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THE HISTORICAL ACHIEVEMENT OF KARL

MARX

By KARL KAUTSKY . . . Translated for "The Socialist" by Ernest Untermann

Foreword

At the request of the Educational Committee of our party at Bremen I gave a lecture on Karl Marx in that city on December 17th of the preceding year. Some of the Bremen Comrades who had heard this lecture urged me to issue it in pamphlet form, since it was calculated, in their opinion, to correct widespread errors concerning the meaning of Marxism and the achievement of Marx. Herewith I comply with this invitation, without, however, limiting myself to a mere reproduction of that lecture. I have enlarged it at different points for publication, particularly in its first part.

It is not a eulogy on Karl Marx, which I bring here. Such a thing would not suit the proud mind of the man whose motto was: "Follow your course and let the people talk."

Moreover, it would be out of place at a time when his personal significance is recognized by all the world.

I am rather interested in facilitating the understanding of the gift of Marx to the world. This is by no means so generally known as would be necessary at a time, when bitter controversies are carried on for and against Marx. Many a one may find on reading the following lines, that thoughts, which have become matters of fact today, had to be discovered by Marx and Engels through hard work. They will also find that ideas, which are offered to us today as surprising and new discoveries, by which the "obsolete" Marxism is supposed to be overcome or further developed, are at bottom nothing but the revival of conceptions and modes of thought which were in vogue before Marx and were wearing away, and which were overcome precisely by Marx, although they always re-appear to the new generations, who are strangers to the history of our movement.

For this reason this work is not written merely as a contribution to the history of our party, but also as a contribution to the settlement of pending questions.

Friedenau, February 1908,

K. KAUTSKY.

Introduction

On March 14th, 1908, it will be 25 years since Marx died, and in the beginning of the same year it was six decades since the "Communist Manifesto" appeared, in which his new teaching found its first comprehensive expression. These are long periods for times as fast as ours, which change their scientific and artistic conceptions as quickly as their style of dressing. But nevertheless Karl Marx still lives among us in his full strength, and he dominates the thought of our times more than ever, in spite of all crises of Marxism, in spite of all refutations and defeats by the chairs of capitalist science.

This amazing and ever increasing influence would be wholly inexplicable, if Marx had not succeeded in laying bare the last roots of capitalist society. If he has done that, then it is a fact that, so long as this form of society endures, no new social discoveries of any fundamental nature can be made beyond those of Marx. And in that case the way shown by him will remain theoretically and practically far more effective than any other. The powerful influence of Marx upon modern thought would, however, be unintelligible, if he had not been able to grow mentally beyond the confines of the capitalist mode of production, to recognize the tendencies, which lead on beyond it towards a higher order of society, and in this way to hold up to our view remote aims, which shall become more distinct and tangible through the further progress of historical development. To the same extent will the magnitude of the man be revealed, who was the first to understand them clearly.

It is the rare combination of scientific depth with revolutionary daring, which causes Karl Marx to live far more powerfully among us now, a quarter of a century after his death, two generations after the beginning of his public career, than he did when he was actually alive.

Let us try to gain a clear conception of the nature of the historical achievement of this wonderful man. We shall then realize that it may most appropriately be regarded as a work of unification, a unification of different, and often seemingly antagonistic fields in a higher unity. Above all we mean the unification of natural science and mental science, of English, French and German thought, of the labor movement and socialism, of theory and practice. That he succeeded in all this, that he was not only familiar with all these fields by his unequalled universality, but also grasped them to the point of mastery, made it possible for Karl Marx to accomplish his stupendous historical mission, which places its mark upon the last decades of the nineteenth and the first of the twentieth centuries.

1. The Unification of Natural and Mental Science

The foundation of all of Marx's activity is his theoretical achievement. It is the first to be considered before all others. But it is precisely this which offers the greatest

obstacles to popular presentation. We hope to be able to overcome these difficulties, although we shall have to limit ourselves to a few suggestions. At any rate, the points of which we propose to treat after this will be easily understood. The reader, therefore, should not be deterred, if the following pages should offer a little difficulty, from pushing onward through the others.

The sciences are divided into two great territories: The Natural Sciences, which seek to explore the laws of the movement of living and inanimate bodies, and the Mental Sciences, which bear this name unjustly, since the mind, so far as it manifests itself as the expression of some individual body, is analyzed by the natural sciences. Psychology, the science of the soul, is wholly carried on by methods of natural science, and the mental sciences have never attempted to heal diseases of the mind. The claim of natural science to this territory remains unchallenged.

The thing called Mental Science is actually Social Science, and deals with the relations of man to his fellow men. Only those mental activities and expressions of man, which come under this head, are analyzed by the mental sciences.

Within the Mental Sciences we may distinguish two groups: One kind studies human society as such by means of mass observations. Of this kind is Political Economy the science of the laws of social economy under the rule of commodity production; Ethnology, the science of the different social conditions of different nations; finally Primitive History, which explores the social conditions of periods which did not bequeath any written records to us.

The other group of mental sciences comprises studies which have so far had mainly the individual for their starting point, and treated of the position and activity of the individual in society; History, Law, Ethics or Morality.

This second group of mental sciences is extremely old and has from time immemorial exerted the greatest influence upon the human mind. The former group, however, was new at the time when Marx was in process of formation, and had just acquainted itself with scientific methods. It remained confined to specialists and had as yet no influence upon public thought, which was controlled by the natural and mental sciences of the second group.

But there was a deep chasm between the two last named kinds of sciences, and it revealed itself in antagonistic world conceptions.

Natural science had discovered so many necessary and law-controlled interrelations in nature, that is, it had found by frequent tests that the same causes always produced the same effects, that it was thoroughly imbued with the assumption of a general lawfulness of nature and completely rejected the idea of mysterious powers, which were supposed to interfere with the natural events in an arbitrary manner. Modern man no longer endeavors to incline such powers in his favor by prayers and sacrifices. His aim is rather to understand the laws of natural interrelation, in order to produce, by his own interference, such effects as are helps to his existence or well being. It was different in the so-called mental sciences. These were still dominated by the assumption of a free will of man, which should not be subject to any lawful necessities. The jurists and moralists felt constrained to cling to this assumption, because the bottom would otherwise have slipped from under their feet. If man is a product of conditions, if his will and actions are the necessary effects of cause, which are not dependent upon his good will, then what would become of sin and atonement, of good and bad, of legal and moral condemnation?

True, this objection was urged only by a certain motive, a consideration of "practical reason." It was not a proof. But the proof was supplied principally by historical science, which rested essentially upon a mere collection of written documents of former days, in which the deeds of single individuals, particularly of rulers, were registered either by themselves or by others. It seemed impossible to discover any controlling law in those individual deeds. In vain did thinkers in natural science try to discover any such natural necessity. Of course, they were unwilling to believe that the universal laws of nature should not apply to the actions of men. Experience supplied them with enough material to show, that the human mind was not an exception in nature, that it rather replied to definite causes by definite effects. However, while this could undeniably be proved in the case of simpler mind activities, which man shares with animals, the natural scientists were unable to find any casual connection for the social ideas and ideals, so that they were unable to fill this gap. They might indeed assert that the human mind was a part of nature and subject to its natural laws, but they could not prove it convincingly upon all fields. Their materialist monism remained incomplete and could not make an end to idealism and dualism.

Now Marx came and saw that the history and the ideas and ideals of men in history, with their successes and failures, were the result of class struggles. But he saw still more. Class antagonisms and class struggles had been observed even before him in history, but they had generally been regarded as the work of ignorance and spite on the one hand, of high-mindedness and enlightenment on the other. Marx, on the contrary, revealed their necessary interdependence with economic conditions, whose laws may be understood, as Marx proved better than any one else. These economic conditions in their turn rest in the last analysis upon the manner and measure of man's control over nature, due to his understanding of natural laws.

Only under definite social conditions are class struggles the agents of history; whereas the struggle against nature is, in the last resort, always the prime motive power. No matter how peculiar society may appear when compared to the rest of nature, here as there we find the same manner of movement and development by a struggle of opposites, which always proceed fundamentally from nature, the dialectic development.

