

On the 40th Anniversary of Engels' Death

LENIN

ON

ENGELS

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

FREDERICK ENGELS, the life-long collaborator of Karl Marx and co-founder with him of scientific socialism, died on August 5, 1895. This pamphlet is issued in commemoration of the Fortieth Anniversary of the death of Engels.

While the present pamphlet by no means exhausts everything written by Lenin on Engels, it offers a brief evaluation and appreciation of Engels by the direct continuer of his and Marx's work. Included are Lenin's speech at the unveiling of a monument to Marx and Engels on the first anniversary of the proletarian revolution in Russia; an article on Engels written shortly after his death; and an evaluation of Engels as one of the founders of Communism.

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SPEECH AT THE UNVEILING OF A MONUMENT TO MARX AND ENGELS ON NOVEMBER 7, 1918

WE ARE unveiling a monument to the leaders of the world workers' revolution, to Marx and Engels.

Humanity suffered and languished for ages under the oppression of a tiny handful of exploiters who tortured millions of toilers. But while the exploiters of the previous epoch, the landlords, robbed and pressed down the peasants, the serfs, who were disunited, scattered and ignorant, the exploiters of the new period saw before them, among the down-trodden masses, the vanguard of these masses: the industrial factory workers of the towns. The factory united them, town life enlightened them, the common struggle in strikes as well as revolutionary action hardened them.

The great world-wide historical service of Marx and Engels lies in the fact that they proved by scientific analysis the inevitability of the downfall of capitalism and its transition to communism under which there will be no more exploitation of man by man.

The great world-wide historical service of Marx and Engels lies in this, that they indicated to the proletarians of all countries their role, their task, their calling: to be the first to rise in the revolutionary fight against capital and unite around themselves in this struggle *all* the toilers and the exploited.

We are living in a happy time, when the forecast of the great socialists is beginning to come true. We all see the dawn of the international socialist revolution in a whole

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number of countries. The unspeakable horrors of the imperialist butchery of the peoples are evoking the heroic upsurge of the oppressed masses, and are increasing their forces tenfold in the struggle for emancipation.

May the monument to Marx and Engels remind the millions of workers and peasants that we do not stand alone in the struggle. The workers of the more advanced countries are rising side by side with us. Hard battles are still in store for them and ourselves. The yoke of capital will be broken in the common struggle and socialism will finally triumph!

FREDERICK ENGELS *

*Oh, what a lamp of reason ceased to burn,
What a heart had ceased to throb! ***

IN LONDON, on August 5, 1895, Frederick Engels breathed his last. After his friend Karl Marx (who died in 1883), Engels was the most remarkable scientist and teacher of the modern proletariat in the whole civilized world. Ever since fate brought Karl Marx and Frederick Engels together, the lifework of both friends became their common cause. To understand, therefore, what Frederick Engels has done for the proletariat, one must clearly master the significance of the work and teaching of Marx in the development of the contemporary labor movement. Marx and Engels were the first to show that the working class with its demands was the necessary outcome of the modern economic order, which together with the bourgeoisie inevitably creates and organizes the proletariat. They have shown that it is not the well-meaning attempts of some noble-minded individuals that will deliver humanity from the ills which now oppress it, but the class struggle of the organized proletariat. Marx and Engels, in their scientific works, were the first to explain that socialism is not the fancy of dreamers but the final aim and the inevitable result of the development of the productive forces of modern society. All recorded history up till now was the history of

* Written in 1895, soon after the death of Engels.—*Ed.*

** From a well-known verse by Nekrassov written on the death of the famous revolutionary publicist of the 'fifties and 'sixties, Dobrolubov.

class struggle, the change of domination and the victory of one social class over another. And this will continue until the bases of the class struggle and class rule—private property and anarchic social production—have ceased to exist. The interests of the proletariat demand the overthrow of these bases, and therefore the conscious class struggle of the organized workers must be directed against them. And every class struggle is a political struggle.

