourgeoisie not less, and often more, than the proletariat, but who are incapable of carrying on the struggle for their freedom *independently*.

The doctrine of the class struggle, as applied by Marx to the

question of the state and of the Socialist revolution, leads inevitably to the recognition of the *political rule* of the proletariat, of its dictatorship, *i.e.*, of a power shared with none and relying directly upon the armed force of the masses. The overthrow of the bourgeoisie is realizable only by the transformation of the proletariat into the *ruling class*, able to crush the inevitable and desperate resistance of the bourgeoisie, and to organize, for the new economic order, *all* the toiling and exploited masses.

The proletariat needs state power, the centralized organization of force, the organization of violence, both for the purpose of crushing the resistance of the exploiters and for the purpose of *guiding* the great mass of the population—the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie, the semi-proletarians—in the work of organizing socialist economy.

By educating a workers' party, Marxism educates the vanguard of the proletariat, capable of assuming power and of *leading the whole people* to socialism, of directing and organizing the new order, of being the teacher, guide and leader of all the toiling and exploited in the task of building up their social life without the bourgeoisie and against the bourgeoisie. As against this, the opportunism predominant at present breeds in the workers' party representatives of the better paid workers, who lose touch with the rank and file, "get along" fairly well under capitalism, and sell their birthright for a mess of pottage, *i.e.*, renounce their role of revolutionary leaders of the people against the bourgeoisie.

The state, *i.e.*, the proletariat organized as the ruling class"—this theory of Marx's is indissolubly connected with all his teaching concerning the revolutionary role of the proletariat in history. The culmination of this role is proletarian dictatorship, the political rule of the proletariat.

But, if the proletariat needs the state, as a *special* form of organization of violence *against* the capitalist class, the following question arises almost automatically: is it thinkable that such an organization can be created without a preliminary breakup and destruction of the state machinery created for *its own* use by the bourgeoisie? The *Communist Manifesto* leads straight to this conclusion, and it is of this conclusion that Marx speaks when summing up the experience of the revolution of 1848-1851

In the *Communist Manifesto* are summed up the general les-

sons of history, which force us to see in the state the organ of class domination, and lead us to the inevitable conclusion that the proletariat cannot overthrow the bourgeoisie without first conquering political power, without obtaining political rule, without transforming the state into the "proletariat organized as the ruling class"; and that this proletarian state will begin to wither away immediately after its victory, because in a society without class antagonisms, the state is unnecessary and impossible. The question as to how, from the point of view of historical development, this replacement of the capitalist state by the proletarian state shall take place, is not raised here.

It is precisely this question that Marx raises and solves in 1852. True to his philosophy of dialectical materialism, Marx takes as his basis the experience of the great revolutionary years 1848-1851. Here, as everywhere, his teaching is the *summing up of experience*, illuminated by a profound philosophical world conception and a rich knowledge of history.

The problem of the state is put concretely: how did the bourgeois state, the state machinery necessary for the rule of the bourgeoisie, come into being? What were its changes, what its evolution in the course of the bourgeois revolutions and in the face of the independent actions of the oppressed classes? What are the tasks of the proletariat relative to this state machinery?

The centralized state power peculiar to bourgeois society came into being in the period of the fall of absolutism. Two institutions are especially characteristic of this state machinery: bureaucracy and the standing army. In their works, Marx and Engels mention repeatedly the thousand threads which connect these institutions with the bourgeoisie. The experience of every worker illustrates this connection in the clearest and most impressive manner. From its own bitter experience, the working class learns to recognize this connection; that is why it so easily acquires, so completely absorbs the doctrine revealing this inevitable connection, a doctrine which the petty-bourgeois democrats either ignorantly and lightheartedly deny, or, still more lightheartedly, admit "in general," forgetting to draw adequate practical conclusions.

—LENIN, *The State and Revolution* (1917), pp. 22-26.

E. THE STATE AND DEMOCRACY IN THE TRANSITION FROM CAPITALISM TO COMMUNISM.

“Between capitalist and communist society” – Marx continues – “lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the former into the latter. To this also corresponds a political transition period, in which the state can be no other than *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.*” (Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Program*).

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

Earlier the question was put thus: to attain its emancipation, the proletariat must overthrow the bourgeoisie, conquer political power and establish its own revolutionary dictatorship.

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

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

We have seen that the *Communist Manifesto* simply places side by side the two ideas: the “transformation of the proletariat into the ruling class” and the “establishment of democracy.” On the basis of all that has been said above, one can define more exactly how democracy changes in the transition from capitalism to communism.

In capitalist society, under the conditions most favorable to its development, we have more or less complete democracy in the democratic republic. But this democracy is always bound by the narrow framework of capitalist exploitation, and consequently always remains, in reality, a democracy for the minority, only for the possessing classes, only for the rich. Freedom in capitalist society always remains just about the same as it was in the ancient Greek republics: freedom for the slave owners. The modern wage slaves, owing to the conditions of capitalist exploitation, are so much crushed by want and poverty that “democracy is nothing to them,” “politics is nothing to them”; that, in the ordinary peaceful course of events, the majority of

the population is debarred from participating in social and political life....

Democracy for an insignificant minority, democracy for the rich — that is the democracy of capitalist society. If we look more closely into the mechanism of capitalist democracy, everywhere, both in the “petty” — so-called petty — details of the suffrage (residential qualification, exclusion of women, etc.), and in the technique of the representative institutions, in the actual obstacles to the right of assembly (public buildings are not for “beggars”!), in the purely capitalist organization of the daily press, etc., etc. — on all sides we see restriction after restriction upon democracy. These restrictions, exceptions, exclusions, obstacles for the poor, seem slight, especially in the eyes of one who has himself never known want and has never been in close contact with the oppressed classes in their mass life (and nine-tenths, if not ninety-nine hundredths, of the bourgeois publicists and politicians are of this class), but in their sum total these restrictions exclude and squeeze out the poor from politics and from an active share in democracy.

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

But from this capitalist democracy — inevitably narrow, subtly rejecting the poor, and therefore hypocritical and false to the core — progress does not march onward, simply, smoothly and directly, to “greater and greater democracy,” as the liberal professors and petty-bourgeois opportunists would have us believe. No, progress marches onward, *i.e.*, towards communism, through the dictatorship of the proletariat; it cannot do otherwise, for there is no one else and no other way to *break the resistance* of the capitalist exploiters.

But the dictatorship of the proletariat — *i.e.*, the organization of the vanguard of the oppressed as the ruling class for the purpose of crushing the oppressors — cannot produce merely an expansion of democracy. *Together* with an immense expansion of democracy which *for the first time* becomes democracy for the poor, democracy for the people, and not democracy for the rich folk, the dictatorship of the proletariat produces a series of

restrictions of liberty in the case of the oppressors, the exploiters, the capitalists. We must crush them in order to free humanity from wage slavery; their resistance must be broken by force; it is clear that where there is suppression there is also violence, there is no liberty, no democracy.

Engels expressed this splendidly in his letter to Bebel when he said, as the reader will remember, that "as long as the proletariat still *needs* the state, it needs it not in the interests of freedom, but for the purpose of crushing its antagonists; and as soon as it becomes possible to speak of freedom, then the state, as such, ceases to exist."

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

Only in communist society, when the resistance of the capitalists has been completely broken, when the capitalists have disappeared, when there are no classes (*i.e.*, there is no difference between the members of society in their relation to the social means of production), *only then* "the state ceases to exist," and "*it becomes possible to speak of freedom.*" Only then a really full democracy, a democracy without any exceptions, will be possible and will be realized. And only then will democracy itself begin to *wither away* due to the simple fact that, freed from capitalist slavery, from the untold horrors, savagery, absurdities and infamies of capitalist exploitation, people will gradually *become accustomed* to the observance of the elementary rules of social life that have been known for centuries and repeated for thousands of years in all school books; they will become accustomed to observing them without force, without compulsion, without subordination, without the *special apparatus* for compulsion which is called the state.

The expression "the state *withers away*," is very well chosen, for it indicates both the gradual and the elemental nature of the process. Only habit can, and undoubtedly will, have such an effect; for we see around us millions of times how readily people get accustomed to observe the necessary rules of life in common, if there is no exploitation, if there is nothing that causes indignation, that calls forth protest and revolt and has to be *suppressed*.

Thus, in capitalist society, we have a democracy that is curtailed, poor, false; a democracy only for the rich, for the minority. The dictatorship of the proletariat, the period of transition to communism, will, for the first time, produce democracy for the people, for the majority, side by side with necessary suppression of the minority—the exploiters. Communism alone is capable of giving a really complete democracy, and the more complete it is the more quickly will it become unnecessary and wither away of itself.

In other words: under capitalism we have a state in the proper sense of the word, that is, special machinery for the suppression of one class by another, and of the majority by the minority at that. Naturally, for the successful discharge of such a task as the systematic suppression by the exploiting minority of the exploited majority, the greatest ferocity and savagery of suppression are required, seas of blood are required, through which mankind is marching in slavery, serfdom, and wage labor.

Again, during the *transition* from capitalism to communism, suppression is *still* necessary; but it is the suppression of the minority of exploiters by the majority of exploited. A special apparatus, special machinery for suppression, the “state,” is *still* necessary, but this is now a transitional state, no longer a state in the usual sense, for the suppression of the minority of exploiters, by the majority of the wage slaves *of yesterday*, is a matter comparatively so easy, simple and natural that it will cost far less bloodshed than the suppression of the risings of slaves, serfs or wage laborers, and will cost mankind far less. This is compatible with the diffusion of democracy among such an overwhelming majority of the population that the need for *special machinery* of suppression will begin to disappear. The exploiters are, naturally, unable to suppress the people without a most complex machinery for performing this task; but *the people* can suppress the exploiters even with very simple “machinery,” almost without any “machinery,” without any special apparatus, by the simple *organization of the armed masses* (such as the Soviets of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies, we may remark, anticipating a little).

Finally, only communism renders the state absolutely unnecessary, for there is *no one* to be suppressed—“no one” in the sense of a *class*, in the sense of a systematic struggle with a

definite section of the population. We are not utopians, and we do not in the least deny the possibility and inevitability of excesses on the part of *individual persons*, nor the need to suppress *such* excesses. But, in the first place, no special machinery, no special apparatus of repression is needed for this; this will be done by the armed people itself, as simply and as readily as any crowd of civilized people, even in modern society, parts a pair of combatants or does not allow a woman to be outraged. And, secondly, we know that the fundamental social cause of excesses which consist in violating the rules of social life is the exploitation of the masses, their want and their poverty. With the removal of this chief cause, excesses will inevitably begin to "*wither away*." We do not know how quickly and in what succession, but we know that they will wither away. With their withering away, the state will also *wither away*.

—LENIN, *The State and Revolution* (1917), 71-75.

[3]

IMPERIALISM AND WAR

A. THE MARXIST POSITION ON WAR

From the point of view of Marxism, that is, of modern scientific socialism, the fundamental question for socialists in discussing how this war should be appraised, and what our attitude towards it should be, is the objects of the war and the classes which prepared for it and directed it. We Marxists are not among those who are absolutely opposed to all war. We say: our object is to achieve the socialist system of society, which, by abolishing the division of mankind into classes, by abolishing all exploitation of man by man, and of one nation by other nations, will inevitably abolish all possibility of war. In the war for this socialist system of society, however, we will inevitably meet a situation in which the class struggle in each nation may collide with a war, caused by this very class struggle, between different nations. For this reason we cannot deny the possibility of revolutionary wars, that is, of wars arising out of the class struggle, conducted by revolutionary classes, and having direct,

immediate, revolutionary significance. We cannot deny this particularly because the history of European revolutions during the past century, the past 125 to 135 years, shows that in addition to the majority of wars, which were reactionary, there have been revolutionary wars; for example, the war waged by the revolutionary masses of the people of France against united, monarchist, backward, feudal and semi-feudal Europe.

Even at the present time there is no more widespread deception of the masses in Western Europe, and lately here in Russia, than references to revolutionary wars. There are wars and wars. We must examine the historical conditions which gave rise to each particular war, the classes which conducted it, and for what objects. Unless we do this, all our arguments about war will be reduced to futility; to a wordy and barren controversy. . . .

We know of the aphorism uttered by one of the most celebrated writers on the philosophy and history of war—Clausewitz—which reads as follows: “War is a continuation of politics by other means.” This was uttered by a writer who reviewed the history of war and drew philosophical lessons from it soon after the epoch of the Napoleonic wars. This writer, whose fundamental ideas have now become an undoubted acquisition for all thinking people, 80 years ago combated the philistine and ignorant prejudice that war can be separated from the politics of the respective governments, the respective classes; that war can at any time be regarded simply as aggression, which disturbs peace, followed by the restoration of this peace. As much as to say: people quarreled, and then made up! This is a crude and ignorant opinion, refuted scores of years ago, and refuted now by a more or less careful analysis of any historical epoch of war.

War is a continuation of politics by other means. Every war is inseparably connected with the political system which gave rise to it. The politics which a certain country, a certain class in that country, pursued for a long period before the war, are inevitably pursued by that very same class during the war; it merely changes its form of action. . . .

—LENIN, *War and the Workers* (1917), pp. 3-5.

B. JUST AND UNJUST WARS

Socialists cannot, without ceasing to be socialists, be opposed to all war.

Firstly, socialists have never been, nor can they ever be, opposed to revolutionary wars. The bourgeoisie of the imperialist "Great" powers has become thoroughly reactionary, and the war *this* bourgeoisie is now waging we regard as a reactionary, slave owners' and criminal war. But what about a war *against* this bourgeoisie? A war, for instance, waged by peoples oppressed by and dependent upon this bourgeoisie, or by colonial peoples, for liberation?...

The history of the 20th century, this century of "unbridled imperialism," is replete with colonial wars. But what we Europeans, the imperialist oppressors of the majority of the world's peoples, with our habitual, despicable European chauvinism, call "colonial wars" are often national wars, or national rebellions of these oppressed peoples. One of the main features of imperialism is that it accelerates capitalist development in the most backward countries, and thereby extends and intensifies the struggle against national oppression. That is a fact, and from it inevitably follows that imperialism must often give rise to national wars. *Junius*, who defends the above-quoted "theses" in her pamphlet, says that in the imperialist era every national war against an imperialist great power leads to the intervention of a rival imperialist great power. Every national war is thus turned into an imperialist war. But that argument is wrong too. This *can* happen, but does not always happen. Many colonial wars between 1900 and 1914 did not follow that course. And it would be simply ridiculous to declare, for instance, that after the present war, if it ends in the utter exhaustion of all the belligerents, "there can be no" national, progressive, revolutionary wars "of any kind," waged, say, by China in alliance with India, Persia, Siam, etc., against the great powers.