By this means the social development was placed within the frame of natural development, the human mind, even in its most complicated and supreme expressions, the social, was revealed as a part of nature, and the natural lawfulness of its activity upon all fields demonstrated, so that philosophical idealism and dualism were deprived of their last foothold.

In this way Marx has not only completely revolutionized the science of history, but also bridged the chasm between the natural sciences and mental sciences, laid the foundation for the unification of the entire human science, and thus made philosophy superfluous, to the extent that it sought to bring about the unification of thought concerning the world process in the role of a wisdom standing outside of the sciences and above them, because formerly this unification could not be gained from the sciences.

It signifies a stupendous rise of science, this achievement of Marx by his conception of history. The entire human thought and understanding had to be powerfully fertilized by it. But strange to say, capitalist science declined it, and only in opposition to capitalist science, as a special proletarian science, could the new scientific conception assert itself.

The assertion of an antagonism between bourgeois and proletarian science has been ridiculed, as though such a thing as a bourgeois or proletarian chemistry or mathematics could exist. But the scoffers merely prove that they do not know the real point.

The discovery of the Marxian materialist conception of history was based upon two prerequisites. In the first place, it required a certain rise of science, and in the second place a revolutionary point of view.

The laws of historical development could not be recognized, until the new mental sciences mentioned above, political economy, and in it particularly economic history, furthermore ethnology and primitive history, had reached a certain eminence. Only these sciences, from whose material the individual was excluded from the outset, which were based at the start upon mass observations, could reveal the fundamental laws of social development and thus pave the way for the study of those currents, by which the individuals floating on the surface, whom the traditional writings on history considered and registered alone, are driven about.

These new mental sciences developed only with the capitalist mode of production and its world traffic, they could not accomplish remarkable results until capital had come to rule, which implied, indeed, that the capitalist class had ceased to be a revolutionary class.

But only a revolutionary class could accept the theory of the class struggle. A class that wants to conquer the power in society must also want the struggle for this power, it will easily grasp the necessity of such a struggle. On the other hand, a class that is in possession of the power will regard every struggle for it as an unwelcome disturbance and reject every teaching which reveals its necessity. It will object to such teaching all the more, if the theory of the class struggle is a theory of social development, which demonstrates the inevitable outcome of the present class struggle to be the abolition of the present rulers of society.

But also the teaching that human beings are products of social conditions to the extent that the members of a certain form of society differ from those of another form of society is not acceptable to a conservative class, because in that case a change of society itself appears as the only means of changing human beings. So long as the bourgeoisie were revolutionary, they likewise held that human beings are the products of society. But unfortunately the sciences, by which the motive forces of social development could have been understood, were not sufficiently developed in those days. The French materialists of the 18th century did not know the class struggle and did not consider technical development. They knew, indeed, that in order to change men it would be necessary to change society, but they did not know, whether the forces were to come that should change society. They saw these forces in the omnipotence of a few extraordinary men, especially in that of school masters. Beyond this point bourgeois materialism did not progress.

As soon as the capitalist class became conservative, the thought seemed unbearable to them that it should be social conditions, which were to blame for the particular evils of our times and which would have to be changed. To the extent that the bourgeoisie think scientifically, they now attempt to demonstrate, that men are by nature and must be what they are, and that to change society would mean to overthrow the order of nature. However, a man must be very exclusively educated as a naturalist and have remained wholly untouched by the social conditions of our time, in order to contend that these will endure forever by natural necessity. The majority of the capitalist class no longer find the courage to do this, they seek consolation in a repudiation of materialism and an endorsement of freedom of the will. They claim that it is not society which makes human beings, but human beings that make society, according to their will. Society is imperfect because human beings are. We should improve society, not by social transformations, but by uplifting the individuals and inspiring them with a higher morality. Better men will then of themselves create a better society. Thus ethics and the championing of freedom of the will become the favorite doctrines of the present day bourgeoisie. By this means they pretend to show their good will to remedy social evils, and yet this is not supposed to pledge them to any social changes, but on the contrary to ward off such changes.

Whoever is standing upon the soil of capitalist society, cannot have any access, from this standpoint, to any of the knowledge gained upon the basis of the unification of all sciences achieved by Marx. Only he who looks critically upon existing society can come to an understanding of

this knowledge, that is, only he who stands upon proletarian soil. To this extent proletarian science may be distinguished from bourgeois science.

Naturally the antagonism between these two expresses itself most strongly in the mental sciences, whereas the antagonism between feudal, or catholic, and capitalist science shows itself most clearly in the natural sciences. But human thought always strives after unity, the various fields of science always influence each other, and for this reason our social conceptions impress themselves upon our entire world conception. Consequently the antagonism between bourgeois and proletarian science asserts itself also in natural science.

This may be observed even in ancient Grecian philosophy, and it is shown, for example, by the following illustration from modern natural science, which is closely related to our subject. In another place I have already indicated that the bourgeoisie, so long as they were revolutionary, also assumed that natural evolution proceeds by catastrophes. But since they have become conservative, they refuse to have anything to do with catastrophes, even in nature. According to them, evolution now proceeds in very slow steps and exclusively by means of imperceptible changes. Catastrophes appear as something abnormal, unnatural, something that is rather calculated to disturb natural development. And in spite of the Darwinian struggle for existence bourgeois science makes every effort to identify the conception of development with that of an entirely peaceful process.

For Marx, on the other hand, the class struggles were but a special form of the universal law of natural development, which is by no means of a peaceful character. Evolution for him, as we have already indicated, is "dialectic," that is, a product of a struggle between opposites, which appear of necessity. But every struggle of irreconcilable antagonisms must ultimately lead to a defeat of one of the combatants, in other words, to a catastrophe. The catastrophe may be long in preparation, the strength of one of the opponents may increase imperceptibly, that of the other decrease absolutely or relatively, in the end the collapse of one of them will become inevitable, that is, inevitable as a result of the struggle and the increasing strength of the other, not inevitable in the sense of something that accomplishes itself. Day by day, step by step, we meet with little catastrophes, in nature as well as in society. Every death is a catastrophe. Every existing form must at some time succumb to the overwhelming power of antagonisms. This applies not only to plants and animals, but also to entire societies, entire empires, entire celestial bodies. For all of them the process of development prepares from time to time catastrophes by the gradual accumulation of antagonisms. No movement, no development, without occasional catastrophes. They are a necessary stage of development, evolution is impossible without occasional revolutions.

In this conception we have overcome both bourgeois conceptions of evolution, the revolutionary one, which assumed that evolutions proceed exclusively by catastrophes, as well as the conservative one which does not regard a catastrophe as a necessary point of transition of a frequently very slow and imperceptible process of transformation, but rather as a disturbance and obstacle of such a process.

Another antagonism between bourgeois and proletarian, or, if you please, between conservative and revolutionary science, is found in the field of epistemology (Theory of understanding). A revolutionary class that feels in itself the strength to conquer society, is also inclined to acknowledge no barrier to its scientific conquests and think itself capable of solving all problems of its time. A conservative class, on the other hand, instinctively dreads every progress, not merely upon the field of politics and sociology, but also upon that of science, because it feels that any deeper knowledge can no longer help it much, but may do it much harm. It is inclined to belittle confidence in science.

Even the most daring revolutionist of today can no longer share the naive confidence which animated the revolutionary thinkers of the 18th century, who fancied that they carried the solution of all world problems in their pockets and that they were the mouth pieces of absolute reason. No one will want to deny nowadays, what a few thinkers knew also in the 18th century, and some even in antiquity, namely that all our cognition is relative, that it represents an interrelation between man, or his I, and the rest of the world, that it shows to us only this interrelation, not the world itself. All cognition is relative, conditional and limited, and there are no absolute or eternal truths. But this signifies nothing else but that there is no end to our cognition, that the process of cognition is an infinite and unlimited one, that it is indeed vain to represent any cognition as the last conclusion of wisdom, but no less vain to formulate any statement as the ultimate limit of wisdom, which we are supposed never to exceed. We rather know that humanity has always succeeded in passing beyond every limit of cognition, of which it ever became conscious, of course only to find other limits beyond, of which it formerly knew nothing. We have not the least reason to shrink from any definite problem, which we can recognize; we need not lose courage, fold our hands resignedly and mumble: We shall never know about that. But it is precisely such discouragement which is typical of modern bourgeois thought. Instead of exerting all their powers to extend and deepen our knowledge, bourgeois thinkers today devote themselves chiefly to finding definite limits by which our cognition is supposed to be bounded forever, and thus to discrediting the accuracy of scientific understanding.