To deny all possibility of national wars under imperialism is wrong in theory, obviously mistaken historically, and tantamount to European chauvinism in practice: we who belong to nations that oppress hundreds of millions in Europe, Africa, Asia, etc., are invited to tell the oppressed peoples that it is "impossible" for them to wage war against "our" nations!

Secondly, civil war is just as much a war as any other. He who accepts the class struggle cannot fail to accept civil wars, which in every class society are the natural, and under certain conditions inevitable, continuation, development and intensification of the class struggle. That has been confirmed by every

great revolution. To repudiate civil war, or to forget about it, is to fall into extreme opportunism and renounce the socialist revolution.

Thirdly, the victory of socialism in one country does not at one stroke eliminate all war in general. On the contrary, it presupposes wars. The development of capitalism proceeds extremely unevenly in different countries. It cannot be otherwise under commodity production. From this it follows irrefutably that socialism cannot achieve victory simultaneously *in all* countries. It will achieve victory first in one or several countries, while the others will for some time remain bourgeois or prebourgeois. This is bound to create not only friction, but a direct attempt on the part of the bourgeoisie of other countries to crush the socialist state's victorious proletariat. In such cases a war on our part would be a legitimate and just war. It would be a war for socialism, for the liberation of other nations from the bourgeoisie. Engels was perfectly right when, in his letter to Kautsky of September 12, 1881, he clearly stated that it was possible for *already victorious* socialism to wage "defensive wars." What he had in mind was defense of the victorious proletariat against the bourgeoisie of other countries.

Only after we have overthrown, finally vanquished and expropriated the bourgeoisie of the whole world, and not merely of one country, will wars become impossible. And from a scientific point of view it would be utterly wrong—and utterly unrevolutionary—for us to evade or gloss over the most important thing: crushing the resistance of the bourgeoisie—the most difficult task, and one demanding the greatest amount of fighting, in the *transition* to socialism. The "social" parsons and opportunists are always ready to build dreams of future peaceful socialism. But the very thing that distinguishes them from revolutionary social-democrats is that they refuse to think about and reflect on the fierce class struggle and class *wars* needed to achieve that beautiful future.

—LENIN, (1916), "The Military Program of the Proletarian Revolution," *Selected Works* (1967), vol. I, pp. 778-80.

TACTICS OF PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

A. PEACEFUL OR VIOLENT SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION?

QUESTION 16. *Will the peaceful abolition of private property be possible?*

Answer. It would be desirable if this could happen, and the communists would certainly be the last to oppose it. Communists know only too well that all conspiracies are not only useless but even harmful. They know all too well that revolutions are not made intentionally and arbitrarily, but that everywhere and always they have been the necessary consequence of conditions which were wholly independent of the will and direction of individual parties and entire classes. But they also see that the development of the proletariat in nearly all civilized countries has been violently suppressed, and that in this way the opponents of communism have been working toward a revolution with all their strength. If the oppressed proletariat is finally driven to revolution, then we communists will defend the interests of the proletarians with deeds as we now defend them with words.

—ENGELS, *Principles of Communism* (1847)

B. THE ROLE OF COMMUNISTS IN THE CLASS STRUGGLE

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 bourgeois supremacy, conquest of political power by the proletariat.

—MARX and ENGELS, *The Communist Manifesto* (1848),
Selected Works (1968), p. 46

C. MARXISTS AND BOURGEOIS REVOLUTIONS

The bourgeois revolution is a revolution which does not go beyond the limits of the bourgeois, *i.e.*, capitalist, social and economic system. The bourgeois revolution expresses the needs of capitalist development, and not only does it not destroy the foundations of capitalism, but, on the contrary, it widens and deepens them. This revolution therefore expresses the interests not only of the working class, but also the interests of the whole of the bourgeoisie. Since, under capitalism, the domination of the bourgeoisie over the working class is inevitable, we are entitled to say that the bourgeois revolution expresses not so much the interests of the proletariat as those of the bourgeoisie. But the idea that the bourgeois revolution does not express the interests of the proletariat is altogether absurd. This absurd idea reduces itself either to the old-fashioned Narodnik theory that the bourgeois revolution runs counter to the interests of the proletariat and that, therefore, bourgeois political liberty is of no use to us; or to anarchism, which rejects all participation of the proletariat in bourgeois politics, in the bourgeois revolution and in bourgeois parliamentarism. Theoretically, this idea ignores the elementary postulates of Marxism concerning the inevitability of capitalist development on the basis of commodity production. Marxism teaches that at a certain stage of its development a

society that is based on commodity production, and having commercial intercourse with civilized capitalist nations, inevitably takes the road of capitalism itself. Marxism has irrevocably broken with all the nonsense talked by the Narodniks and the anarchists about Russia, for instance, being able to avoid capitalist development, jump out of capitalism, or skip over it, by some means other than the class struggle on the basis and within the limits of capitalism.

All these principles of Marxism have been proved and explained in minute detail in general and with regard to Russia in particular. It follows from these principles that the idea of seeking salvation for the working class in anything save the further development of capitalism is *reactionary*. In countries like Russia, the working class suffers not so much from capitalism as from the lack of capitalist development. The working class is therefore undoubtedly interested in the widest, freest and speediest development of capitalism. The removal of all the remnants of the old order which are hampering the wide, free and speedy development of capitalism is of *absolute advantage* to the working class. The bourgeois revolution is precisely such a revolution which most resolutely sweeps away the survivals of the past, the remnants of serfdom (which include not only autocracy but monarchy as well); it is a revolution which most fully guarantees the widest, freest and speediest development of capitalism.

Therefore, the *bourgeois* revolution is in the *highest degree advantageous to the proletariat*. The bourgeois revolution is *absolutely* necessary in the interests of the proletariat. The more complete, determined and consistent the bourgeois revolution is, the more secure will the proletarian struggle against the bourgeoisie and for socialism become. Such a conclusion may appear new, or strange, or even paradoxical only to those who are ignorant of the rudiments of scientific socialism. And from this conclusion, among other things, follows the postulate that, *in a certain sense*, the bourgeois revolution is more *advantageous* to the proletariat than it is to the bourgeoisie. This postulate is undoubtedly correct in the following sense: it is to the advantage of the bourgeoisie to rely on certain remnants of the past as against the proletariat, for instance, on a monarchy, a standing army, etc. It is to the advantage of the bourgeoisie if the bourgeois revolution does not too resolutely sweep away the rem-

nants of the past, but leaves some, *i.e.*, if this revolution is not fully consistent, if it does not proceed to its logical conclusion and if it is not determined and ruthless. . . .

The very position the proletariat as a class occupies compels it to be consistently democratic. The bourgeoisie looks behind, is afraid of democratic progress which threatens to strengthen the proletariat. The proletariat has nothing to lose but its chains, but by means of democracy it has the whole world to win. Therefore, the more consistent the bourgeois revolution is in its democratic reforms the less will it limit itself to those measures which are advantageous only to the bourgeoisie. The more consistent the bourgeois revolution is, the more does it guarantee the advantages which the proletariat and the peasantry will derive from a democratic revolution.

Marxism teaches the proletarian not to keep aloof from the bourgeois revolution, not to refuse to take part in it, not to allow the leadership of the revolution to be assumed by the bourgeoisie but, on the contrary, to take a most energetic part in it, to fight resolutely for consistent proletarian democracy, to fight to carry the revolution to its completion. We cannot jump out of the bourgeois-democratic boundaries of the Russian revolution, but we can enormously extend those boundaries, and within those boundaries we can and must fight for the interests of the proletariat, for its immediate needs and for the prerequisites for training its forces for the complete victory that is to come. There are different kinds of bourgeois democracy.... He would be a fine Marxist indeed, who in a democratic revolution failed to see the difference between the degrees of democracy, between the different nature of this or that form of it, and confined himself to "clever" quips about this being "a bourgeois revolution" after all, the fruits of a "bourgeois revolution."

—LENIN, *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution* (1905), pp. 38-41.

D. THE GOALS OF THE WORKING CLASS AND THE PETTY BOURGEOISIE

The relation of the revolutionary workers' party to petty-bourgeois democracy is this: it marches together with it against the section which it aims at overthrowing, it opposes the petty bourgeois in everything by which they desire to establish themselves.

The democratic petty bourgeois, far from desiring to revolutionize all society for the revolutionary proletarians, strive for a change in social conditions by means of which existing society will be made as tolerable and comfortable as possible for them. Hence they demand above all diminution of state expenditure by restricting the bureaucracy and shifting the chief taxes on to the big landowners and bourgeois. Further, they demand the abolition of the pressure of big capital on small, through public credit institutions and laws against usury, by which means it will be possible for them and the peasants to obtain advances, on favorable conditions, from the state instead of from the capitalists; and, further, they demand the establishment of bourgeois property relations in the countryside by the complete abolition of feudalism. In order to accomplish all this, they require a democratic state constitution, whether constitutional or republican, giving a majority to them and their allies, the peasants, as well as a democratic local government which would give them control over municipal property and over a series of functions now performed by the bureaucrats.

The domination and speedy increase of capital are further to be counteracted partly by limiting the right of inheritance and partly by transferring as many works as possible to the state. As far as the workers are concerned, it remains certain above all that they are to remain wage workers as before; the democratic petty bourgeois only desire better wages and a secure existence for the workers and hope to achieve this through partial employment by the state and through charity measures, in short, they hope to bribe the workers by more or less concealed alms and to break their revolutionary force by making their position tolerable for the moment. The demands of petty-bourgeois democracy here summarized are not put forward by all of its fractions at the same time and as a whole are held in view as a definite goal by a very small section of them. The further separate persons or sections among them go, the more of these demands will they make their own, and those few who see their own program in what has been outlined above would believe that thereby they have put forward the utmost that can be demanded from the revolution. But these demands can in no wise suffice for the party of the proletariat. While the democratic petty bourgeois wish to bring the revolution to a conclusion as quickly as possible and with the achievement at most

of the above demands, it is our interest and our task to make the revolution permanent, until all more or less possessing classes have been displaced from domination, until the proletariat has conquered state power, and the association of proletarians, not only in one country but in all the dominant countries of the world, has advanced so far that competition among the proletarians of these countries has ceased and that at least the decisive productive forces are concentrated in the hands of the proletarians. For us the issue cannot be the alteration of private property but only its abolition, not the smoothing over of class antagonisms but the abolition of classes, not the improvement of existing society but the foundation of a new one.

—MARX and ENGELS, "Address to the Communist League" (1850), *Selected Works*, Vol. II (2 vol. ed.), pp. 160-61.

E. "THE FUNDAMENTAL LAW OF REVOLUTION"

The fundamental law of revolution, which has been confirmed by all revolutions, and particularly by all three Russian revolutions in the 20th century, is as follows: it is not enough for revolution that the exploited and oppressed masses should understand the impossibility of living in the old way and demand changes; what is required for revolution is that the exploiters should not be able to live and rule in the old way. Only when the "*lower classes*" *do not want* the old way and when the "*upper classes*" *cannot carry on in the old way* can revolution win. This truth may be expressed in other words: revolution is impossible without a nationwide crisis (affecting both the exploited and the exploiters). It follows that revolution requires, firstly, that a majority of the workers (or at least a majority of the class-conscious, thinking and politically active workers) should fully understand that revolution is necessary and be ready to sacrifice their lives for it; secondly, that the ruling classes should be passing through a governmental crisis which would draw even the most backward masses into politics (a symptom of every real revolution is a rapid tenfold and even hundredfold increase in the number of representatives of the toiling and oppressed masses—who have hitherto been apathetic—capable of waging the political struggle), weaken the government and make it possible for the revolutionaries to overthrow it rapidly.... Of course, without a revolutionary mood among the masses,

and without conditions favoring the growth of this mood, revolutionary tactics would never be converted into action; but we in Russia have been convinced by long, painful and bloody experience of the truth that revolutionary tactics cannot be built up on revolutionary moods alone. Tactics must be based on a sober and strictly objective estimation of *all* the class forces in a given state (and in neighboring states, and in all states the world over) as well as of the experience of revolutionary movements. Expressing one's "revolutionariness" solely by hurling abuse at parliamentary opportunism, solely by repudiating participation in parliaments, is very easy; but just because it is too easy, it is not the solution for a difficult, a very difficult, problem. It is much more difficult to create a really revolutionary parliamentary fraction in a European parliament than it was in Russia. Of course. But this is only a particular expression of the general truth that it was easy for Russia in the specific, historically very unique situation of 1917 to *start* a socialist revolution, but that it will be more difficult for Russia than for the European countries to *continue* it and consummate it. I had occasion to point this out even in the beginning of 1918, and our experience of the past two years has entirely confirmed the correctness of this view. Certain specific conditions, *viz.*, (1) the possibility of linking up the Soviet revolution with the ending (as a consequence of this revolution) of the imperialist war, which had exhausted the workers and peasants to an incredible degree; (2) the possibility of taking advantage for a certain time of the mortal conflict between two world powerful groups of imperialist robbers, who were unable to unite against their Soviet enemy; (3) the possibility of enduring a comparatively lengthy civil war, partly owing to the enormous size of the country and to the poor means of communication; (4) the existence of such a profound bourgeois-democratic revolutionary movement among the peasantry that the party of the proletariat was able to adopt the revolutionary demands of the peasant party (the Socialist-Revolutionary party, the majority of the members of which were definitely hostile to Bolshevism) and to realize them at once, thanks to the conquest of political power by the proletariat — these specific conditions do not exist in Western Europe at present; and a repetition of such or similar conditions will not come about easily. That is why, apart from a number of other

causes, it will be more difficult to *start* a socialist revolution in Western Europe than it was for us.

—LENIN, “*Left-Wing*” *Communism* (1920), pp. 66f, 46f.

F. FLEXIBILITY IN REVOLUTIONARY TACTICS

History generally, and the history of revolutions in particular, is always richer in content, more varied, more many-sided, more lively and “subtle” than even the best parties and the most class-conscious vanguards of the most advanced classes imagine. This is understandable, because even the best vanguards express the class consciousness, will, passion and imagination of tens of thousands, whereas the revolution is made, at the moment of its climax and the exertion of all human capacities, by the class consciousness, will, passion and imagination of tens of millions, spurred on by a most acute struggle of classes. From this follow two very important practical conclusions: first, that in order to fulfill its task the revolutionary class must be able to master *all* forms or sides of social activity without exception (completing, after the capture of political power, sometimes at great risk and very great danger, what it did not complete before the capture of power); second, that the revolutionary class must be ready to pass from one form to another in the quickest and most unexpected manner.

—LENIN, “*Left-Wing*” *Communism* (1920), p. 76.

G. CHANGES IN BOURGEOIS TACTICS

Bourgeois ideologists, liberals and democrats, not understanding Marxism, and not understanding the modern labor movement, are constantly leaping from one helpless extreme to another. At one time they explain the whole matter by asserting that evil-minded persons are “inciting” class against class—at another they console themselves with the assertion that the workers’ party is “a peaceful party of reform.” Both anarcho-syndicalism and reformism—which seize upon *one* aspect of the labor movement, which elevate one-sidedness to a theory, and which declare such tendencies or features of this movement as constitute a specific peculiarity of a given period, of given conditions of working-class activity, to be mutually exclusive—must be regarded as a direct product of this bourgeois world outlook

and its influence. But real life, real history, *includes* these different tendencies, just as life and development in nature include both slow evolution and swift leaps, breaks in continuity.

The revisionists regard all reflections on "leaps" and on the fundamental antithesis between the labor movement and the whole of the old society as mere phrase-mongering. They regard reforms as a partial realization of socialism. The anarcho-syndicalist rejects "petty work," especially the utilization of the parliamentary platform. As a matter of fact, these latter tactics amount to waiting for the "great days" and to an inability to muster the forces which create great events. Both hinder the most important and most essential thing, namely, the concentration of the workers into big, powerful and properly functioning organizations capable of functioning properly under *all* circumstances, organizations permeated with the spirit of the class struggle, clearly realizing their aims and trained in the true Marxist world outlook. . . .

Lastly, an extremely important cause that gives rise to differences among the participants in the labor movement lies in the changes in tactics of the ruling classes in general, and of the bourgeoisie in particular. If the tactics of the bourgeoisie were always the same, or at least similar, the working class would rapidly learn to reply to them by tactics that were also always the same or similar. But as a matter of fact, the bourgeoisie in all countries inevitably evolves two systems of rule, two methods of fighting for its interests and of retaining its rule, and these methods at times alternate and at times are interwoven one with another in various combinations. They are, firstly, the method of force, the method which rejects all concessions to the labor movement, the method of supporting all the old and obsolete institutions, the method of irreconcilably rejecting reforms. Such is the nature of the conservative policy, which in Western Europe is becoming less and less a policy of the land-owning classes and more and more one of the varieties of bourgeois policy in general. The second method is the method of "liberalism," which takes steps towards the development of political rights, towards reforms, concessions and so on.

The bourgeoisie passes from one method to the other not in accordance with the malicious design of individuals, and not fortuitously, but owing to the fundamental contradictions of its

own position. Normal capitalist society cannot develop successfully without a firmly established representative system and without the enjoyment of certain political rights by the population, which is bound to be distinguished by its relatively high "cultural" demands. This demand for a certain minimum of culture is created by the conditions of the capitalist mode of production itself, with its high technique, complexity, flexibility, mobility, rapidity of development of world competition, etc. The oscillations in the tactics of the bourgeoisie, the passage from the system of force to the system of ostensible concessions, are, consequently, peculiar to the history of all European countries during the last half-century, while, at the same time, various countries chiefly develop the application of one method or the other at definite periods. For instance, England in the 60s and 70s was a classical country of "liberal" bourgeois policy, Germany in the 70s and 80s adhered to the method of force, and so on.

—LENIN, "Differences in the European Labor Movement" (1910), *Marx-Engels-Marxism*, pp. 289-92.

H. DIFFICULTIES OF SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

Capitalism inevitably bequeaths to socialism, on the one hand, old trade and craft distinctions among the workers, distinctions evolved in the course of centuries, and, on the other, trade unions which only very slowly, in the course of years and years, can and will develop into broader, industrial unions with less of the craft union about them (embracing whole industries, and not only crafts, trades and occupations), and later proceed, through these industrial unions, to the abolition of the division of labor among people, to the education, schooling and training of people with *an all round development and an all round training*, people *able to do everything*. Communism is marching and must march towards this goal, and *will reach it*, but only after very many years. To attempt in practice today to anticipate this future result of a fully developed, fully stabilized and formed, fully expanded and mature communism would be like trying to teach higher mathematics to a four-year-old child.

We can (and must) begin to build socialism not with imaginary human material, not with human material invented by us, but with the human material bequeathed to us by capitalism. That

is very "difficult," it goes without saying, but no other approach to this task is serious enough to warrant discussion.

The trade unions were a tremendous progressive step for the working class at the beginning of the development of capitalism, inasmuch as they represented a transition from the disunity and helplessness of the workers to the *rudiments* of class organization. When the *highest* form of proletarian class organization began to arise, *viz.*, the *revolutionary party of the proletariat* (which will not deserve the name until it learns to bind the leaders with the class and the masses into one single indissoluble whole), the trade unions inevitably began to reveal *certain* reactionary features, a certain craft narrowness, a certain tendency to be nonpolitical, a certain inertness, etc. But the development of the proletariat did not, and could not, proceed anywhere in the world otherwise than through the trade unions, through their interaction with the party of the working class. The conquest of political power by the proletariat is a gigantic forward step for the proletariat as a class, and the Party must more than ever, and not merely in the old way but in a new way, educate and guide the trade unions, at the same time not forgetting that they are and will long remain an indispensable "school of communism" and a preparatory school for training the proletarians to exercise their dictatorship, an indispensable organization of the workers for the gradual transfer of the management of the whole economic life of the country to the working *class* (and not to the separate trades), and later to all the toilers....

To carry on a war for the overthrow of the international bourgeoisie, a war which is a hundred times more difficult, prolonged and complicated than the most stubborn of ordinary wars between states, and to refuse beforehand to maneuver, to utilize the conflict of interests (even though temporary) among one's enemies, to refuse to temporize and compromise with possible (even though transitory, unstable, vacillating and conditional) allies—is not this ridiculous in the extreme? Is it not as though, when making a difficult ascent of an unexplored and hitherto inaccessible mountain, we were to refuse beforehand ever to move in zigzags, ever to retrace our steps, ever to abandon the course once selected to try others? And yet people who are so ignorant and inexperienced (if youth were the explanation, it would not be so bad; young people are ordained by God

himself to talk such nonsense for a period) could meet with the support—whether direct or indirect, open or covert, whole or partial, does not matter—of certain members of the Dutch Communist Party!!

After the first socialist revolution of the proletariat, after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie in one country, the proletariat of that country *for a long time* remains *weaker* than the bourgeoisie, simply because of the latter's extensive international connections, and also because of the spontaneous and continuous restoration and regeneration of capitalism and the bourgeoisie by the small commodity producers of the country which has overthrown the bourgeoisie. The more powerful enemy can be conquered only by exerting the utmost effort, and by *necessarily*, thoroughly, carefully, attentively and skillfully taking advantage of every, even the smallest, "rift" among the enemies, of every antagonism of interest among the bourgeoisie of the various countries and among the various groups or types of bourgeoisie within the various countries, by taking advantage of every, even the smallest, opportunity of gaining a mass ally, even though this ally be temporary, vacillating, unstable, unreliable and conditional. Those who do not understand this do not understand even a particle of Marxism, or of scientific, modern socialism *in general*. Those who have not proved by *deeds* over a fairly considerable period of time, and in fairly varied political situations, their ability to apply this truth in practice have not yet learned to assist the revolutionary class in its struggle for the emancipation of toiling humanity from the exploiters. And this applies equally to the period before and to the period after the conquest of political power by the proletariat.

Our theory is not a dogma but a *guide to action*, said Marx and Engels...

—LENIN, "*Left-Wing*" *Communism* (1920), pp. 34f, 52f.

I. FORMS OF REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE: PARTISAN WARFARE

What are the fundamental demands which every Marxist should make of an examination of the question of the forms of struggle? In the first place, Marxism differs from all primitive forms of socialism by the fact that it does not bind the move-

ment to any one particular form of struggle; and it does not "concoct" them, but only generalizes, organizes, gives conscious expression to those forms of struggle of the revolutionary classes which arise of themselves in the course of the movement. Absolutely hostile to all abstract formulas and to all doctrinaire recipes, Marxism demands an attentive attitude to the *mass* struggle in progress, which, as the movement develops, as the class consciousness of the masses grows, as economic and political crises become acute, continually gives rise to new and more varied methods of defense and offense. Marxism, therefore, positively does not reject any form of struggle. Under no circumstances does Marxism confine itself to the forms of struggle that are possible and that exist at the given moment only, recognizing as it does that new forms of struggle, unknown to the participants of the given period, *inevitably* arise as the given social situation changes. In this respect Marxism *learns*, if we may so express it, from mass practice, and makes no claim whatever to *teach* the masses forms of struggle invented by "systematizers" in the seclusion of their studies. We know—said Kautsky, for instance, when examining the forms of social revolution—that the coming crisis will introduce new forms of struggle that we are now unable to foresee.

In the second place, Marxism demands an absolutely *historical* examination of the question of the forms of struggle. To treat the question apart from the concrete historical situation is to betray ignorance of the very rudiments of dialectical materialism. At different stages of economic evolution, depending on differences in political, national-cultural, living and other conditions, different forms of struggle come to the fore and become the principal forms of struggle; and in connection with this, the secondary, auxiliary forms of struggle undergo change in their turn. To attempt to answer yes or no to the question whether any particular means of struggle should be used, without making a detailed examination of the concrete situation of the given movement at the given stage of its development, means completely to abandon the Marxist position.

These are the two principal theoretical precepts by which we must be guided. The history of Marxism in Western Europe provides an infinite number of examples corroborating what has been said. European social-democracy at the present time

regards parliamentarism and the trade union movement as the principal forms of struggle; it recognized insurrection in the past, and is quite prepared to recognize it, should conditions change, in the future—despite the opinion of bourgeois liberals . . . Social-democracy in the 70s rejected the general strike as a social panacea, as a means of overthrowing the bourgeoisie at one stroke by nonpolitical means—but social-democracy fully recognizes the mass political strike (especially after the experience of Russia in 1905) as *one* of the methods of struggle essential under *certain* conditions. Social-democracy recognized street barricade fighting in the 40s, rejected it for definite reasons at the end of the 19th century, and expressed complete readiness to revise the latter view and to admit the expediency of barricade fighting after the experience of Moscow. . . .

You will find that national oppression or antagonism explain nothing, because they have always existed in the western border regions, whereas partisan warfare has been engendered only by the present historical period. There are many places where there is national oppression and antagonism, but no partisan struggle, which sometimes develops where there is no national oppression whatever. A concrete analysis of the question will show that it is not a matter of national oppression, but of conditions of insurrection. Partisan warfare is an inevitable form of struggle at a time when the mass movement has actually reached the point of insurrection and when fairly large intervals occur between the “big engagements” in the civil war. . . .

In a period of civil war the ideal party of the proletariat is a *fighting party*. This is absolutely incontrovertible. We are quite prepared to grant that it is possible to argue and to prove the *inexpediency* from the standpoint of civil war of particular forms of civil war at any particular moment. We fully admit criticism of diverse forms of civil war from the standpoint of *military expediency* and absolutely agree that in *this* question it is the social-democratic practical workers in each particular locality who must have the deciding say. But we absolutely demand in the name of the principles of Marxism that an analysis of the conditions of civil war should not be evaded by hackneyed and stereotyped talk about anarchism, Blanquism and terrorism. . . .

The argument that partisan warfare disorganizes the movement must be regarded critically. *Every* new form of struggle,

accompanied as it is by new dangers and new sacrifices, inevitably "disorganizes" organizations which are unprepared for this new form of struggle. Our old propagandist circles were disorganized by recourse to methods of agitation. Our committees were subsequently disorganized by recourse to demonstrations. Every military action in any war to a certain extent disorganizes the ranks of the fighters. But this does not mean that one must not fight. It means that one must *learn* to fight. That is all.

When I see social-democrats proudly and smugly declaring "we are not anarchists, thieves, robbers, we are superior to all this, we reject partisan warfare,"—I ask myself: do these people realize what they are saying? Armed collisions and conflicts between the Black-Hundred government and the population are taking place all over the country. This is an absolutely inevitable phenomenon at the present stage of development of the revolution. The population is spontaneously and in an unorganized way—and for that very reason often in unfortunate and *undesirable* forms—reacting to this phenomenon also by armed conflicts and attacks. I can understand us refraining from party leadership of *this* spontaneous struggle in a particular place or at a particular time because of the weakness and unpreparedness of our organization. I realize that this question must be settled by the local practical workers, and that the remolding of weak and unprepared organizations is no easy matter. But when I see a social-democratic theoretician or publicist not displaying regret over this unpreparedness, but rather a proud smugness and a self-exalted tendency to repeat phrases learned by rote in early youth about anarchism, Blanquism and terrorism, I am hurt by this degradation of the most revolutionary doctrine in the world.

It is said that partisan warfare approximates the class-conscious proletarian to the position of a degraded, drunken vagabond. That is true. But it only means that the party of the proletariat can never regard partisan warfare as the only, or even as the chief, method of struggle; it means that this method must be subordinated to other methods, that it must be commensurate with the chief methods of warfare, and must be ennobled by the enlightening and organizing influence of socialism. And without this *latter* condition, *every*, positively every, method of struggle in bourgeois society approximates the proletariat to the

position of the various nonproletarian strata above and below it and, if left to the spontaneous course of events, becomes frayed, corrupted and prostituted. Strikes, if left to the spontaneous course of events, become corrupted into "alliances"—agreements between the workers and the masters *against* the interests of the consumers. Parliament becomes corrupted into a brothel, where a gang of bourgeois politicians barter wholesale and retail "national freedom," "liberalism," "democracy," republicanism, anticlericalism, socialism and all other salable wares. A newspaper becomes corrupted into a public pimp, into a means of corrupting the masses, of pandering to the low instincts of the mob, and so on and so forth. Social-democracy knows of no universal methods of struggle, such as would shut off the proletariat by a Chinese wall from the strata standing slightly above or slightly below it. At different periods social-democracy applies different methods, *always* qualifying the choice of them by *strictly* defined ideological and organizational conditions.