So long as the bourgeoisie were revolutionary, they passed by such problems. Marx likewise paid no attention to them, much to the indignation of the present bourgeois philosophy.

2. Marx and Engels

It was his revolutionary proletarian point of view which enabled a mental giant like Marx to lay the foundation for a unified science. But when we speak of Marx, we must never forget that the same great deed was also accomplished by a thinker who was his peer, Frederick Engels, and that without the intimate co-operation of both, the new materialist conception of history and the new historical or dialectic conception of the world could not have manifested itself at the first blow so perfectly and comprehensively.

Engels arrived at this conception on a different road than Marx. Marx was the son of a jurist, and had first been intended for a legal career, later for an academic one. He studied law, philosophy, history, and did not turn his attention to the study of economics until he keenly felt the lack of economic knowledge.

In Paris he studied economics, the history of revolutions, and socialism. Particularly the great thinker Saint Simon seems to have exerted a strong influence on him. These studies led him to understand that society is not made by law, nor by the state, but vice versa, that the society arising from the economic process makes the law, the state, according to its requirements.

Engels, on the other hand, was born as the son of a manufacturer. Not the classic high school, but the ordinary high school gave him the foundation of his knowledge and taught him to think after the manner of natural scientists. Then he became a practical merchant, carried on economic practices and theoretically, in England, in Manchester, the center of English capitalism, where his father had a factory. Being familiar with Hegel's philosophy through his German training, he knew how to deepen his economic understanding, and his attention was directed mainly towards economic history. At the same time the proletarian class struggle, during the forties of the 19th century, was nowhere so well developed as in England, and in no other country did its connection with capitalist development show itself so plainly.

In this way Engels arrived simultaneously with Marx at the threshold of the same materialist conception of history, only by a different route. While the one came by way of the old mental sciences, law, ethics, history, the other came by way of the new mental sciences, economic history, ethnology and natural history. Both met in the revolution, in socialism. It was the agreement of their ideas, which at once drew them closer to one another when they came into personal touch in Paris, in 1844. This agreement of their ideas soon became a complete amalgamation into a higher unity, in which it is impossible to say, what and how much the one or the other has contributed to it. Marx was indeed the more powerful of the two, and no one has acknowledged this more unselfishly, even joyously, than Engels himself. After Marx, their mode of thought is also called the Marxian. But Marx could never have accomplished what he did without Engels, from whom he learned a great deal. Of course, the reverse is also true. Each one of them was lifted by the co-operation with the other, and by this means each acquired a farsightedness and universality which he could not have secured by himself alone. Marx would have found the materialist conception of history without Engels, and Engels without Marx, but their development would no doubt have been slower and they would have passed through more mistakes and failures. Marx was the deeper thinker of the two, Engels the more daring. In Marx the power of abstraction was more strongly developed, the gift of discovering in the tangle of concrete phenomena the general; in Engels the power of combination was more pronounced, the gift of constructing out of individual characteristics the whole complex phenomenon in his mind. In Marx the critical power was more vigorous, even the self-critique, which put a brake on the daring of his thought and constrained it to advance cautiously and examine the ground step by step, whereas the mind of Engels received light wings from his proud joy over the stupendous understanding gained by him and flew over the greatest difficulties.

Among the many suggestions received by Marx from Engels, one became especially significant. He had been tremendously uplifted by overcoming the oneness of German thought and fertilizing German by French ideas. Engels acquainted him also with English thought. By this means alone did his mind rise to the greatest power which it could reach under the prevailing conditions. Nothing is farther from the truth than the assertion that Marxism is a purely German product. It has been international from its very inception.

3. The Unification of German, French and English Thought

Three nations were the bearers of modern civilization in the 19th century. Only he, who had become imbued with the spirit of all three, was armed with all achievements of his century, only he could accomplish the best that was possible with the means of this century.

The unification of the thought of these three nations into a higher form, in which the oneness of each should be overcome, forms the starting point of the historical achievement of Marx and Engels.

England, as we have already mentioned, had capitalism farther developed in the first half of the 19th century than any other country, owing particularly to its geographical location, which enabled it in the 18th century to draw considerable benefits out of its colonial policy of conquest and spoliation, which bled to death the states of the European continent bordering on the Atlantic Ocean. Thanks to its insular situation it did not have to maintain a large standing army, was enabled to devote its entire strength to the navy and to conquer the supremacy of the sea without exhausting itself. Its wealth in coal and iron, enabled it to employ the wealth gained by its colonial policy for the development of a great capitalist industry, which in its turn, through its supremacy of the sea, conquered the world market, that could be opened for the consumption of large masses of goods only by water ways, so long as the railroad systems had not been developed for this purpose.

Capitalism and its tendencies could therefore be studied in England earlier than elsewhere, and so could the proletarian class struggle, called forth by these tendencies, as I have already indicated. So the insight into the laws of the capitalist mode of production, that is, political economy, was nowhere farther advanced than in England. The same was true of economic history and ethnology, thanks to world commerce. Better than in other countries was it possible in England to recognize, what the future carried in its womb, and, thanks to the new mental sciences, to perceive the laws governing the social development of all times and thereby to accomplish the unification of natural and social science.

But England offered only the best material, not the best

methods of research, for this purpose.

Just because capitalism developed earlier in England than anywhere else, the capitalist class there conquered the rule of society before feudalism had completely run its race in politics, economics, and in the human mind, and before the capitalist class had come to full self-dependence in every respect. The colonial policy itself, which promoted Capitalism so much, gave new strength also to the feudal lords.

In addition to this, the standing army did not reach a powerful development in England, for reasons which we have already mentioned. This prevented in its turn the rise of a strong centralized government. The bureaucracy remained weak, the selfmanagement of the ruling classes retained its great power in a subordinate position. But this signified that class struggles were but little centralized and frequently split up.

All this caused the spirit of compromise between the old and the new to penetrate the entire life and thought. The thinkers and champions of the rising classes did not oppose christianity, aristocracy, monarchy on principle, their parties did not make any great programs. They did not strive to think their thoughts out, they preferred to champion only individual measures dictated by the practical exigencies of the moment instead of comprehensive programs. Narrowmindedness and conservatism, overestimation of little measures in politics and in science, indifference to all striving for the development of a wide horizon, penetrated all classes.

The situation was quite different in France. This country was economically far more backward, its capitalist industries were mainly purveyors of luxuries, the small bourgeoisie predominated. The small burghers of a great city like Paris sounded the keynote. There were but a few such large cities with half a million inhabitants before the introduction of railroads, and they played a far different role than today. Armies could be only small before the introduction of railroads, which made the rapid transportation of masses possible. They were scattered through the country, could not be rapidly concentrated, and the mass of the people were not so helpless against the equipment of the military forces as they are today. It was also the Parisians, who had distinguished themselves more than others by opposition, and had forced concessions from the government by several armed revolts long before the great revolution.

Before the introduction of compulsory education, the improvement of the postal system by railroads and telegraphs, the spread of daily papers throughout the country, it was the population of the large cities which was mentally superior to the rest of the country and thus exerted a great influence upon mental life. Social intercourse at that time offered the only opportunity for the mass of the uneducated to inform themselves, particularly about politics, but also on matters of art and even of science. How much greater was this possibility in a large city than in the country towns and villages! Whoever had esprit in France, crowded into Paris to express and develop it. Whoever expressed himself in Paris, was filled with a higher spirit.

And now this critical, overbearing, audacious population witnessed an unprecedented collapse of the government and of the ruling class.