—LENIN, "Partisan Warfare" (1906), *Marx-Engels-Marxism*, pp. 186-88, 192-87.

[5]

LABOR OPPORTUNISM

A. FORMATION OF THE ENGLISH LABOR ARISTOCRACY

That the condition [of the English trade unions] has remarkably improved since 1848 there can be no doubt, and the best proof of this is in the fact, that for more than fifteen years not only have their employers been with them, but they with their employers, upon exceedingly good terms. They form an aristocracy among the working-class; they have succeeded in enforcing for themselves a relatively comfortable position, and they accept it as final. . . . They are very nice people nowadays to deal with, for any sensible capitalist in particular and for the whole capitalist class in general.

—ENGELS, "Preface to the Second Edition" (1892), *The Condition of the Working Class in England*.

B. ENGLISH WORKERS AND COLONIAL POLICY

You asks me what the English workers think about colonial policy. Well, exactly the same as they think about politics in general. . . . There is no workers' party here, there are only Conservatives and Liberal-Radicals, and the workers gaily share the feast of England's monopoly of the world market and the colonies.

— ENGELS, Letter to Kautsky (1882), *Selected Correspondence of Marx and Engels*, p. 399.

C. IMPERIALIST BASE OF THE ENGLISH LABOR ARISTOCRACY

The English proletariat is becoming more and more bourgeois, so that this most bourgeois of all nations is apparently aiming ultimately at the possession of a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat *as well as* a bourgeoisie. For a nation which exploits the whole world this is of course to a certain extent justifiable.

— ENGELS, Letter to Marx (1858), *Selected Correspondence of Marx and Engels*, pp. 115f.

D. LABOR OPPORTUNISM IN THE EPOCH OF IMPERIALISM

The bourgeoisie of a "Great" imperialist Power is *economically able* to bribe the upper strata of *its* workers, devoting one or two hundred million francs a year for this purpose, because its superprofits probably amount to a billion. The question as to how this little sop is distributed among the Labor Ministers, the "labor representatives" (remember Engels' splendid analysis of this term), the labor members of War Industries Committees, the labor officials, the workers who are organized in craft unions, salaried employees, etc., etc., is a secondary question.

Between 1848 and 1868, partly even later, England alone enjoyed a monopoly; *that is why* opportunism could be victorious there for decades. There were *no other* countries with very rich colonies, or with an industrial monopoly.

The last third of the 19th century witnessed the transition to the new imperialist epoch. Monopoly is enjoyed by finance capital *not* in one, but in some, very few, Great Powers. (In Japan and Russia, the monopoly of military power, vast territories, or special facilities for robbing minority nationalities, China, etc.,

partly supplements and partly takes the place of the monopoly of modern, up-to-date finance capital.) Because of this difference England's monopoly *could* remain *unchallenged* for decades. The monopoly of modern finance capital is furiously challenged; the epoch of imperialist wars has begun. Formerly, the working class of *one* country could be bribed and corrupted for decades. At the present time this is improbable, perhaps even impossible. On the other hand, however, *every* imperialist "Great" Power can and does bribe *smaller* (compared with England in 1848-1868) strata of the "labor aristocracy." Formerly a "*bourgeois labor party*," to use Engels' remarkably profound expression, could be formed only in one country, because that country alone enjoyed a monopoly, and enjoyed it for a long period. Now the "*bourgeois labor party*" is *inevitable* and typical for *all* the imperialist countries; but in view of the desperate struggle that is being waged for the division of the booty, it is improbable that such a party will remain victorious for any length of time in a number of countries; for while trusts, the financial oligarchy, high prices, etc., *permit* the bribing of small upper strata, they at the same time oppress, crush, ruin and torture the *masses* of the proletariat and the semi-proletariat more than ever.

On the one hand, there is the tendency of the bourgeoisie and the opportunists to convert a handful of the richest, privileged nations into "eternal" parasites on the body of the rest of mankind, to "rest on the laurels" of exploitation of Negroes, Hindus, etc., by keeping them in subjection with the aid of the excellent technique of destruction of modern militarism. On the other hand, there is the tendency of the *masses*, who are more oppressed than formerly and who bear the brunt of the suffering caused by imperialist wars, to throw off that yoke, to overthrow the bourgeoisie. Henceforth, the history of the labor movement will inevitably unfold itself in the struggle between these two tendencies: for the first tendency is not accidental, it is "founded" on economics. The bourgeoisie has already begotten, nurtured, secured for itself "bourgeois labor parties" of social chauvinists in *all* countries. . . .

On the economic foundation mentioned, the political institutions of modern capitalism — the press, parliament, trade unions, congresses, etc. — created *political* privileges and sops for the respectful, meek, reformist and patriotic salaried employees and

workers corresponding to the economic privileges and sops. Lucrative and easy berths in the Ministries or War Industries Committees, in parliament and on various commissions, on the editorial staffs of "respectable" legal newspapers, or on management boards of no less respectable and "bourgeois law-abiding" trade unions—these are the means with which the imperialist bourgeoisie attracts and rewards the representatives and adherents of the "bourgeois labor parties."

The mechanics of political democracy work in the same direction. It would not do to dispense with elections in our age; the masses cannot be dispensed with, and in this epoch of book printing and parliamentarism it is *impossible* to make the masses follow you without a widely ramified, systematically managed, well-equipped system of flattery, lies and fraud, without juggling with fashionable and popular catchwords, without scattering right and left promises of all kinds of reforms and blessings for the workers, if only they abandon the revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. . . .

Certain individuals among the present social-chauvinist leaders may return to the proletariat; but the social chauvinist, or (what is the same thing) opportunist *trend* can neither disappear nor "return" to the revolutionary proletariat. Wherever Marxism is popular among the workers, this political trend, this "bourgeois labor party" will swear by the name of Marx. You cannot prevent it from doing so any more than a trading firm can be prevented from using any label, any sign, any advertisement it pleases. It has always happened in history that after the death of revolutionary leaders who were popular among the oppressed classes, their enemies attempted to assume their names in order to deceive the oppressed classes.

The fact is that as a political phenomenon "bourgeois labor parties" have already been formed in *all* the advanced capitalist countries, and unless a determined, ruthless struggle all along the line is conducted against these parties—or, what is the same thing, against these groups, trends, etc.—it is useless talking about the struggle against imperialism, about Marxism, or about the socialist labor movement. . . .

One of the most widespread sophisms of Kautskyism is its reference to the "masses." They say: We do not want to break away from the masses and mass organizations! But ponder over how

Engels approached this question. In the 19th century the "mass organizations" of the English trade unions were on the side of the bourgeois labor party; but Marx and Engels did not compromise with it on those grounds, but exposed it. They did not forget, first, that the trade union organizations directly embraced a *minority of the proletariat*. In England then and in Germany now, not more than one-fifth of the proletariat was organized. It cannot be seriously believed that it is possible to organize the majority of the proletariat under capitalism. Second—and this is the main point—it is not so much a question of how many members there are in an organization, as of the real objective meaning of its policy: does this policy represent the masses? Does it serve the masses, i.e., the emancipation of the masses from capitalism, or does it represent the interests of the minority, its conciliation with capitalism? The latter was true for England of the 19th century; it is true for Germany, etc., today.

Engels draws a distinction between the "bourgeois labor party" of the *old* trade unions, a privileged minority, and the "*lower mass*," the real majority. Engels appeals to the latter, which is *not* infected with "bourgeois respectability." This is the essence of Marxism tactics!

We cannot—nor can anybody else—calculate exactly what portion of the proletariat is following and will follow the social-chauvinists and opportunists. This will only be revealed by the struggle, it will be definitely decided only by the socialist revolution. But we know definitely that the "defenders of the fatherland" in the imperialist war *represent* only a minority. And it is our duty, therefore, if we wish to remain Socialists, to go down *lower* and *deeper*, to the real masses: this is the whole meaning and the whole content of the struggle against opportunism. Exposing the fact that the opportunists and social-chauvinists really betray and sell the interests of the masses, that they defend the temporary privileges of a minority of the workers, that they are the conduits of bourgeois ideas and influence, that in practice they are allies and agents of the bourgeoisie, we thereby teach the masses to understand their real political interests, to fight for socialism and the revolution throughout the long and painful vicissitudes of imperialist wars and imperialist armistices.

To explain to the masses the inevitability and the necessity of breaking with opportunism, to educate them for revolution by a

ruthless struggle against opportunism, to utilize the experiences of the war for the purpose of unmasking the utter vileness of national-liberal labor politics and not to cover them up—this is the only Marxian line to be pursued in the international labor movement.

—LENIN, “Imperialism and the Split in the Socialist Movement” (1916), *Collected Works*, vol. XIX (1942), pp. 346-51.

[6]

THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT
AND THE PROLETARIAT

A. THE MARXIAN POSITION ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION

Throughout the world, the period of the final victory of capitalism over feudalism has been linked up with national movements. For the complete victory of commodity production, the bourgeoisie must capture the home market, and there must be politically united territories whose population speak a single language, with all obstacles to the development of that language and to its consolidation in literature eliminated. Therein is the economic foundation of national movements. Language is the most important means of human intercourse. Unity and unimpeded development of language are the most important conditions for genuinely free and extensive commerce on a scale commensurate with modern capitalism, for a free and broad grouping of the population in all its various classes and, lastly, for the establishment of a close connection between the market and each and every proprietor, big or little, and between seller and buyer.

Therefore, the tendency of every national movement is towards the formation of *national states*, under which these requirements of modern capitalism are best satisfied. The most profound economic factors drive towards this goal, and, therefore, for the whole of Western Europe, nay, for the entire civilized world, the national state is *typical* and normal for the capitalist period.

Consequently, if we want to grasp the meaning of self-determination of nations, not by juggling with legal definitions, or

“inventing” abstract definitions, but by examining the historico-economic conditions of the national movements, we must inevitably reach the conclusion that the self-determination of nations means the political separation of these nations from alien national bodies, and the formation of an independent national state. . . .

There is no doubt that the greater part of Asia, the most densely populated continent, consists either of colonies of the “Great Powers,” or of states that are extremely dependent and oppressed as nations. But does this commonly known circumstance in any way shake the undoubted fact that in Asia itself the conditions for the most complete development of commodity production and the freest, widest and speediest growth of capitalism have been created only in Japan, *i.e.*, only in an independent national state? The latter is a bourgeois state, and for that reason has itself begun to oppress other nations and to enslave colonies. We cannot say whether Asia will have had time to develop into a system of independent national states, like Europe, before the collapse of capitalism, but it remains an undisputed fact that capitalism, having awakened Asia, has called forth national movements everywhere in that continent, too; that the tendency of these movements is towards the creation of national states in Asia; that it is such states that ensure the best conditions for the development of capitalism. . . .

The categorical requirement of Marxist theory in investigating any social question is that it be examined within *definite* historical limits, and, if it refers to a particular country (*e.g.*, the national program for a given country), that account be taken of the specific features distinguishing that country from others in the same historical epoch.

What does this categorical requirement of Marxism imply in its application to the question under discussion?

First of all, it implies that a clear distinction must be drawn between the two periods of capitalism, which differ radically from each other as far as the national movement is concerned. On the one hand, there is the period of the collapse of feudalism and absolutism, the period of the formation of the bourgeois-democratic society and state, when the national movements for the first time become mass movements and in one way or another draw *all* classes of the population into politics through the press,

participation in representative institutions, etc. On the other hand, there is the period of fully formed capitalist states with a long established constitutional regime and a highly developed antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie—a period that may be called the eve of capitalism's downfall.

The typical features of the first period are: the awakening of national movements and the drawing of the peasants, the most numerous and the most sluggish section of the population, into these movements, in connection with the struggle for political liberty in general, and for the rights of the nation in particular. Typical features of the second period are: the absence of mass bourgeois-democratic movements and the fact that developed capitalism, in bringing closer together nations that have already been fully drawn into commercial intercourse, and causing them to intermingle to an increasing degree, brings the antagonism between internationally united capital and the international working-class movement into the forefront.

Of course, the two periods are not walled off from each other; they are connected by numerous transitional links, the various countries differing from each other in the rapidity of their national development, in the national makeup and distribution of their population, and so on. There can be no question of the Marxists of any country drawing up their national program without taking into account all these general historical and concrete state conditions. . . .

The epoch of bourgeois-democratic revolutions in Western, continental Europe, embraces a fairly definite period, approximately between 1789 and 1871. This was precisely the period of national movements and the creation of national states. When this period drew to a close, Western Europe had been transformed into a settled system of bourgeois states, which, as a general rule, were nationally uniform states. Therefore, to seek the right to self-determination in the program of West-European socialists at this time of day is to betray one's ignorance of the ABC of Marxism.

In Eastern Europe and Asia the period of bourgeois-democratic revolutions did not begin until 1905. The revolutions in Russia, Persia, Turkey and China, the Balkan wars—such is the chain of world events of our period in our "Orient." And only a blind man could fail to see in this chain of events the awakening

of a *whole series* of bourgeois-democratic national movements which strive to create nationally independent and nationally uniform states. It is precisely and solely because Russia and the neighboring countries are passing through this period that we must have a clause in our program on the right of nations to self-determination. . . .

The bourgeoisie, which naturally assumes the leadership at the start of every national movement, says that support for all national aspirations is practical. However, the proletariat's policy in the national question (as in all others) supports the bourgeoisie only in a certain direction, but it never coincides with the bourgeoisie's policy. The working class supports the bourgeoisie only in order to secure national peace (which the bourgeoisie cannot bring about completely and which can be achieved only with *complete* democracy), in order to secure equal rights and to create the best conditions for the class struggle. Therefore, it is *in opposition to the practicality* of the bourgeoisie that the proletarians advance their *principles* in the national question; they always give the bourgeoisie *only conditional* support. What every bourgeoisie is out for in the national question is either privileges for its *own* nation, or exceptional advantages for it; this is called being "practical." The proletariat is opposed to all privileges, to all exclusiveness. To demand that it should be "practical" means following the lead of the bourgeoisie, falling into opportunism.