The same causes, which retarded economic development in France, promoted the decline of feudalism and of the state. Especially the colonial policy entailed infinite sacrifices upon the state, broke its military and financial strength, and accelerated the economic ruin of the peasants no less than of the aristocrats. State, nobility and church were politically and morally bankrupt, and with the exception of the church also financially. Yet they managed to maintain their oppressive rule to the utmost, thanks to the power centralized by the government through the army and a widespread bureaucracy, and thanks to the complete abolition of all independent action and organization among the people.

This led finally to that colossal catastrophe, which we know as the great French revolution, and by which the small bourgeoisie and proletariat of Paris managed to rule all of France and defy all Europe. But even before that the increasing sharpness of the antagonisms, between the needs of the popular masses led by the liberal bourgeoisie and those of the aristocracy and clergy protected by the state power, led to the most radical defeat of all existing things in thought. War was declared against all traditional authority. Materialism and atheism, which had been in England merely a luxurious hobby of a degenerate nobility and vanished quickly with the victory of the bourgeoisie, became in France precisely the mode of thought of the most daring reformers among the rising classes. While in England more than anywhere else the economic root of class antagonisms and class struggles sprang into view, the France of the revolution showed most clearly, that every class struggle is a struggle for political power, that the task of any great political party is not exhausted in some reform, but rather must keep in view the conquest of political power, and that this conquest, if accomplished by a hitherto suppressed class, always carries with it a change of the entire social fabric. While during the first half of the nineteenth century economic thought was most highly developed in England, political thought was most highly developed in France. While England was dominated by the spirit of compromise, France was ruled by that of radicalism. And while the detail work of gradual organization and upbuilding had its place in England, France was seized by a revolutionary passion that swept everything away.

Radical and daring action was preceded by radical and daring thought which considered nothing sacred, which fearlessly and heedlessly followed up every understanding to its last conclusions, and thought out every thought to the end.

But though the results of this thought and action were brilliant and captivating, it also developed the faults of its virtues. Impatiently pushing toward the last and extreme aims, it took no time to prepare the way for them. Full of eagerness to storm the fort of the state by revolutionary impetuosity, it neglected the work of preparing and organizing its siege. And the longing to push on toward the last and highest truths led easily to the most hasty conclusions based upon wholly inadequate material, preferred brilliant and surprising flashes to patient research. It gave rise to the habit of trying to master the infinite wealth of life by a few simple formulae and catchwords. British sober thought was met by Gallic love of phrases.

In Germany, the situation was still different.

Capitalism was even far less developed there than in France, for Germany was almost completely cut off from the great thoroughfare of European world commerce, the Atlantic ocean, and therefore recovered but slowly from the gruesome devastations of the Thirty Years' War. Germany was still more a small bourgeois country than France, and lacked at the same time a strong central power. Split up into innumerable small states, it had no great capital to show. Petty provincialism and petty village nature made its bourgeoisie narrow, weak and cowardly. The final breakdown of feudalism was not accomplished by an uprising from within, but by an invasion from the outside. Not German burghers, but French soldiers swept it out of the most important parts of Germany.

It is true that the great successes of the rising bourgeoisie in England and France excited also the German bourgeoisie. But every one of the fields conquered by the bourgeoisie of Western Europe remained closed to the enterprise of its most energetic and intelligent elements.

They could not find any great commercial and industrial enterprises nor conduct them, could not take a hand in molding the destinies of state through a parliament or a powerful press, could not command navies and armies. Reality was dismal for them, nothing remained for them but to turn their backs upon reality and devote themselves to pure thought and idealize reality by art. They threw themselves with full force upon these fields, and accomplished great things upon them. Here the German people excelled France and England. While these produced a Pitt, a Fox, a Burke, a Mirabeau, Danton, Robespierre, a Nelson and Napoleon, Germany produced a Schiller, a Goethe, a Kant, a Fichte, a Hegel.

Thinking became the foremost occupation of the great Germans, the idea for them constituted itself the ruler of the world, the revolution of thought became for them a means of revolutionizing the world. The more miserable and circumscribed reality was, the more their thought tried to rise above it, to overcome its limitations, to embrace all infinity.

While the English thought out the best methods for the victorious advance of their navies and industries, the French the best methods for the victorious advance of their armies and insurrections, the Germans thought out the best methods for the victorious march of thought and research.

However, this victorious advance, like the French and English, carried in its train disadvantages in theory and practice. The withdrawal from reality generated unfamiliarity with the world and an overestimation of ideas. These assumed life and strength by the themselves independently of the heads of men that produced and would have to realize them. People were satisfied to be right in theory and neglected to reach for power by which the theory might be applied. Though German philosophy was deep, and German science profound, though German idealism was imaginative, though they created magnificent things, under their surface was hidden an indescribable practical impotence and a complete renunciation of all striving for power. The German ideals were far more sublime than the French and decidedly more than the English. But the Germans did not take one step to get nearer to them. It was proclaimed at the outset that an ideal was something unattainable.

As conservatism sticks to the English, the radical phrase to the French, so inactive idealism still clings in some measure to the German to this day. It is true that the great industrial development of the last decades has strongly restricted it. But even before that it found a counterbalance in the invasion of the French spirit after the revolution. To the mixture of French revolutionary thought with the German philosophical method, Germany owes some of its greatest minds. It is enough to remember Heinrich Heine and Ferdinand Lassalle.

But the result was still more stupendous, when this mixture was fertilized by English economic thought. To this we owe the achievement of Engels and Marx.

They recognized to what extent economics and politics, the detail work of organization and the storm and stress of revolution, are mutual conditions; that detail work remains fruitless without a great aim that is its constant guide and inspiration, and that such an aim floats in the air without the preparation of detail work, which provides the power required for its consummation. But they also recognized that such an aim must not be born out of a mere revolutionary need, if it is to remain free from illusions and self-intoxication, that it may be gained by the most conscientious application of the methods of scientific research, that it must always be reconciled with the total knowledge of humanity. They also recognized that economics forms the basis of social development, that in it the laws are found by which this development is necessarily brought about.

England offered to them the largest amount of actual economic material, the philosophy of Germany the best method by which to derive from this material the goal of the present social development; the revolution of France, finally, showed to them most clearly the way in which we may acquire power, particularly political power, for the attainment of this goal.

In this way they created modern scientific Socialism by the combination of all the great and good elements in English, French and German thought in a higher unity.

4. Unification of the Labor Movement and Socialism

The materialist conception of history marks by itself an epoch. With it begins a new era of science, in spite of all reluctance of bourgeois learning. It marks an epoch, not merely in the history of thought, but also in the history of the struggle for social evolution, of politics in the widest and highest meaning of the word. For by means of it the unification of the labor movement and of Socialism was accomplished and the proletarian class struggle endowed with the greatest strength of which it is capable.

The labor movement and Socialism are by no means identical from the outset. The labor movement arises with necessity of itself as a resistance against industrial capitalism, wherever this appears, expropriates the working masses, oppresses them, but at the same time crowding and unites them in large enterprises and industrial cities. The most primitive form of the labor movement is the purely economic one, the struggle for wages and labor time, which at first assumes merely the form of simple outbreaks of despair, or unprepared revolts, but is soon carried over into higher forms by labor organization. Along with it appears at an early stage the political struggle. The bourgeoisie itself requires in its struggles against feudalism the help of the proletariat and calls upon it for that purpose. In this way the laborers soon learn to value the significance of political freedom and political power for their own purposes. Particularly universal suffrage soon becomes in England and France the objects of the political efforts of the proletarians, and leads in England, during the thirties, to the formation of a proletarian party, the Chartists.

Socialism arises even before that time. But by no means among the proletariat. True, it is a product of capitalism, just as the labor movement is. Like the labor movement, socialism arises from the desire to escape the miseries, which capitalist exploitation brings upon the laboring classes. However, the resistance of the proletariat arises of itself in the labor movement, where a large laboring population congregates, whereas socialism requires a deep insight into the nature of modern society. All socialism rests upon the understanding, that capitalist misery cannot be abolished so long as bourgeois society lasts, that this misery rests upon the private property in means of production and cannot disappear until it does. Upon this point all socialist systems agree. They differ only about the ways that should be chosen for the purpose of abolishing this private property, and in their

conceptions of the new social property that is to take its place.