The demand for a "yes" or "no" reply to the question of secession in the case of every nation may seem a very "practical" one. In reality it is absurd; it is metaphysical in theory, while in practice it leads to subordinating the proletariat to the bourgeoisie's policy. The bourgeoisie always places its national demands in the forefront, and does so in categorical fashion. With the proletariat, however, these demands are subordinated to the interests of the class struggle. Theoretically, you cannot say in advance whether the bourgeois-democratic revolution will end in a given nation seceding from another nation, or in its equality with the latter; *in either case*, the important thing for the proletariat is to ensure the development of its class. For the bourgeoisie it is important to hamper this development by pushing the aims of its "own" nation before those of the proletariat. That is why the proletariat confines itself, so to speak, to the

negative demand for recognition of the *right* to self-determination, without giving guarantees to any nation, and without undertaking to give *anything at the expense* of another nation. . . .

To the workers the important thing is to distinguish the principles of the two trends. In so far as the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation fights the oppressor, we are always, in every case, and more strongly than anyone else, in favor, for we are the staunchest and the most consistent enemies of oppression. But in so far as the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation stands for *its own* bourgeois nationalism, we stand against. We fight against the privileges and violence of the oppressor nation, and do not in any way condone strivings for privileges on the part of the oppressed nation.

—LENIN, “The Right of Nations to Self-Determination,” (1914), *National Liberation, Socialism and Imperialism*, pp. 46f, 49-52, 56, 59f.

B. COLONIAL REVOLUTIONS AND THE WORLD SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

It is becoming quite clear that the socialist revolution which is impending for the whole world will not be merely the victory of the proletariat of each country over its own bourgeoisie. That would be possible if revolutions came easily and swiftly. We know that the imperialists will not allow this, that all countries are armed against their domestic Bolshevism and that their one thought is how to defeat Bolshevism at home. That is why in every country a civil war is brewing in which the old socialist compromisers are enlisted on the side of the bourgeoisie. Hence, the socialist revolution will not be solely, or chiefly, a struggle of the revolutionary proletarians in each country against their bourgeoisie—no, it will be a struggle of all the imperialist-oppressed colonies and countries, of all dependent countries, against international imperialism. Characterizing the approach of the world social revolution in the party program we adopted last March, we said that the civil war of the working people against the imperialists and exploiters in all the advanced countries is beginning to be combined with national wars against international imperialism. That is confirmed by the course of the revolution, and will be more and more confirmed as time goes on. It will be the same in the East.

We know that in the East the masses will rise as independent participants, as builders of a new life, because hundreds of millions of the people belong to dependent, underprivileged nations, which until now have been objects of international imperialist policy, and have only existed as material to fertilize capitalist culture and civilization. And when they talk of handing out mandates for colonies, we know very well that it means handing out mandates for spoliation and plunder — handing out to an insignificant section of the world's population the right to exploit the majority of the population of the globe. That majority, which up till then had been completely outside the orbit of historical progress, because it could not constitute an independent revolutionary force, ceased, as we know, to play such a passive role at the beginning of the twentieth century. We know that 1905 was followed by revolutions in Turkey, Persia and China, and that a revolutionary movement developed in India. The imperialist war likewise contributed to the growth of the revolutionary movement, because the European imperialists had to enlist whole colonial regiments in their struggle. The imperialist war aroused the East also and drew its peoples into international politics. Britain and France armed colonial peoples and helped them to familiarize themselves with military technique and up-to-date machines. That knowledge they will use against the imperialist gentry. The period of the awakening of the East in the contemporary revolution is being succeeded by a period in which all the Eastern peoples will participate in deciding the destiny of the whole world, so as not to be simply objects of the enrichment of others. The peoples of the East are becoming alive to the need for practical action, the need for every nation to take part in shaping the destiny of all mankind.

That is why I think that in the history of the development of the world revolution — which, judging by its beginning, will continue for many years and will demand much effort — that in the revolutionary struggle, in the revolutionary movement you will be called upon to play a big part and to merge with our struggle against international imperialism. Your participation in the international revolution will confront you with a complicated and difficult task, the accomplishment of which will serve as the foundation for our common success, because here the majority of the people for the first time begin to act independently

and will be an active factor in the fight to overthrow international imperialism.

Most of the Eastern peoples are in a worse position than the most backward country in Europe—Russia. But in our struggle against feudal survivals and capitalism, we succeeded in uniting the peasants and workers of Russia; and it was because the peasants and workers united against capitalism and feudalism that our victory was so easy. Here contact with the peoples of the East is particularly important, because the majority of the Eastern peoples are typical representatives of the working people—not workers who have passed through the school of capitalist factories, but typical representatives of the working and exploited peasant masses who are victims of medieval oppression. The Russian revolution showed how the proletarians, after defeating capitalism and uniting with the vast diffuse mass of working peasants, rose up victoriously against medieval oppression. Our Soviet Republic must now muster all the awakening peoples of the East and, together with them, wage a struggle against international imperialism.

In this respect you are confronted with a task which has not previously confronted the communists of the world: relying upon the general theory and practice of communism, you must adapt yourselves to specific conditions such as do not exist in the European countries; you must be able to apply that theory and practice to conditions in which the bulk of the population are peasants, and in which the task is to wage a struggle against medieval survivals and not against capitalism. That is a difficult and specific task, but a very thankful one, because masses that have taken no part in the struggle up to now are being drawn into it, and also because the organization of communist cells in the East gives you an opportunity to maintain the closest contact with the Third International. You must find specific forms for this alliance of the foremost proletarians of the world with the laboring and exploited masses of the East whose conditions are in many cases medieval. We have accomplished on a small scale in our country what you will do on a big scale and in big countries. And that latter task you will, I hope, perform with success. Thanks to the communist organizations in the East, of which you here are the representatives, you have contact with the advanced revolutionary proletariat. Your task

is to continue to ensure that communist propaganda is carried on in every country in a language the people understand.

—LENIN, “Address to the Second All-Russia Congress of Communist Organizations of the Peoples of the East, November 22, 1919,” *Selected Works* (1967), vol. III, pp. 290-92.

[7]

THE BUILDING OF SOCIALISM

A. THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE PRODUCTS OF LABOR UNDER SOCIALISM AND UNDER COMMUNISM

“The emancipation of labor demands the promotion of the instruments of labor to the common property of society, and the cooperative regulation of the total labor with equitable distribution of the proceeds of labor.”*

“Promotion of the instruments of labor to the common property” ought obviously to read, their “conversion into the common property,” but this only in passing.

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

The “proceeds of labor” is a loose notion which Lassalle has put in the place of definite economic conceptions.

What is “equitable distribution”?

Do not the bourgeois assert that the present-day distribution is “equitable”? And is it not, in fact, the only “equitable” distribution on the basis of the present-day mode of production? Are economic relations regulated by legal conceptions or do not, on

*This quotation and the others analyzed by Marx in this selection are from the Program of the Congress of Gotha, 1875, at which the two wings of German socialism united to form the German Social-Democratic Party. The dominant ideas in the program were those of the followers of Ferdinand Lassalle, a non-Marxist labor and socialist leader. When Marx saw a draft of the program he wrote to his friend, Wilhelm Bracke, a member of the Party Committee, enclosing his critical notes, now known as the *Critique of the Gotha Program*.

the contrary, legal relations arise from economic ones? Have not also the socialist sectarians the most varied notions about "equitable" distribution?

To understand what idea is meant in this connection by the phrase "equitable distribution," we must take the first paragraph and this one together. The latter implies a society wherein "the instruments of labor are common property, and the total labor is cooperatively regulated," and from the first paragraph we learn that "the proceeds of labor belong undiminished with equal rights to all members of society."

"To all members of society"? To those who do not work as well? What remains then of the "undiminished proceeds of labor"? 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" Lassalleian "proceeds of labor."

Let us take first of all the words "proceeds of labor" in the sense of the product of labor, then the cooperative proceeds of labor are the *total social product*.

From this is then to be deducted: *First*, cover for replacement of the means of production used up; *Secondly*, additional portion for expansion of production; *Thirdly*, reserve or insurance fund to provide against misadventures, disturbances through natural events, etc.

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

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

Before this is divided among the individuals, there has to be deducted 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 destined for the communal satisfaction of needs, such as schools, health services, etc.

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

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

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

The "undiminished proceeds of labor" have already quietly 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 "undiminished proceeds of labor" has disappeared, so now does the phrase "proceeds of labor" disappear altogether.

Within the cooperative society based on common ownership of the means of production, the producers do not exchange their products; just as little does the labor 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 labor no longer exists in an indirect fashion but directly as a component part of the total labor. The phrase "proceeds of labor," objectionable even 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, 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 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 amount of labor. For example, the social working day consists of the sum of the individual labor hours; the individual labor time of the individual producer is the part of the social labor day contributed by him, his share in it. He receives a certificate from society that he has furnished such and such an amount of labor (after deducting

his labor for the common fund), and with this certificate he draws from the social stock of means of consumption as much as the same amount of labor costs. The same amount of labor 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 labor, and because, on the other hand, nothing can pass into 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, so much labor in one form is exchanged for an equal amount of labor in another form.

Hence, *equal right* here is still in principle—*bourgeois right*, although principles and practice are no longer in conflict, 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 stigmatized by a bourgeois limitation. The right of the producers is *proportional* to the labor they supply; the equality consists in the fact that measurement is made with an *equal standard*, labor.

But one man is superior to another physically or mentally and so supplies more labor in the same time, or can labor for a longer time; and labor, to serve as a measure, must be defined by its duration or intensity, otherwise it ceases to be a standard of measurable by an equal standard in so far as they are brought labor. It recognizes no class differences, because everyone is only a worker like everyone else; but it tacitly recognizes 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 only consist in the application of an equal standard; but unequal individuals (and they would not be different individuals if they were not unequal) are only measurable by an equal standard in so far as they are brought under an equal point of view, are taken from one *definite* side only, *e.g.*, in the present case are regarded *only as workers*, and nothing more seen in them, everything else being ignored. Fur-

ther, one worker is married, another not; one has more children than another and so on and so forth. Thus with an equal output, 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 the cultural development thereby determined.

In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of individuals under division of labor, and therewith also the antithesis between mental and physical labor, has vanished; after labor, from a mere means of life, has itself become the prime necessity of life; after the productive forces have also increased with the all round development of the individual, and all the springs of cooperative wealth flow more abundantly—only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be fully left behind 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 labor” on the one hand, and with “equal right” and “equitable 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 rubbishy phrases, while on the other, perverting the realistic outlook, which has cost so much effort to instill into the party, but which has now taken root in it, by means of ideological nonsense about “right” and other trash common among the democrats and French Socialists.

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

The distribution of the means of consumption at any time 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 nonworkers in the form of

property in capital and land, while the masses are only owners of the personal condition of production, *viz.*, labor power. Once 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 cooperative property of the workers themselves, then this likewise results in a different distribution of the means of consumption from the present one. Vulgar socialism (and from it in turn a section of 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 position has long been made clear, why go back again?

— MARX, *Critique of the Gotha Program* (1875), pp. 4-9.

B. VARYING PATHS TO SOCIALISM

All nations will reach socialism; this is inevitable. But not all nations will reach socialism in the same way; each will introduce a special feature in the form of democracy it adopts, in the form of proletarian dictatorship, and in the rate at which it carries out the reconstruction of the various phases of social life. In *this* respect there can be nothing more ignorant theoretically, and more absurd in practice, than “in the name of historical materialism” to paint the future in a uniform, drab color.

— V. I. LENIN, “A Caricature of Marxism” (1916), *Collected Works*, vol. XIX (1942), p. 256.

C. WHY THE BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION SUCCEEDED

Certainly nearly everyone now realizes that the Bolsheviks could not have maintained themselves in power for two and a half months, let alone for two and a half years, unless the strictest, truly iron discipline prevailed in our party, and unless the latter had been rendered the fullest and unreserved support of the whole mass of the working class, that is, of all its thinking, honest, self-sacrificing and influential elements who are capable of leading or of attracting the backward strata.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is a most determined and most ruthless war waged by the new class against a *more powerful* enemy, the bourgeoisie, whose resistance is increased *tenfold* by

its overthrow (even if only in one country), and whose power lies not only in the strength of international capital, in the strength and durability of the international connections of the bourgeoisie, but also in the *force of habit*, in the strength of *small production*. For, unfortunately, small production is still very, very widespread in the world, and small production *engenders* capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously, and on a mass scale. For all these reasons the dictatorship of the proletariat is essential, and victory over the bourgeoisie is impossible without a long, stubborn and desperate war of life and death, a war demanding perseverance, discipline, firmness, indomitableness and unity of will.

I repeat, the experience of the victorious dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia has clearly shown even to those who are unable to think or who have not had occasion to ponder over this question, that absolute centralization and the strictest discipline of the proletariat constitute one of the fundamental conditions for victory over the bourgeoisie.

This is often discussed. But far from enough thought is given to what it means, and to the conditions that make it possible. Would it not be better if greetings to the Soviet power and the Bolsheviks were *more frequently* accompanied by a *profound analysis* of the reasons *why* the Bolsheviks were able to build up the discipline the revolutionary proletariat needs?

As a trend of political thought and as a political party, Bolshevik party of the proletariat maintained? How is it tested? How is it enforced? First, by the class consciousness of the shevism exists since 1903. Only the history of Bolshevism during the *whole* period of its existence can satisfactorily explain why it was able to build up and to maintain under the most difficult conditions the iron discipline that is needed for the victory of the proletariat.

And first of all the question arises: how is the discipline of the revolutionary party of the proletariat maintained? How is it tested? How is it reinforced? First, by the class consciousness of the proletarian vanguard and by its devotion to the revolution, by its perseverance, self-sacrifice and heroism. Secondly, by its ability to link itself, to keep in close touch with, and to a certain extent, if you like, to merge itself with the broadest masses of the toilers—primarily with the proletarian, *but also with the non-proletarian* toiling masses. Thirdly, by the correctness of the po-

litical leadership exercised by this vanguard and of its political strategy and tactics, provided that the broadest masses have been convinced *by their own experiences* that they are correct. Without these conditions, discipline in a revolutionary party that is really capable of being a party of the advanced class, whose mission it is to overthrow the bourgeoisie and transform the whole of society, cannot be achieved. Without these conditions, all attempts to establish discipline inevitably fall flat and end in phrasemongering and grimacing. On the other hand, these conditions cannot arise all at once. They are created only by prolonged effort and hard-won experience. Their creation is facilitated by correct revolutionary theory, which, in its turn, is not a dogma but assumes final shape only in close connection with the practical activity of a truly mass and truly revolutionary movement.