Although the expectations and suggestions of some socialists were at times rather naive, yet the understanding, upon which they were based, required a social science that was wholly inaccessible to the proletariat during the first decades of the nineteenth century. It is true that a man could arrive at socialist understanding only when he placed himself upon proletarian ground and looked at bourgeois society from this point of view. But at the same time it had to be a man who commanded the means of science, which was then even more than at present accessible for bourgeois circles only. Even though the labor movement develops naturally and inevitably out of capitalist production wherever this reaches a certain height, socialism required for its development not merely capitalism, but also a meeting of extraordinary circumstances, such as occurred but rarely. In any event, however, socialism could have its first beginning only in a bourgeois environment. In England, until very recently, socialism has even been mainly propagated by bourgeois elements.

This fact might appear in contradiction with the Marxian theory of the class struggle. But it would be so only, if the bourgeois class had ever adopted socialism anywhere, or if Marx had declared it to be impossible that single non-proletarian individuals could, from particular motives, accept the point of view of the proletariat.

Marx has always contended no more than that the working class is the only power which can consummate socialism. In other words, the proletariat can free itself only by its own power. But this is by no means equivalent to saying that only proletarians can show it the way to that goal.

That socialism does not amount to anything, unless it is backed by a strong labor movement, need not be proved any more today. Not so clear is the reverse side of the medal, namely that the labor movement can develop its full power only, when it shall have understood and accepted socialism.

Socialism is not the product of ethics standing outside of time, space and all class distinctions. Fundamentally and primarily it is the science of society from the point of view of the proletariat. But science serves not merely for the satisfaction of our curiosity and inquisitiveness in trying to understand the unknown and mysterious, it also has an economic aim, namely that of saving energy. It makes it possible for men to find their way more easily through reality, to apply their strength more efficiently, and thus to perform and accomplish at all times the maximum of the work possible under the existing circumstances. In its points of departure science serves directly and consciously such purposes of saving energy. The more it develops and departs from its starting point, the more intermediate links come between its exploring activity and its practical effects. However, the connection between the two can merely be obscured, not abolished thereby.

Thus the proletariat's science of society, socialism, serves to make possible the most effective application of its strength and thus the highest development of its powers. This science accomplishes this so much better, the more perfect it becomes itself, the deeper its understanding of the reality opened up by it.

Socialist theory is by no means an idle play of parlor scientists, but a very practical thing for the fighting proletariat.

Its principal weapon is the combination of its total mass in powerful and independent organizations, free from all bourgeois influences. This it cannot accomplish without a socialist theory, which alone is able to discover the common proletarian interest in the varied multiplicity of the different proletarian strata and to separate them all sharply and permanently from the bourgeois world.

This cannot be accomplished by that naive labor movement, which arises of itself among the laboring classes against the increasing capitalism, and which is devoid of every theory.

Take a look, for instance, at the labor unions. They are organizations of trades, which seek to protect the immediate interests of their members. But how different are these interests in the individual trades, how different those of the seamen from those of the coal miners, those of the cab-drivers from those of the typesetters! Without a socialist theory they cannot recognize the identity of their interests, without it the various strata of proletarians face one another as strangers, or even as enemies.

Since a labor union defends only the immediate interests of its members, it is not, merely for that reason, antagonistic to the whole bourgeois world, but primarily to the capitalists of its own sphere. Apart from these capitalists there are other bourgeois elements, who derive their existence directly or indirectly from the exploitation of proletarians, and who are thus interested in the bourgeois order of society and will oppose every attempt to make an end of proletarian exploitation, but who have no interest at all in having labor conditions in that particular line very bad. Whether a spinner of Manchester earned 2 shillings or 2½ shillings per day, whether he worked 10 or 12 hours per day, would be immaterial to a great landlord, a banker, a newspaper owner, a lawyer, so long as they didn't own spinning stock. Such people might be interested in making concessions to labor unionists, in order to obtain in return their services in politics. In this way it became possible that labor unions, which were not enlightened by a socialist theory, could be made to serve ends that were anything but proletarian.

But even worse things were possible and happened. Not all proletarian strata are able to form labor organizations. The distinction between organized and unorganized laborers arose. Wherever the organized laborers are filled with socialist thought, they become the most vigorously combative sections of the proletariat, the champions of their entire class. Where they lack this thought, they are prone to become aristocratic, to lose not alone all interest for the unorganized laborers, but to place themselves frequently in opposition to them, to make their organization difficult, and to monopolize the benefits of organization. The unorganized laborers, on the other hand, are incapable of fighting, of rising, without the help of the organized laborers. Without the assistance of these they sink into poverty so much the more, the higher the organizations rise. In this way the organized labor movement, in spite of the increasing strength of some proletarian strata, may bring about a direct weakening of the entire proletariat, unless the organizations are imbued with the socialist spirit.

Neither can the political organization of the proletariat develop its full power without this spirit. This is plainly shown by the first labor party, the Chartists of England, born in 1835. It is true, that Chartism contained some very far-reaching and farseeing elements, but in its totality it followed up no definite socialist program. It had only some practical aims, which were directly obtainable, above all universal suffrage, although this was not supposed to be an end in itself, but a means to an end; but the end, for the Chartists as a body, consisted only in some immediate economic demands, particularly the normal Ten Hour Day.

The first disadvantage of this was that the party did

not become a pure class party. Universal suffrage was a thing which interested also the little bourgeois.

Some may think that it would be an advantage, if the small bourgeois as such would join the labor party. But this would make this party only more numerous, not stronger. The proletariat has its own interests and its own methods of fighting, which differ from those of all other classes. It is hemmed in by uniting with other classes and cannot develop its full strength. It is true, that we socialists welcome small business men and farmers, if they wish to join us, but only on condition that they place themselves upon proletarian ground and feel like proletarians. Our socialist program is a guarantee that only such small business and small farmer elements will join us. The Chartists did not have such a program, and for this reason numerous little bourgeois elements joined in their struggle for universal suffrage, who little understood and sympathized with proletarian interests and methods of fighting. The natural consequence of this was hard internal fights within Chartism, which weakened it considerably.

The defeat of the revolution of 1848 made an end, for a decade, to all political labor movements. When the European proletariat began to stir once more, the English laboring class again took up the fight for universal suffrage. A resurrection of Chartism was to be expected. But the English bourgeois class then made a master stroke. It split the English proletariat, granted to the organized laborers the suffrage, detached them from the mass of the other proletarians, and thus prevented a rebirth of Chartism. This movement did not have a comprehensive program beyond universal suffrage. As soon as this demand was fulfilled in a way that satisfied the combatant portion of the laboring class, the bottom fell out of it. It is only in our own day that Englishmen, painfully dragging behind the laborers of the European continent, devote themselves to the formation of an independent labor party. But even now many of them have not grasped the practical significance of socialism for the full development of proletarian power, and refuse to adopt for their party a program, so long as this could be only a socialist one. They wait until the logic of fact forces such a program upon them. Only when the new labor party shall be fully imbued with socialist understanding, will the labor movement of England develop its full power and be able to produce the best fruit.

In our day the pre-requisites for the indispensable union of the labor movement with socialism exist everywhere. In the first half of the nineteenth century they were missing.

In those days the working people were crushed by the first onslaught of capitalism, so they could hardly ward off its blows. Still they resisted in a primitive way. But they found no opportunity for deep social studies.

Under these circumstances the bourgeois socialists saw in the poverty spread by capitalism only the one side, the depressing one, not the other, the stirring and revolutionizing one, which spurred the proletariat on. They thought that there was only one factor, which could bring about the liberation of the proletariat, namely the good will of the bourgeoisie. They judged the bourgeoisie by themselves and fancied that they would find in it enough allies to carry through socialist measures.

In the beginning their socialist propaganda found much acceptance among bourgeois philanthropists. On the whole the bourgeois are not inhuman. They are touched by misery, out of which they derive no profit, and would like to do away with it. However, though the suffering proletariat excites their pity, the fighting proletariat makes them hard. The begging proletariat has their sympathy, the demanding proletariat arouses their wild resentment. For this reason the socialists found it very disagreeable, that the labor movement threatened to rob them of that factor, upon which they built most: The sympathy of the "well-meaning bourgeoisie" for the proletariat.