That Bolshevism was able in 1917-20, under unprecedentedly difficult conditions, to build up and successfully maintain the strictest centralization and iron discipline was simply due to a number of historical peculiarities of Russia.

On the one hand, Bolshevism arose in 1903 on the very firm foundation of the theory of Marxism. And the correctness of this—and only this—revolutionary theory has been proved not only by the experience of all countries throughout the 19th century, but particularly by the experience of the wanderings and vacillations, the mistakes and disappointments of revolutionary thought in Russia. For nearly half a century—approximately from the 40s to the 90s—advanced thinkers in Russia, under the oppression of an unprecedented, savage and reactionary tsardom, eagerly sought for the correct revolutionary theory and followed each and every “last word” in Europe and America in this sphere with astonishing diligence and thoroughness. Russia achieved Marxism, the only correct revolutionary theory, virtually through *suffering*, by a half century of unprecedented torment and sacrifice, of unprecedented revolutionary heroism, incredible energy, devoted searching, study, testing in practice, disappointment, verification and comparison with European experience. Thanks to the enforced emigration caused by tsardom, revolutionary Russia in the second half of the 19th century possessed a wealth of international connections and excellent information about world forms and theories of the revolutionary movement such as no other country in the world possessed.

On the other hand, having arisen on this granite theoretical basis, Bolshevism passed through 15 years (1903-17) of practical history which in wealth of experience has had no equal anywhere else in the world. For no other country during these 15 years had anything even approximating to this revolutionary experience, this rapid and varied succession of different forms of the movement—legal and illegal, peaceful and stormy, underground and open, circles and mass movements, parliamentary and terrorist. In no other country was there concentrated during so short a time such a wealth of forms, shades, and methods of struggle involving *all* classes of modern society, and moreover, a struggle which, owing to the backwardness of the country and the heaviness of the yoke of tsardom, matured with exceptional rapidity and assimilated most eagerly and successfully the appropriate “last word” of American and European political experience. . . .

We in Russia (in the third year since the overthrow of the bourgeoisie) are taking the first steps in the transition from capitalism to socialism, or the lowest stage of communism. Classes have remained, and will remain everywhere *for years after* the conquest of power by the proletariat. Perhaps in England, where there is no peasantry (but where there are small proprietors!), the period will be shorter. The abolition of classes not only means driving out the landlords and capitalists—that we accomplished with comparative ease—it also means *abolishing the small commodity producers*, and they *cannot be driven out*, or crushed; we must live *in harmony* with them; they can (and must) be remolded and reeducated only by very prolonged, slow, cautious organizational work. They encircle the proletariat on every side with a petty-bourgeois atmosphere, which permeates and corrupts the proletariat and causes constant relapses among the proletariat into petty-bourgeois spinelessness, disunity, individualism, and alternate moods of exaltation and dejection. The strictest centralization and discipline are required within the political party of the proletariat in order to counteract this, in order that the *organizational* role of the proletariat (and that is its *principal* role) may be exercised correctly, successfully, victoriously. The dictatorship of the proletariat is a persistent struggle—sanguinary and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, educational and administrative—against

the forces and traditions of the old society. The force of habit of millions and tens of millions is a most terrible force. Without an iron party tempered in the struggle, without a party enjoying the confidence of all the honest elements in the given class, without a party capable of watching and influencing the mood of the masses, it is impossible to conduct such a struggle successfully. It is a thousand times easier to vanquish the centralized big bourgeoisie than to "vanquish" millions and millions of small proprietors, while they, by their ordinary, everyday, imperceptible, elusive, demoralizing activity achieve the *very* results which the bourgeoisie need and which *restore* the bourgeoisie. Whoever weakens ever so little the iron discipline of the party of the proletariat (especially during the time of its dictatorship) actually aids the bourgeoisie against the proletariat.

—LENIN, "*Left-Wing*" *Communism* (1920), pp. 9-12, 28f.

D. THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION AND AMERICAN WORKERS

The American people have a revolutionary tradition which has been adopted by the best representatives of the American proletariat, who have repeatedly expressed their complete solidarity with us Bolsheviks. That tradition is the war of liberation against the British in the 18th century and the Civil War in the 19th century. In some respects, if we only take into consideration the "destruction" of some branches of industry and of the national economy, America in 1870 was *behind* 1860. But what a pedant, what an idiot would anyone be to deny on *these* grounds the immense, world-historic, progressive and revolutionary significance of the American Civil War of 1861-65!

The representatives of the bourgeoisie understand that for the sake of overthrowing Negro slavery, of overthrowing the slaveowners, it was worth letting the country go through long years of civil war, through the abysmal ruin, destruction and terror that accompany every war. But now, when we are confronted with the vastly greater task of overthrowing capitalist *wage* slavery, of overthrowing the rule of the bourgeoisie — now, the representatives and defenders of the bourgeoisie, and also the reformist socialists who have been frightened by the bourgeoisie and are shunning the revolution, cannot and do not want to understand that civil war is necessary and legitimate.

The American workers will not follow the bourgeoisie. They

will be with us, for civil war against the bourgeoisie. The whole history of the world and of the American labor movement strengthens my conviction that this is so. I also recall the words of one of the most beloved leaders of the American proletariat, Eugene Debs, who wrote in the *Appeal to Reason*, I believe towards the end of 1915, in the article "What Shall I Fight For" (I quoted this article at the beginning of 1916 at a public meeting of workers in Berne, Switzerland)—that he, Debs, would rather be shot than vote credits for the present criminal and reactionary war; that he, Debs, knows of only one holy and, from the proletarian standpoint, legitimate war, namely: the war against the capitalists, the war to liberate mankind from wage slavery.

I am not surprised that Wilson, the head of the American multimillionaires and servant of the capitalist sharks, has thrown Debs into prison. Let the bourgeoisie be brutal to the true internationalists, to the true representatives of the revolutionary proletariat! The more fierce and brutal they are, the nearer the day of the victorious proletarian revolution.

We are blamed for the destruction caused by our revolution. . . . Who are the accusers? The hangers-on of the bourgeoisie, of that very bourgeoisie who, during the four years of the imperialist war, have destroyed almost the whole of European culture and have reduced Europe to barbarism, brutality and starvation. These bourgeoisie now demand we should not make a revolution on these ruins, amidst this wreckage of culture, amidst the wreckage and ruins created by the war, nor with the people who have been brutalized by the war. How humane and righteous the bourgeoisie are!

Their servants accuse us of resorting to terror. . . . The British bourgeoisie have forgotten their 1649, the French bourgeoisie have forgotten their 1793. Terror was just and legitimate when the bourgeoisie resorted to it for their own benefit against feudalism. Terror became monstrous and criminal when the workers and poor peasants dared to use it against the bourgeoisie! Terror was just and legitimate when used for the purpose of substituting one exploiting minority for another exploiting minority. Terror became monstrous and criminal when it began to be used for the purpose of overthrowing *every* exploiting minority, to be used in the interests of the vast actual majority, in the interests of the proletariat and semi-proletariat, the working class and the poor peasants!

The international imperialist bourgeoisie have slaughtered 10 million men and maimed 20 million in "their" war, the war to decide whether the British or the German vultures are to rule the world.

If *our* war, the war of the oppressed and exploited against the oppressors and the exploiters, results in half a million or a million casualties in all countries, the bourgeoisie will say that the former casualties are justified, while the latter are criminal.

The proletariat will have something entirely different to say.

Now, amidst the horror of the imperialist war, the proletariat is receiving a most vivid and striking illustration of the great truth taught by all revolutions and bequeathed to the workers by their best teachers, the founders of modern socialism. This truth is that no revolution can be successful unless *the resistance of the exploiters is crushed*. When we, the workers and toiling peasants, captured state power, it became our duty to crush the resistance of the exploiters. We are proud we have been doing this. We regret we are not doing it with sufficient firmness and determination.

We know that fierce resistance to the socialist revolution on the part of the bourgeoisie is inevitable in all countries, and that this resistance will *grow* with the growth of this revolution. The proletariat will crush this resistance; during the struggle against the resisting bourgeoisie it will finally mature for victory and for power.

Let the corrupt bourgeois press shout to the whole world about every mistake our revolution makes. We are not daunted by our mistakes. People have not become saints because the revolution has begun. The toiling classes who for centuries have been oppressed, downtrodden and forcibly held in the vice of poverty, brutality and ignorance cannot avoid mistakes when making a revolution. And, as I pointed out once before, the corpse of bourgeois society cannot be nailed in a coffin and buried. The corpse of capitalism is decaying and disintegrating in our midst, polluting the air and poisoning our lives, enmeshing that which is new, fresh, young and virile in thousands of threads and bonds of that which is old, moribund and decaying.

For every hundred mistakes we commit, and which the bourgeoisie and their lackeys (including our own Mensheviks and Right Socialist-Revolutionaries) shout about to the whole world, 10,000 great and heroic deeds are performed, greater and more

heroic because they are simple and inconspicuous amidst the everyday life of a factory district or a remote village, performed by people who are not accustomed (and have no opportunity) to shout to the whole world about their successes.

But even if the contrary were true—although I know such an assumption is wrong—even if we committed 10,000 mistakes for every 100 correct actions we performed, even in that case our revolution would be great and invincible, and *so it will be in the eyes of world history*, because, *for the first time*, not the minority, not the rich alone, not the educated alone, but the real people, the vast majority of the working people, are themselves building a new life, are *by their own experience* solving the most difficult problems of socialist organization.

Every mistake committed in the course of such work, in the course of this most conscientious and earnest work of tens of millions of simple workers and peasants in reorganizing their whole life, every such mistake is worth thousands and millions of “flawless” successes achieved by the exploiting minority—successes in swindling and duping the working people. For only *through* such mistakes will the workers and peasants *learn* to build the new life, learn to do *without* capitalists; only in this way will they hack a path for themselves—through thousands of obstacles—to victorious socialism.

Mistakes are being committed in the course of their revolutionary work by our peasants, who at one stroke, in one night, October 25-26 (old style), 1917, entirely abolished the private ownership of land, and are now, month after month, overcoming tremendous difficulties and correcting their mistakes themselves, solving in a practical way the most difficult tasks of organizing new conditions of economic life, of fighting the kulaks, providing land for the *working people* (and not for the rich), and of changing to *communist* large-scale agriculture.

Mistakes are being committed in the course of their revolutionary work by our workers, who have already, after a few months, nationalized almost all the biggest factories and plants, and are learning, by hard, everyday work the new task of managing whole branches of industry, are setting the nationalized enterprises going, overcoming the powerful resistance of inertia, petty-bourgeois mentality and selfishness, and, brick by brick, are laying the foundation of *new* social ties, of a *new* labor

discipline, of a *new* influence of the workers' trade unions over their members.

Mistakes are committed in the course of their revolutionary work by our Soviets, which were created as far back as 1905 by a mighty upsurge of the people. The Soviets of Workers and Peasants are a new *type* of state, a new and higher *type* of democracy, a form of the proletarian dictatorship, a means of administering the state *without* the bourgeoisie and *against* the bourgeoisie. For the first time democracy is here serving the people, the working people, and has ceased to be democracy for the rich as it still is in all bourgeois republics, even the most democratic. For the first time, the people are grappling, on a scale involving 100,000,000, with the problem of implementing the dictatorship of the proletariat and semi-proletariat—a problem which, if not solved, makes socialism *out of the question*.

Let the pedants, or the people whose minds are incurably stuffed with bourgeois-democratic or parliamentary prejudices, shake their heads in perplexity about our Soviets, about the absence of direct elections, for example. These people have forgotten nothing and have learned nothing during the period of the great upheavals of 1914-18. The combination of the proletarian dictatorship with the new democracy for the working people—of civil war with the widest participation of the people in politics—such a combination cannot be brought about at one stroke, nor does it fit in with the outworn modes of routine parliamentary democracy. The contours of a new world, the world of socialism, are rising before us in the shape of the Soviet Republic. It is not surprising that this world does not come into being ready-made, does not spring forth like Minerva from the head of Jupiter.

The old bourgeois-democratic constitutions waxed eloquent about formal equality and right of assembly; but our proletarian and peasant Soviet Constitution casts aside the hypocrisy of formal equality. When the bourgeois republicans overturned thrones, they did not worry about formal equality between monarchists and republicans. When it is a matter of overthrowing the bourgeoisie, only traitors or idiots can demand formal equality of rights for the bourgeoisie. "Freedom of assembly" for workers and peasants is not worth a farthing when the best buildings belong to the bourgeoisie. Our Soviets have *confiscated*

all the good buildings in town and country from the rich and have *transferred all* of them to the workers and peasants for *their* unions and meetings. This is *our* freedom of assembly—for the working people! This is the meaning and content of our Soviet, our socialist Constitution!

That is why we are all so firmly convinced that no matter what misfortunes may still be in store for it, our Republic of Soviets is *invincible*.

It is invincible because every blow struck by frenzied imperialism, every defeat the international bourgeoisie inflict on us, rouses more and more sections of the workers and peasants to the struggle, teaches them at the cost of enormous sacrifice, steels them and engenders new heroism on a mass scale.

We know that help from you will probably not come soon, comrade American workers, for the revolution is developing in different countries in different forms and at different tempos (and it cannot be otherwise). We know that although the European proletarian revolution has been maturing very rapidly lately, it may, after all, not flare up within the new few weeks. We are banking on the inevitability of the world revolution, but this does not mean that we are such fools as to bank on the revolution inevitably coming on a *definite* and early date. We have seen two great revolutions in our country, 1905 and 1917, and we know revolutions are not made to order, or by agreement. We know that circumstances brought *our* Russian detachment of the socialist proletariat to the fore not because of our merits, but because of the exceptional backwardness of Russia, and that *before* the world revolution breaks out a number of separate revolutions may be defeated.

In spite of this, we are firmly convinced that we are invincible, because the spirit of mankind will not be broken by the imperialist slaughter. Mankind will vanquish it. And the first country to *break* the convict chains of the imperialist war was *our* country. We sustained enormously heavy casualties in the struggle to break these chains, but we *broke* them. We are *free* from imperialist dependence, we have raised the banner of struggle for the complete overthrow of imperialism for the whole world to see.

We are now, as it were, in a besieged fortress, waiting for the other detachments of the world socialist revolution to come to

our relief. These detachments *exist*, they are *more numerous* than ours, they are maturing, growing, gaining more strength the longer the brutalities of imperialism continue. The workers are breaking away from the social traitors. . . .Slowly but surely the workers are adopting communist, Bolshevik tactics and are marching towards the proletarian revolution, which alone is capable of saving dying culture and dying mankind.