They regarded the labor movement so much the more as a disturbing element, the less confidence they had in the proletariat, which then consisted on the whole of a very low mass, and the more clearly they recognized the inadequacy of the unsophisticated labor movement. So they often turned against the labor movement, to demonstrate, for instance how useless labor unions are, which wish merely to raise wages instead of combatting the root of all evil, the wage system.

But gradually a change took place. In the forties the labor movement had developed to a point, where it produced a number of talented brains, who mastered socialism and recognized that it was the proletarian science of society. These laborers knew by their own experience that they need not depend upon the philanthropy of the bourgeoisie. They recognized, that the proletariat would have to free itself. There were also some bourgeois socialists who came to the conclusion, that no reliance could be placed upon the magnanimity of the bourgeoisie. True, they did not place any confidence in the proletariat, either. Its movement appeared to them only as a destroying power, which threatened all civilization. They believed that only bourgeois intelligence could build up a socialist society, but the incentive for it they now saw no longer in compassion with the suffering, but in fear of the aggressive proletariat. They already recognized its tremendous power and understood that the labor movement necessarily arises from the capitalist mode of production, and would grow more and more within this mode of production. They hoped that the fear of the growing labor movement would cause the intelligent bourgeoisie to deprive it of its dangerousness by socialist measures. This was a tremendous progress, but the unification of socialism and of the labor movement could not arise from this conception. The socialist laborers, in spite of the talent of some of them, lacked the comprehensive knowledge, which was required for the purpose of founding a new and higher theory of socialism, which should unite it organically with the labor movement. They could adopt only the old bourgeois socialism, utopianism, and adapt it to their requirements.

In so doing those proletarian socialists went farthest who connected themselves with Chartism or with the French Revolution. Particularly those who started from this revolution assumed a great importance for the history of socialism. The great revolution had shown plainly how important the conquest of the political power may become for the emancipation of a certain class. In this revolution, also, had a powerful political organization, the Jacobin Club, thanks to peculiar circumstances, succeeded in ruling all Paris and through it all France by a reign of terror of the small bourgeoisie that was strongly permeated with proletarian elements. And while the Revolution was still on, Babeuf had already drawn its logical conclusions in a truly proletarian sense and attempted to conquer by a conspiracy, the political power for a communist organization and adapt it to its use.

The memory of this had never died among the French laborers. The conquest of the political power very early became a means for the proletarian socialists by which they wanted to acquire the strength for inaugurating socialism. But in view of the weakness and immaturity of the proletariat they knew no better way for the conquest of the political power than the uprising of a number of conspirators which was supposed to start the

revolution. Among the representatives of this line of thought in France, Blanqui has become best known. Similar ideas were held by Weitling in Germany.

There were still other socialists who started out from the French Revolution. But an uprising seemed to them an unsuitable means of overthrowing the rule of capital. This line did not rely any more than that just mentioned upon the strength of the labor movement. It found a way out by overlooking to what extent the small bourgeoisie rests upon the same foundation of private property in means of production as capital, by believing that the proletarians would be able to accomplish the settlement of their accounts with the capitalists without being disturbed by the small bourgeoisie, the "people," or even by their help. All that was needed was the republic and universal suffrage, in order to induce the government to introduce socialist measures.

This republican superstition, whose most prominent representative was Louis Blanc, found its counterpart in Germany in the monarchic superstition of a social kingdom, which was nursed by a few professors and other dreamers.

This monarchic state socialism was always but a hobby, sometimes also a demagogic phrase. It has never assumed any serious practical importance. On the other hand, the tendencies represented by Blanqui and Louis Blanc became practically significant. They acquired the power to rule Paris in the days of the February revolution of 1848.

In the person of Proudhon they met a powerful critic. He doubted the proletariat as well as the state and the revolution. He recognized very well that the proletariat would have to free itself, but he saw also that, if it fought for its emancipation, it would also have to take up the fight with the government for the control of the political power, for even the purely economic struggle depended upon this power, as the laborers felt at that time at every step, owing to the want of freedom to organize. Since Proudhon regarded the struggle for political power as hopeless, he advised the proletariat to refrain from all fighting in its efforts at emancipation and to try only the means of peaceful organization, such as banks of exchange, insurance funds, and similar institutions. For labor unions he had as little use as for politics.

In this way the labor movement and socialism and all attempts to bring both of them into closer relation formed a chaos of many tendencies during the decade, in which Marx and Engels formed their point of view and their method. Each one of these tendencies had discovered a piece of the truth, but none of them had comprehended it fully, and each one had to end sooner or later in failure.

What these tendencies could not accomplish, was perfected by the materialist conception of history, which thus assumed as great a significance for science as it did for the actual development of society. It facilitated the revolution of the one and of the other.

Like the socialists of their time, Marx and Engels also recognized that the labor movement appears inadequate when confronted with socialism in the question: What means is more apt to secure for the proletariat an assured livelihood and an abolition of all exploitation, the labor movement (labor unions, fighting for universal suffrage, etc.) or socialism? But they also recognized that this question was wrongly framed. Socialism, an assured livelihood of the proletariat and abolition of all exploitation are identical. The question is only: How does the proletariat come to socialism? And the theory of the class struggle answered: By the labor movement.

True, this movement in itself is unable to secure a guaranteed existence and the abolition of all exploitation for the proletariat, but it is the indispensable means of not only safeguarding the individual proletarian against drowning in misery, but also of bestowing visibly more and more power to his whole class, intellectual, economic, political power, a power which increases continually, even though the exploitation of the proletariat increases at the same time. The labor movement should be judged, not by its significance for the limitation of exploitation, but by its significance for the increase of power in the proletariat. Not out of the conspiracy of Blanqui, nor out of the democratic state socialism of Louis Blanc, nor out of the peaceful organization of Proudhon, but only out of the class struggle, which has to last through decades, or even through generations, arises the power which finally can and must bring socialism to the front. To carry on the economic and political class struggle, to perform its detail work devotedly while filling it with the ideas of a far-seeing socialism, to combine harmoniously the organizations and activities of the proletariat into one, tremendous whole which assumes ever more irresistible dimensions, this is, according to Marx and Engels, the task of every one, whether a proletarian or not, who places himself upon a proletarian standpoint and wishes to free the proletariat.

The growth of the power of the proletariat, again, rests in the last resort upon the displacement of the precapitalist, little bourgeois, mode of production, by the capitalist mode, which increases the number of proletarians, concentrates them, increases their indispensability for the whole society, but at the same time creates in the more and more concentrated capital the pre-requisites for the social organization of production, which is no longer to be arbitrarily invented by the utopians, but to be developed out of the capitalist reality.

By this line of reasoning Marx and Engels have created the basis, upon which the social democracy rises, the foundation upon which the fighting proletariat of the entire globe places itself more and more, and from which it started out upon its victorious march.

This achievement was hardly possible, so long as socialism did not have its own science, independent of bourgeois science. The socialists before Marx and Engels were generally well acquainted with the science of political economy, but they adopted it uncritically in the form created by bourgeois thinkers, and differed from them, only in such a way that they drew other conclusions from them, which were friendly to the proletariat.

Marx was the first to undertake the analysis of the capitalist mode of production quite independently and to show, how much more deeply and clearly it may be grasped, if viewed from the proletarian instead of the bourgeois standpoint. For the proletarian point of view stands outside and above it. Only it, which regards capitalism as a passing form, makes it possible to grasp fully its peculiar historical individuality.

This great achievement was accomplished by Marx in his "Capital" (1867), after he and Engels had proclaimed his new socialist position as early as 1848, in the Communist Manifesto.

By this means the proletarian struggle for emancipation had received a scientific foundation of a magnitude and strength, which no revolutionary class had possessed before him. It is true, however, that no other class ever faced so tremendous a task as the modern proletariat. It has to reemphasize the whole world which capitalism has disrupted. Fortunately it is no Hamlet, it does not greet this task with complaints. Out of the immense magnitude of this task it derives an immense confidence and strength.

Editor's Note—This admirable brochure of Kautsky's will be concluded next week with the final chapter, "The Combination of Theory and Practice." No Socialist library will be complete without this work, the best study of Marx that we know. The Trustee Printing Co. expects to publish this translation in a 10 cent pamphlet. Orders should be sent in at once.

5. The Combination of Theory and Practice

We have now considered the most important achievements attained by Marx in co-operation with Engels. But the picture of their work would remain incomplete if we did not refer to one side of it, which marks it to a pronounced degree, namely, the combination of theory and practice.

Bourgeois minds look upon this as a stain upon the bright shield of their scientific greatness, a greatness before which even bourgeois learning must bow down, though reluctantly, grudgingly and without understanding. If they had been merely theoreticians, parlor scientists, content to expound their theories in language unintelligible to ordinary mortals and in inaccessible volumes, they might have been forgiven. But it is assumed that they became biased and their integrity doubtful, because their science was born out of the struggle and in its turn served as a weapon in the struggle, a struggle against the existing order.

This mean view conceives of a fighter only as a lawyer, who has no other use for his science than to draw from it arguments for the refutation of the opposing side. It has no inkling of the fact that no one has a greater craving for truth than a genuine fighter, in a terrible struggle, which he cannot hope to carry to a successful issue, unless he clearly understands his situation, his resources, his prospects. The judges who interpret the laws of the state may be cheated by the tricks of a spellbinder familiar with legal science. But the necessity of natural laws can only be ascertained, not noodled or bribed.

A fighter taking this view of the matter will but draw a greater craving for undisguised truth out of the intensity of the struggle. But he will also feel the need of not keeping any acquired truth for himself, but of communicating it to his fellow fighters.

Thus Engels writes in the period from 1845 to 1848, in which he and Marx gained their new scientific results, that it was by no means their intention to "whisper these results in ponderous volumes exclusively to the 'learned' world." On the contrary, they immediately got in touch with proletarian organizations, in order to make propaganda among them for their point of view and the tactics corresponding to it. They succeeded in winning one of the most important revolutionary organizations of proletarians of that period, the International "Communist Club," for their principles. These found expression a few weeks before the February revolution of 1848 in the Communist Manifesto, which was destined to become the handbook of the proletarian movement of all countries.

The revolution called Marx and Engels from Brussels, where they lived, first to Paris, then to Germany, where the practical exigencies of the revolution completely absorbed their energies for a while.

The decline of the revolution compelled them, since 1850, much against their will, to devote themselves entirely to the theory. But when the labor movement took on new life, in the beginning of the sixties, Marx at once devoted all his strength to a practical participation in it, while Engels was at first prevented by private affairs from doing so. Marx did this in the International Workmen's Association, which was founded in 1864 and was soon to become a specter for all bourgeois Europe.

The ridiculous police spirit, which led even bourgeois democracy to view every proletarian movement with suspicion, represented the International as an enormous society of conspirators, whose sole aim was supposed to be the planning of riots and revolts. In reality the International followed its aims in broad publicity. These were the unification of all proletarian forces for common action, but also for independent action, apart from bourgeois politics and bourgeois thought, with a view to expropriating capital, conquering all political and economic means of class rule from the possessing classes through the proletariat. The most important and decisive step in this struggle is the conquest of the political power, but the economic emancipation of the working classes is the final goal, "to which every political movement has to subordinate itself as a mere auxiliary."

As the foremost means for the development of proletarian power, Marx mentions organization.

"The proletarians possess one element of success," he said in his inaugural address, "numbers. But numbers weigh heavily in the scale only when they are united by organization and led toward a conscious aim."

Without an aim, no organization. The common aim alone can unite the various individuals for common organization. On the other hand, the difference of aims tends as much to separate as the community of aims tends to unify.

It is precisely the significance of organization for the proletariat which makes the question of its aims paramount. This aim is of the greatest practical importance. Nothing is more impractical than the apparently practical policy which regards the movement as everything and the aim as nothing. Is organization also nothing and the unorganized movement everything?

Socialists had marked out goals for the proletariat long before Marx. But these had called forth only sectarianism, had split the proletariat, since every one of those socialists had laid special stress upon the particular way of solving the social problem which he had invented. There were as many solutions as there were sects.

Marx did not offer any particular solution. He withstood all challenges to become "positive," to explain in detail the measures by which the proletariat is to be emancipated. He held up only the general goal of organization, in the International, a goal which every proletarian could set for himself, namely, the economic emancipation of his class. The way, likewise, which he showed was one that class instinct pointed out to every proletarian: the economic and political class struggle.

It was above all the organization of trade unions which Marx espoused in the International; they appeared to him as that form of organization which would most rapidly unite large masses permanently. In the labor unions he saw also the framework of a labor party. No less diligently than to the extension of labor union organization did he devote himself to the work of filling them with the spirit of the class struggle and teaching them to understand the conditions under which the expropriation of the capitalist class and the emancipation of the proletariat would be possible.

He had to overcome much opposition in this work, precisely among the most advanced laborers, who were still full of the spirit of the old socialists, and who looked with disdain upon labor unions, because they did not touch the wage system. These socialists regarded labor unions as a deviation from the straight road, which to them led to the goal by the formation of organizations which should overcome the wage system directly, such as productive associations. That labor organization nevertheless made rapid progress on the European continent since the second half of the sixties is due above all to the International and to the influence exerted in it had through it by Marx.

But trade unions were not an end in themselves for Marx. They were for him merely means to the end of fighting the class struggle against the capitalist system. He vigorously opposed labor union leaders who tried to turn the unions away from this purpose, whether they were actuated by narrow personal motives or by pure and simple economic views. He opposed especially the English labor leaders, who began to dicker with the Liberals. While Marx was very lenient and tolerant toward the proletarian masses, he was very strict toward those who posed as leaders of these masses. This applied particularly to their theoretical leaders.

Marx welcomed every proletarian in the proletarian organization who came with the honest intention of taking part in the class struggle, no matter what views a man might hold on other subjects, no matter what might be his theoretical motives, or what arguments he might employ; it was immaterial to Marx whether such a man was an atheist or a good Christian, a Proudhonian, Blanquist, Weitlingian, Lassalleian, whether he understood the theory of value or whether he considered it quite superfluous, etc.

Of course, it was not immaterial to him whether he had to deal with clearly thinking or confused laborers. He considered it his most important task to enlighten them, but he would have considered it a mistake to repulse laborers or keep them away from his organization merely because they were confused thinkers. He had implicit confidence in the power of the class antagonism and in the logic of the class struggle, which should necessarily push every (proletarian into the right path, as soon as he would join an organization which was actually devoted to the real proletarian class struggle.

But he acted differently toward men who came to the proletariat as teachers and spread ideas that were apt to destroy the strength and unity of this class struggle. He was not in the least tolerant toward such elements. He met them as an inexorable critic, though their intentions might be the best; their influence seemed perilous to him under any conditions, provided it produced any results at all and did not prove wholly a waste of energy.

Thanks to this, Marx was one of the most hated men; he was hated not merely by the bourgeoisie, who feared him as their most dangerous enemy, but also by all sectarians, inventors, educated middleheads and similar elements in the socialist camp, who were so much more indignant over his "intolerance," his "authoritarianism," his "popery," his "courts of heresy," the more deeply his critique cut them.

We Marxians have adopted with the conceptions of Marx also this position of his, and we are proud of it. Only he who feels that he is the weaker complains of the "intolerance" of a purely literary critique. None are criticized more, and with greater sharpness and vindictiveness, than Marx and Marxism. But so far no Marxian has thought of complaining about the intolerance of our literary opponents. We are too sure of our position for that.

We are not so indifferent to the ill humor shown at times by the proletarian masses on account of the literary feuds between Marxism and its critics. This ill humor expresses a very just need: The need of a united class struggle, of a combination of all proletarian elements in a great and compact mass, the fear of disruptions, by which the proletariat might be weakened.