In short, we are invincible, because the world proletarian revolution is invincible.

—LENIN, “A Letter to American Workers” (1918), *Selected Words* (1967), vol. III, pp. 22-28.

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BIOGRAPHICAL INDEX

A.

- Adams, Charles Francis (1807-86), U.S. ambassador to England during and after the Civil War. 162
- Alexander II (1818-81), Russian Emperor, 1855-81; his reign marked by rapid capitalist development and wide popular unrest; formally emancipated the serfs, 1861; assassinated by terrorists. 175, 184
- Anderson, Robert (1805-71), U.S. Union officer who defended Fort Sumter and later fought in Kentucky as a brigadier-general. 153
- Appian (2nd century), Roman historian who wrote of Roman imperial conquests. 342
- Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), Greek philosopher, natural and social scientist; lectured and wrote on biology, physics, economics, politics, ethics, esthetics, metaphysics; founder of "formal logic." 69, 295
- Arkwright, Richard (1732-92), English inventor, whose "water frame" spinning machine contributed to the Industrial Revolution. 252
- Axelrod, Paul B. (1850-1928), early Russian Marxist, one of the leaders of the Menshevik faction of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party. 335

B.

- Ball, John (*d.* 1381), one of the instigators of the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 under Wat Tyler. 231
- Barbès, Armand (1809-70), French revolutionary, a participant in the major struggles and conspiracies of the 1848-1850 upheavals. 333
- Barth, Paul (1858-1922), German philosopher and sociologist, professor at Leipzig University. 72
- Bastiat, Frédéric (1801-50), French economist, advocate of the classical theories of economic individualism and laissez-faire. 35, 296

- Beauregard, Pierre G. T. (1818-93), U.S. Confederate general, in charge, after 1862, of western theater of war. 153
- Bebel, August (1840-1913), German Socialist leader; along with Wilhelm Liebknecht, a founder of the German Social-Democratic Party. 322
- Bismarck, Otto, Prince (1815-98), Prussian statesman and diplomat; Minister-president of Prussia (1862-71), Reichs-Chancellor of the German Empire (1871-90). 110, 115, 127, 128, 129, 170, 175, 176
- Blanqui, Louis Auguste (1805-81), French revolutionary and utopian communist, an important leader of the left in the revolution of 1848. 102, 113, 333
- Bloch, Joseph (1872-1936), editor of the magazine, *Sozialistische Monatshefte*. 79
- Boccaccio, Giovanni (1313-75), Italian poet and novelist, a leading writer of the Renaissance, author of the *Decameron*. 230
- Bonaparte, Charles Louis Napoleon (1808-73), Reigned as Napoleon III from 1852 to 1870, nephew of Napoleon I, deposed in 1870 he went into exile in England. 69, 78, 94, 104, 105, 106, 107, 110, 115, 126, 127, 128
- Bonaparte, Joseph (1768-1844), eldest brother of the Emperor Napoleon, made King of Naples, 1806, and later, King of Spain, 1808. 148
- Bonaparte, Napoleon (1769-1821), Corsican born, French General after the Revolution, First Consul, 1799, and Emperor, 1804-14. Led the armies of the French Revolution against its European adversaries; decisively defeated in his invasion of Russia in 1812; exiled to Saint Helena after his failure at Waterloo in 1815. 67, 76, 105, 121, 124, 147, 148
- Börkheim, Sigismund (1825-85), German merchant and publicist; active in the 1848 revolution and later an emigré in London; close friend of Marx and Engels in the 1860's. 177
- Bracke, Wilhelm (1842-80), one of the leaders of the German Social-Democratic Party, a friend of Marx. 382
- Bright, John (1811-89), English statesman and orator, leading opponent of the Corn Laws, fighter for Parliamentary reform, a champion of the English middle class. 126

- Brown, John (1800-59), U.S. abolitionist, fought to make Kansas a free state, led raid on Harpers Ferry; his execution and martyrdom intensified the anti-slavery cause. *149*
- Brutus, Marcus Junius (85-42 B.C.), Roman politician, conspirator against Julius Caesar and his chief assassin. *67*
- Buchanan, James (1791-1868), U.S. politician, President of the United States, 1857-61. *149, 157*
- Bulygin, Alexander G. (1851-1919), Russian minister of the interior; in August 1905, directed the drafting of a bill to convene a consultative state дума. *187*

C.

- Caesar, Augustus (63 B.C.-A.D. 14), grand-nephew of Julius Caesar and first Emperor of Rome; his reign marks the peak of Roman power. *76*
- Caesar, Julius (102?-44 B.C.), Roman statesman and general, his military and political accomplishments brought Rome to a peak of eminence and paved the way for the Roman Empire. *67, 76*
- Calhoun, John (1782-1850), American statesman and political philosopher, foremost representative of the Southern planter aristocracy. *155*
- Calvin, John (1509-64), French Protestant theologian of the Reformation, profoundly influenced the Puritans of Great Britain and New England. *73, 256*
- Campbell, George, (1824-92), Indian administrator, author on India, later Member of Parliament. *141*
- Carey, Henry C. (1793-1879), American economist; critic of the "pessimism" of Ricardo and Malthus, theoretical proponent of American economic nationalism. *35*
- Carlos IV (1748-1819), King of Spain, 1788-1808; forced to abdicate during the Napoleonic wars. *148*
- Castlereagh, Robert S. (1769-1822), British statesman; secretary of war and foreign secretary during the Napoleonic wars; chiefly responsible for repressive measures against popular unrest in England in the post-Napoleonic period. *253*
- Cavaignac, Louis E. (1802-57), French general who organized the massacre of the Parisian workers in June 1848. *95, 96*

- Charlemagne (742-814), Frankish king, creator of a European empire which became the basis of the theory of the Holy Roman Empire. 223
- Charles I (1600-49), King of England, Scotland and Ireland, 1625-1649; leader of the Royalists in the English Civil War; beheaded by the Puritans in 1649. 242, 257
- Charles X (Charles Gustavus) (1622-60), King of Sweden, 1654-60; his wars on the European continent helped to establish Sweden as a major power. 244
- Charles XI (1655-97), King of Sweden, succeeded in increasing royal power at the expense of the nobles. 244
- Chernov, Victor (1876-1952), Russian political leader; a founder of the Socialist Revolutionary party; minister of agriculture under Kerensky in 1917; organizer of severe repressive measures against the peasants. 201
- Chkheidze, Nikolai S. (1864-1926), a leader of the Menshevik faction of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party, President of the Petrograd Soviet in 1917. 198, 199
- Cicero, Marcus Tullius (106-43 B.C.), Roman orator and politician, leader of the conservative senatorial party in the time of Julius Caesar. 295
- Clausewitz, Karl von (1780-1831), Prussian general, writer on military strategy. 352
- Clemenceau, Georges (1841-1929), French statesman, called "the Tiger"; in conflict with government of Napoleon III he emigrated to the U.S., returned to France, became a senator and premier twice, 1906-09, 1917-19; a major architect of the Versailles Treaty. 170
- Columbus, Christopher (1451?-1506), Italian navigator, discoverer of America. 275
- Constant, Benjamin (1767-1803), French Swiss writer and political theorist, served under Napoleon, attacked him, then upheld him; supported the Revolution of 1830. 68
- Cousin, Victor (1792-1867), French educational leader and philosopher, founder of the eclectic school. 68
- Cromwell, Oliver (1599-1658), English statesman and leader of the Puritan Revolution that overthrew Charles I; ruler of England during the period of the Commonwealth. 68, 76, 138, 243

D.

- Danton, Georges Jacques (1759-94), French statesman, one of the leading figures of the French Revolution; prime mover of the radical revolution that led, in 1792, to the overthrow of the monarchy. 67
- Darwin, Charles Robert (1809-82), founder of theory of biological evolution through natural selection; his most important work was *Origin of Species*, 1859. 30, 31, 79, 80, 85, 250
- Debs, Eugene V. (1855-1926), American labor and socialist leader; five times Presidential candidate of the Socialist Party; imprisoned for opposing World War I; consistently supported the left wing in the Socialist Party. 392
- Desmoulins, Camille (1760-94), French revolutionist and journalist; his oratory helped to trigger the storming of the Bastille; associated with Danton, with whom he was executed. 67
- Diodorus Siculus (*d.* after 21 B.C.), Greek historian; wrote a world history in 40 books. 267
- Dühring, Eugen K. (1833-1921), German university professor; author of a universal "system of all the sciences," which Engels criticized in *Anti-Dühring*. 78
- Duncombe, Thomas (1796-1861), English radical politician, member of Parliament; associated with the Chartists, whose petition he introduced to Parliament. 131

E.

- Elizabeth (1533-1603), Queen of England, 1558-1603; her reign marked a high point in England's national and literary achievements. 242
- Epicurus (342-270 B.C.), materialist philosopher, follower of Democritus; his work was one of the most powerful sources of enlightenment in the Greek world. 236
- Eudes, Emil D. F. (1844-88), French general who led the armies of the Paris Commune in defense against the reactionary government of Versailles, 1871. 113

F.

- Ferdinand VII (1784-1833), King of Spain, 1808-33, deposed by Napoleon during the Peninsular War, became the rallying cry for revolutionary elements; when restored to his throne (1814), revealed himself a thorough reactionary. *148*
- Feuerbach, Ludwig (1804-72), German philosopher; originally a Hegelian, rebelled against Hegel and became a materialist who greatly influenced Marx and Engels. *66, 78*
- Fichte, Johann G. (1762-1814), German philosopher, a representative of classic German idealism; criticized Kant from the position of pure subjective idealism, but contributed to the idea that man shaped his world through his knowledge and activity. *73*
- Fourier, Charles (1772-1837), French utopian socialist; advocated the establishment of socialist communities called "phalanxes"; had considerable influence in both France and the U.S. *61, 300, 304*
- Franklin, Benjamin (1706-90), American statesman, scientist and diplomat; outstanding leader in the fight for American independence; one of the first to propound a labor theory of value. *267*
- Frederick II (the Great) (1712-86), King of Prussia, 1740-86; "benevolent despot," brilliant diplomatist and military tactician, writer, musician, patron of the arts. *128*
- Frederick William (1620-88), Elector of Brandenburg (the Great Elector), 1640-88, laid the foundation of the Prussian state after the devastation of the Thirty Years War. *128*
- Frémont, John C. (1813-90), U.S. explorer, soldier, politician, defeated for presidency in 1856, issued proclamation freeing the slaves in Missouri, 1861. *154*
- Friedrich Karl (1828-85), Prussian Prince and general. *161*

G.

- Gapon, Gregory (1870-1906), Russian priest; tsarist secret police agent, provoked the St. Petersburg workers' march to petition the tsar which resulted in the "Bloody Sunday" massacre, January 9, 1905. *180*

- Gaskell, P., English economist and writer on labor, author of *The Manufacturing Population of England*, and *Artisans and Machinery*. 254
- George, Henry (1839-97), U.S. writer on economics; wrote *Progress and Poverty*, advocating a "single tax" on land as the solution for all social ills. 169
- Gladstone, William E. (1809-98), English statesman, leader of the Liberal Party, four times Prime Minister. 175
- Godunov, Boris (c. 1551-1605), Tsar of Russia, 1598-1605; a ruthless, powerful ruler, under whom many important advances were made; his ukase of 1587 limited the right of peasants to transfer themselves from one property owner to another. 243
- Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von (1749-1832), German poet, dramatist and novelist; one of the outstanding geniuses of the Romantic Movement of the late 18th and early 19th century; author of the dramatic poem, *Faust*. 289
- Gould, Jay (1836-92), American financier; one of the "robber barons," he, with James Fisk, tried to corner gold in 1869 and caused the Black Friday panic; owner of the Union Pacific and other railroads. 128
- Gracchi, two Roman statesmen and social reformers, brothers (Tiberius Gracchus, d. 133 B.C. and Caius Gracchus, d. 121 B.C.) 67
- Grant, Ulysses S. (1822-85), U.S. Civil War general, commander-in-chief of Union armies, 1864-65; President of the U.S., 1869-77. 161, 162
- Guchkov, Alexander I. (1862-1936), Russian politician; represented big commercial and industrial bourgeoisie; in February, 1917, became member of the bourgeois provisional government. 193, 198, 199
- Guizot, Francois (1787-1874), French statesman and historian; prime minister, 1840-48; in his historical writings, strove toward a materialistic interpretation. 66, 68, 76, 96

H.

- Harrison, William (1534-93), English clergyman and chronicler, wrote the description of England in Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*. 242

- Haussmann, George E., Baron (1809-91), French civic official and city planner; carried on big business alterations in Paris in the interest of the bourgeoisie. 300, 301
- Hegel, Georg W. F. (1770-1831), German philosopher; an objective idealist and dialectician; ideological representative of the German bourgeoisie of his time; important influence on Marx and Engels, especially in their early years. 19, 41, 63, 65, 66, 73, 175, 338
- Henry III (1551-89), King of France; weak, debauched, unscrupulous, he instigated the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day. 275
- Henry VII (1457-1509), King of England; his accession marks the end of the War of the Roses and the beginning of what is considered the modern period of English history. 257
- Henry VIII (1491-1547), King of England, 1509-47, his reign marks the beginning of the Protestant Reformation in England, the strengthening of royal power, and the hastening of the transition from feudal to capitalist England. 257
- Heraclitus of Ephesus (c. 544-484 B.C.), Greek philosopher; one of the first to develop a dialectical explanation of the universe. 39
- Hobbes, Thomas (1588-1679), English materialist philosopher, author of *Leviathan*; his materialist outlook, his political theories, and his critique of religion dealt a heavy blow to medieval, scholastic dogmas. 80
- Holinshed, Raphael (d. c. 1580), English chronicler; wrote *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*, which served to provide plots for Shakespeare and other Elizabethan dramatists. 242
- Hood, John B. (1831-79), U.S. Confederate general; fought at Gettysburg; played a role in the Atlanta campaign of 1864. 162

J.

- Johnson, Andrew (1808-75), military governor of Tennessee during the Civil War, elected Vice-President in 1864; became President upon assassination of Lincoln; impeachment proceedings initiated against him by the Radical Republicans. 163, 164
- Junius, pen name used by Luxemburg, Rosa, *see*.