The laborers know very well how much strength there is in their unity; it is worth more to them than theoretical clearness, and they execrate theoretical discussions which threaten to lead to disruption. This is right, for the striving for theoretical clearness would accomplish the opposite of what it should, if it were to weaken instead of strengthen the proletariat.

A Marxian who would carry a theoretical difference to the point of splitting a proletarian fighting organization would not act as a Marxian, would not comply with the Marxian theory of the class struggle, for to it every step of the actual movement is more important than a dozen programs.

Already in the "Communist Manifesto" have Marx and Engels explained the attitude to be taken by Marxians within proletarian organizations. Read the section entitled "Proletarians and Communists." The Communists were then about the same that Marxians are now.

There they said:
"In what relation do the Communists stand to the proletarians as a whole?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

"The theoretical conclusions of the Communists are in no way based on ideas or principles that have been invented or discovered by this or that would-be universal reformer.

"They merely express in general terms actual relations spring from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes." (Karr edition, pages 33 and 33.)

During the sixty years since this was written a good many things have changed, so that these sentences cannot be applied to the letter. In 1848 no great and united labor parties existed, with comprehensive socialist pro-

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grams, and numerous other far more widespread socialist theories existed outside of the Marxian.

Today only one socialist theory, the Marxian, is alive in the fighting proletariat, which is united in mass parties. Not all members of the labor parties are Marxians, still less are all of them thoroughly grounded Marxians. But those among them who do not accept the Marxian theory have no theory at all. Either they deny the necessity of all theories and all programs, or they brew a socialist hash from fragments of pre-Marxian modes of thought, such as we have just discussed and which have not disappeared altogether, with some chunks of Marxism thrown in. This sort of socialism has the advantage that anything may be left out of it which does not suit momentary purposes, and everything adopted into it which seems momentarily useful. This is far more easy than a consistent Marxism, but it fails completely at the points where a theory is most needed. It suffices for the ordinary purposes of popular agitation, but falls whenever it is a question of finding your way through the reality of new and unforeseen events. Out of such yielding and soft material no structure can be built that will defy all storms. Neither can it serve as a guide for explorers, because it is wholly determined by the individual requirements of those who think for a day.

Marxism is no longer compelled to struggle with other socialist theories in the proletariat for its supremacy. Its critics no longer meet it with other theories, but merely with doubts as to the necessity of either all theories or any consistent theory. They offer only phrases, such as that about our "dogmatism," our "orthodoxy" and the like, not any new and compact systems which are opposed to Marxism in the proletarian movement.

But this is for us Marxians only a reason for avoiding every attempt to form a separate Marxian sect within the labor movement, apart from the other strata of the fighting proletariat. We, like Marx, consider it our duty to unite the whole proletariat in a fighting organism. Within this organism we shall always aim to be "practically the most advanced and resolute section which pushes forward all others; on the other hand, theoretically, the section which has 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." In other words, we shall always endeavor to attain to the highest in practical energy and theoretical understanding that can be attained with the existing means. Only in this, in the superiority of our work, which is due to the superiority of the Marxian point of view, do we aim to occupy a marked position in the total organism of the proletariat organized in a class party. Moreover, the proletariat is pushed more and more into Marxian ways by the logic of events, even where it is not yet fully imbued with a conscious Marxism.

Besides, there has hardly been any Marxian, or any group of Marxians, who have caused disruption by purely theoretical differences. Whenever any split took place it was due to practical, not to theoretical, differences, to questions of tactics or organization, and the theory was only the scapegoat that had to carry all the sins committed under these circumstances. For instance, the thing called intolerance for some years by a portion of the French socialists reveals itself on closer scrutiny merely as a fight of a few literary men and parliamentarians against proletarian discipline, which is felt as a degradation by them. They demand discipline only for the great mass, but not for such exalted beings as they are themselves. The champions of proletarian discipline, on the other hand, have always been Marxians in France, and in this they have shown themselves as excellent disciples of their master.

He did not merely show the way by which the proletariat can best reach its great goal, but he also advanced upon it practically. By his work in the International he has become typical for all our practical activity.

Not only as a thinker, but also as an example, should we celebrate Marx, or rather to act more in accordance with his ideas, study him. We derive no less advantage from the history of his personal activity than we do from his theoretical analyses.

He became a model for us in his activity not merely by his knowledge, his superior mind, but also by his daring, his indefatigableness, which was combined with the greatest goodness, unselfishness and a firm equanimity.

Whoever wishes to get an idea of his daring should read his process, which was opened against him in Cologne, on February 9, 1848, because he had called upon the

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people to resist the government by force of arms, and in which he demonstrated the necessity of a new revolution. His goodness and unselfishness is shown by the alert solicitude which he, living in the greatest poverty, exhibited for his comrades, of whom he always thought, rather than of himself, as he did after the collapse of the revolution of 1848, and after the downfall of the Paris Commune of 1871. Finally, his whole life was an uninterrupted chain of trials, which could be borne only by a man whose indefatigableness and firmness far exceeded the ordinary measure.

From the beginning of his work on the "Rheinische Zeitung," in 1842, he was hounded from country to country, until the revolution of 1848 promised him the starting of a victorious advance. By its failure he saw himself hurled back into political and personal misery, which seemed so much more hopeless as the bourgeois democracy, on the one hand, boycotted him in his exile, and some communists, on the other hand, fought him, while many of his faithful comrades were buried for years in Prussian military prisons. After a long time a ray of light fell into his life, the International, but after a few years it was again obscured by the fall of the Paris Commune, which was soon followed by the dissolution of the International through internal dissensions. It is true, the International had fulfilled its duty excellently, but for this reason the proletarian movements of the different countries had become more independent. The more they grew, the more did the International need a more elastic organization, which should leave sufficient playroom for the proletarian movements of the various countries. But at the same time, in which this became necessary, the English labor union leaders, who wanted to work together with the Liberals, felt hemmed in by the theory of the class struggle, while in the Latin countries Bakounist anarchism rebelled against the participation of laborers in politics. These events compelled the General Council of the International to exert its centralized powers at the very moment when more local autonomy became more necessary than ever. This contradiction wrecked the proud ship, whose helm was in the hands of Karl Marx.

This was a bitter disappointment for Marx. It is true, the brilliant rise of the German social democracy followed later, and the revolutionary movement in Russia gained strength. But the laws of exception against socialists stopped the growth of the socialist party in Germany for a while, and Russian terrorism reached its culmination in 1881. After that terrorism declined rapidly.

Thus the political activity of Marx was an uninterrupted chain of failures and disappointments. And so was his scientific activity. His life's work, "Capital," upon which he built such great hopes, seemed to remain without notice and success, even in his own party, for even here it was but little understood until the beginning of the eighties.

Marx died on the threshold of his time, in which the fruit was at last to mature which he had sown in the wildest storms and the darkest days. He died when the time approached in which the proletarian movement seized all Europe and filled itself everywhere with his spirit, stood upon his foundations, and for this reason began a period of uninterrupted and victorious advances for the proletariat which is brilliantly distinct from those days in which Marx struggled as a lonely, little understood and much hated fighter against a world of enemies for an understanding of his ideas among the proletariat.

Discouraging, or even hopeless, as this situation would have been for every ordinary man, Marx never lost his smiling, equanimity nor his proud confidence. He towered so high above his contemporaries, he looked so far beyond them, that he clearly saw the promised land which the overwhelming mass of his fellow beings did not even dream of. It was his scientific greatness, it was the depth of his theory from which he derived the best strength of his character, in which were rooted his firmness and confidence, which kept him free from all vacillation and moods, from that restless excess of feeling, which is elated to the skies today and grieved unto death tomorrow.

We also must drink from this fountain, then we shall be certain of holding our own in the great struggles which we shall have to meet and of developing the highest strength of which we are capable. Then we may expect to reach our goal more quickly than we might ordinarily. The banner of proletarian emancipation and of all humanity which Marx unfurled and carried before us more than a generation, in ever renewed advances, never tinged, never fearing, that banner shall be planted triumphantly upon the ruins of the capitalist dungeon by the fighters whom he has trained.

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