K.

- Kant, Immanuel (1724-1804), founder of classical German philosophy; although criticized by Hegel for his limitation, Kant exercised a profound influence on subsequent philosophy by his emphasis on the activity of the human mind—as opposed to Locke's passive sensationalism—in the knowledge process. *40, 73, 124*
- Kautsky, Karl (1854-1938), German political leader and theoretician, prominent in the German Social-Democratic Party and the Second International; ideologist of "Centrism"; became anti-Soviet after the October 1917 Revolution. *190, 354, 367, 371*
- Kerensky, Alexander (1881-1970), member of the moderate Labor party, became minister of justice, then of war, then Prime Minister in the Russian provisional government between the February and October Revolutions of 1917. *194, 201*
- Kornilov, L. G. (1870-1918), Russian general, appointed by Kerensky as commander-in-chief of the Russian army in 1917, dismissed, arrested, escaped and was killed while leading a counter-revolutionary army against the Bolsheviks. *200, 201*
- Kugelman, Dr. L. (1830-1902), Hanover surgeon who took part in the revolutionary movement of 1848, became a follower and friend of Marx, and a member of the First International. *122, 138*

L.

- Lamartine, Alphonse M. L. de (1790-1869), French poet, novelist and statesman; headed the provisional government after the February revolution of 1848. *96*
- Laplace, Pierre S. (1749-1827), French astronomer and mathematician, proponent of Newtonian astronomy and of the nebular hypothesis of the origin of the solar system. *40*
- Lasalle, Ferdinand (1825-64), German lawyer and writer, joined the German working-class movement in the early 1860's, became a supporter of Bismarck and German unification under the Prussians. *382*
- Lee, General Robert E. (1807-70), U.S. Confederate general-in-chief, surrendered to Grant in 1865. *161, 162*

- Lincoln, Abraham (1809-65), sixteenth President of the United States (1861-65). *149, 150, 153, 154, 157, 159, 162, 165*
- Locke, John (1623-1714), English philosopher and political theorist; taught that all ideas have their origin in sense experience. *68*
- Louis XIV (1638-1715), King of France, 1643-1715, transformed the state into an absolute monarchy, brought France to the zenith of its power. *105, 108*
- Louis XVI (1754-93), King of France, 1774-93, reigning monarch at the time of the French Revolution, guillotined by the revolutionists. *112*
- Louis XVIII (1755-1824), King of France, 1814-15 and 1815-24, his reign characterized by the reaction of the post-Napoleonic period. *68*
- Louis Philippe (1773-1850), Duke of Orleans, King of France, 1830-48, his reign a frank plutocracy, deposed by the revolution of 1848. *94, 95, 96, 100, 102, 115, 257*
- Luther, Martin (1483-1546), leader of the Protestant Reformation. *67, 73, 256*
- Luxemburg, Rosa (1871-1919), Polish and German working-class leader, prominent spokesman for the left wing in the Second International, a founder of the German Communist Party, writer on Marxist theory. *353*
- Lvov, George Y., Prince (1861-1925), Russian liberal leader, became head of the government after abdication of Nicholas II, Feb. 1917, resigned in July, succeeded by Kerensky. *193, 196*

M.

- Macaulay, Thomas B. (1800-59), English historian and member of Parliament. *243*
- MacCulloch, John R. (1789-1864), British economist; developed a theory of wages, promoted free trade, popularized classical economic doctrines. *296*
- Marrast, Armand (1801-52), French publicist, a leader of moderate bourgeois republicans, Mayor of Paris, 1848, President of the Constitutional Assembly, 1848-49. *95*
- McClellan, George B. (1826-85), U.S. Union general, removed as commander of the Army of the Potomac. *157*

- Mehring, Franz (1846-1919), German Marxist socialist and literary critic, author of a biography of Marx. 74
- Meyer, Rudolf H. (1839-99), German economist, sought to prove that Marx plagiarized from Rodbertus. 137
- Mignet, Francois A.M. (1796-1884), French historian and journalist, collaborator with Thiers, wrote a history of the French Revolution. 66
- Mikhailovsky, Nikolai K. (1824-1904), Russian sociologist, writer and literary critic, outstanding theoretician of liberal Narodism; opponent of Marxism. 82, 83, 86, 87
- Milyukov, Pavel N. (1859-1943), Russian bourgeois politician, leader of the Cadet party, member of the Provisional Government after the February 1917 Revolution; organizer of the Kornilov revolt of August 1917. 199
- Montalembert, Charles F. R. (1810-70), French statesman and writer, member of the Paris constituent assembly of 1848, refused to support Louis Napoleon after his coup d'état of 1851. 105
- Montesquieu, Charles L. (1689-1755), French jurist and political philosopher, best known for his *The Spirit of Laws*, a political treatise that helped create modern bourgeois political theory. 73
- Morgan, Lewis Henry (1818-81), American anthropologist and student of the American Indians, author of *Ancient Society* which attracted the attention of Marx and Engels. 76
- Morny, Charles A. (1811-65), French politician, leader of the 1851 coup d'état which gave his half-brother Louis Bonaparte dictatorial powers; later helped place him on the throne as Napoleon III. 129
- Muenzer, Thomas (c. 1489-1525), German Anabaptist, popular leader of the Reformation and of the Peasants' War; set up a communist theocracy at Mülhausen, beheaded when it was overthrown. 229, 231
- Murat, Joachim (1767-1815), French marshall under Napoleon, married Napoleon's sister and was made King of Naples, fled to Corsica with Napoleon. 148

N.

- Newman, Francis W. (1805-97), English scholar, economist, brother of Cardinal Newman; a rationalist opposed to religious orthodoxy. 220
- Nicholas I (1796-1855), Tsar of Russia, 1825-1855, one of the most reactionary, ruthless and autocratic of the Russian emperors, crushed the Decembrist Conspiracy (1825), responsible for the catastrophic Crimean War, 1853-56. 199
- Nicholas II (1868-1918), Tsar of Russia, 1894-1917, last of the Russian Emperors, deposed by the February 1917 Revolution, executed after the October 1917 Revolution. 192, 199

O.

- O'Donovan Rossa, Jeremiah (1831-1915), original name Jeremiah O'Donovan, a leader of the Fenians, convicted of treason, released and emigrated to New York. 138
- Owen, Robert (1771-1858), British social reformer and pioneer in the cooperative movement, a leading utopian socialist. 61, 134, 300

P.

- Pecqueur, Constan (1801-87), French economist and utopian socialist. 319
- Petty, William (1623-87), English statistician and physician, an early propounder of the labor theory of value. 272
- Philip Augustus (1165-1223), King of France, 1180-1223, consolidated royal power at the expense of feudal lords. 73
- Plekhanov, Georgi V. (1857-1918), Russian revolutionist and founder of Russian Marxism, writer on Marxist philosophy, a Menshevik leader. 175
- Poppe, Johann H. M. (1776-1854), German historian of the rise of modern technology. 239
- Powderly, Terence V. (1849-1924), U.S. labor leader, Irish immigrant, head of the Knights of Labor. 169
- Proudhon, Pierre J. (1803-65), French petty-bourgeoisie theoretician and forerunner of modern anarchism. 35, 86, 120, 121

- Publicola, Publius V. (*d.* 503 B.C.), semi-legendary statesman of the Roman Republic. 67
- Puttkammer, Robert von (1828-1900), Prussian politician, spokesman for the reactionary extremist wing that supported Bismarck and Emperor Wilhelm I. 186

R.

- Raspail, Francois V. (1794-1878), French physician and revolutionary democrat, condemned to exile, May 1848. 333
- Ricardo, David (1772-1823), British financier and economist, classical political economist, an exponent of the labor theory of value; his chief work *Principles of Economics and Taxation* (1817). 307
- Richard Coeur de Lion (Richard I) (1157-99), King of England, 1189-99, a leader of the Third Crusade. 73
- Riesser, Jakob (1853-1932), German economist and banker. 317
- Robespierre, Maximilien (1758-94), one of the major figures of the French Revolution, advocated the execution of King Louis XVI; a leader of the popular Jacobin party, guillotined July 28. 67
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques (1712-78), French philosopher, and political theorist, precursor of the French Revolution, best known for his *Confessions* and *The Social Contract*. 73
- Rogyer-Collard, Pierre P. (1763-1845), French lawyer and statesman, took part in the revolution but later became a monarchist. 68

S.

- Saint-Just, Louis de (1767-94), French revolutionist and supporter of Robespierre; guillotined with him. 67
- Saint-Simon, Claude H. (1760-1825), French utopian socialist whose teachings influenced later socialist thought. 61
- Saltykov, Mikhail E. (1826-89), Russian satirist and novelist (pseudonym, N. Shchedrin), writer of radical sympathies. 142
- Sand, George (1804-76), literary pseudonym of a major French woman novelist, champion of women's rights. 333
- Sax, Emil, Dr., German economist, wrote on working-class housing and its reform. 299, 300

- Say, Jean Baptiste (1767-1832), French economist, popularized and developed the theories of Adam Smith. 68
- Schlüter, Hermann (*d.* 1919), German social-democrat, emigrated to the United States where he worked in the German workers' movement. Author of a history of Chartism and other studies of English and U.S. labor movement. 167
- Schmidt, Conrad (1863-1932), German economist and Social-Democrat. 56, 72
- Schouw, Joakim F. (1789-1852), German writer on anthropology, author of *Die Erde, die Pflanzen und der Mensch*. 269
- Sébastieni, Horace, F. B. (1772-1851), French statesman and diplomat; Marshal of France, Foreign Minister. 96
- Senior, Nassau, (1790-1864), English economist, occupied first chair of political economy in England at Oxford, 1825. 133
- Shakespeare, William (1564-1616), English poet, dramatist. 275
- Sherman, William Tecumseh (1820-91), U.S. Union general in the Civil War, best known for his Atlanta campaign and "march to the sea." 161, 162
- Sickingen, Franz von (1481-1523), leader of a political insurrection of the lower nobility (1523) as an aftermath to Luther's challenge to Roman Catholicism. 256
- Sidmouth, Henry A. (1757-1844), English statesman, Prime Minister, Home Secretary. 253
- Smith, Adam (1723-90), Scottish philosopher and economist, founder of the classical school of political economy; author, *Wealth of Nations*, 1776. 61, 73, 307
- Sorge, Friedrich A. (1826-1906), German Communist, took part in the Baden uprising of 1849, emigrated to the U.S., became General Secretary of the First International when the General Council moved to New York. 168, 171, 173, 176
- Starkenbug, Heinz, German Social-Democrat, contributed to *Neue Zeit*. 76
- Steklov, Yuri M. (1873-1941), Russian Social-Democrat; after the February 1917 Revolution joined the "revolutionary defencists"; wrote on the history of the revolution. 198, 199
- Stephens, Alexander H. (1812-83), U.S. Congressman from Georgia, later Vice-President of the Confederacy. 153
- Steuart, James (1712-80), English political economist, author of *Inquiry into the Principles of Political Economy*, 1767, one of the fullest statements of the mercantilist position. 241

Stolypin, Pyotr A. (1862-1911), Russian landowner and tsarist minister; his name associated with the period of extreme political reaction, 1907-10. 193

Struve, Pyotr B. (1870-1944), Russian bourgeois economist and writer; outstanding representative of "legal Marxism" in the 1890s; later a Cadet party leader. 182

T.

Teodorovich, Ivan A. (1875-1940), Russian Bolshevik, active in the October 1917 Revolution, held important posts in the Soviet government. 198

Thierry, Augustin (1795-1856), French liberal historian, sought to disprove reactionary claims of French aristocracy. 66, 76

Thiers, Adolphe (1797-1877), French historian and statesman, President of the Republic, 1871-73, hangman of the Paris Commune. 66, 111, 113, 122

Toombs, Robert (1810-85), U.S. Congressman and Senator from Georgia, aided the Confederacy in both a diplomatic and military capacity. 155

Toricelli, Evangelista (1606-47), pupil of Galileo, outstanding Italian physicist and mathematician, 74

Trélat, Ulysse (1795-1879), French physician and politician, bourgeoisie republican, vice-president of National Constitutional Assembly. 97

Tsereteli, Irakly G. (1882-1959), Russian Menshevik leader, a minister in the Provisional Government after the February 1917 Revolution; a leader of the counter-revolutionary government of Georgia after October 1917. 198, 199, 201

Tyler, Wat (*d.* 1381), a leader of the English peasant rebellion of 1381. 231

U.

Ure, Dr. Andrew (1778-1857), English supporter of child labor and opponent of a bill limiting child labor to 12 hours a day (1833). 133

V.

Vaillant, Marie Eduard (1840-1915), a leader in the Paris Commune. 119

- Vanderbilt, Cornelius ("Commodore") (1794-1877), U.S. railroad and shipping magnate, one of the richest, most colorful and ruthless of the "robber barons." 128
- Vico, Giovanni Battista (1668-1744), Italian jurist, philosopher and historian, pioneer in modern sociological and anthropological methods and of a scientific approach to history. 31
- Vogt, August (c. 1830-c. 83), German member of First International, emigrated to New York after participating in the 1848 Revolution. 137

W.

- Walker, Leroy P. (1817-84), U.S. Confederate Secretary of War, 1861; resigned and became a brigadier-general. 153
- Weber, Max (1864-1920), German sociologist, critic of Marxism, stressed the multiplicity and interdependence of causes, extremely influential in sociology to the present time. 191
- Weydemeyer, Joseph (1818-66), Prussian artillery officer and writer, became a Marxist in 1845-46, emigrated to America where he became colonel of a regiment in the Northern Army during the Civil War. 31, 162
- William of Orange (1650-1702), became Stadholder of the Netherlands after the murder of the de Witt brothers, married Princess Mary of England, and with his wife Mary succeeded James II as King of England. 243
- Wilson, Woodrow (1856-1924), 27th President of the United States, led the country into World War I, participated in the Paris Peace Conference, one of the founders of the League of Nations. 392
- Wischniewsky, Florence Kelley (1859-1932), American social reformer, translator of Engels' *The Condition of the Working Class in England*. 172
- Wycliffe, John (1328-84), English reformer, opponent of the Papacy, translator of the Bible into English, condemned as a heretic. 231

Z.

- Zasulich, Vera I. (1849-1919), Russian Narodnik, a pioneer propagandist of Marxism in Russia, a founder of the Emancipation Labor group; after 1903 a leading Menshevik. 176



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