These views of Marx and Engels have now been made their own by the whole proletariat fighting for its emancipation, but when the two friends in the 'forties took part in the socialist literature and social movements of their time, such opinions were something quite new. At that time there were many people—talented and mediocre, honest and dishonest—who, carried away by the struggle for political freedom and the struggle against the autocracy of kings, police and priests, did not see the antagonism of interests between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. These people did not even admit the idea of the workers coming forward as an independent social force. There were, on the other hand, many dreamers, some of them men of genius, who thought that it was but necessary to convince the rulers and governing classes of the injustice of the modern social order, and it would then be easy to establish peace on earth and general well-being. They dreamt of a socialism without struggle. Finally, almost all the socialists of that day and the friends of the working class generally considered the proletariat only an *ulcer* and observed with horror how, with the growth of industry, this ulcer was growing too. All of them, therefore, contemplated how to stop the development of industry, together with the proletariat, how to stop the

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“wheel of history.” Contrary to the general fear of the growth of the proletariat, Marx and Engels placed all their hopes on its continuous growth. The greater the number of proletarians, the greater will be their power as a revolutionary class, and the nearer and more possible the coming of socialism. In a few words, the services rendered by Marx and Engels to the working class may be expressed thus: they taught the working class to know itself and become class-conscious and they substituted science for dreaming.

This is why the name and life of Engels should be known to every worker. This is why we must give in this volume (the aim of which is, as in all our publications, to awaken class consciousness in the Russian workers) an outline of the life and activity of Frederick Engels, one of the two great teachers of the modern proletariat.

Engels was born in 1820 in Barmen, in the Rhine province of the Prussian kingdom. His father was a manufacturer. In 1823, Engels was forced by family circumstances to enter one of the Bremen commercial houses as a salesman, before completing his course at the *gymnasium*. His commercial occupation did not prevent Engels from working on his scientific and political education. While still at the *gymnasium* he came to hate autocracy and the arbitrariness of officials. His studies of philosophy led him further. The teaching of Hegel dominated German philosophy at that time, and Engels became his disciple. Although Hegel himself was an admirer of the autocratic Prussian state, in whose service he was occupying the post of professor in the Berlin University, the *teaching* of Hegel was revolutionary. The faith of Hegel in human reason and its rights, and the fundamental proposition of the Hegelian philosophy that a

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constant process of change and development is going on in the universe, had led those of the students of the Berlin philosopher, who did not desire to reconcile themselves with the actual state of things, to the idea that the struggle with the actual state of things, the struggle with the existing wrong and ruling evil, is equally rooted in the universal law of eternal development. If all things develop, if one set of institutions is replaced by others, then why should the autocracy of the Prussian king or the Russian tsar—or the enrichment of an insignificant minority, or the domination of the bourgeoisie over the people—continue forever?

The philosophy of Hegel spoke of the development of the mind and ideas; it was *idealistic*. From the development of the mind it deduced the development of nature, man, human and social relations. Marx and Engels, while maintaining Hegel's idea of the eternal process of development,* rejected the preconceived idealistic outlook. Turning to life, they saw that it is not the development of mind that explains the development of nature, but on the contrary, mind must be explained from nature, from matter. . . . Contrary to Hegel and other Hegelians, Marx and Engels were materialists. Casting a materialistic glance at the universe and humanity, they perceived that just as material causes lay at the basis of all phenomena of nature, so also the development of human society was conditioned by the development of material productive forces. The relations in which men stand to each other in the production of things necessary for the satisfaction of their human needs depend

* Marx and Engels pointed out, many a time, that they, in their intellectual development, are very much indebted to the great German philosophers, particularly Hegel. "Without German philosophy," says Engels, "there would have been no scientific socialism."

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upon the development of the productive forces. And it is in these relations that the explanation is to be found of all the phenomena of social life, human aspirations, ideas and laws.

The development of productive forces creates social relations based upon private property, but now we see that the same development of the productive forces deprives the majority of their property and concentrates it in the hands of an insignificant minority. It destroys property, the basis of the modern social order; this development itself tends towards the very aim which the socialists put before themselves. The socialists need but understand which of the social forces is, by its position in modern society, interested in the realization of socialism and imbue this force with a consciousness of its interests and historical tasks. The proletariat is that force. Engels made his acquaintance with the proletariat in England, in the center of British industry, in Manchester, whither he moved in 1842, entering into the service of a commercial house of which his father was a shareholder. Here, Engels did not merely sit in the factory office but walked about the slums in which the workers were cooped up and saw their poverty and misery with his own eyes. But he did not confine himself to personal observations. He read all that had been discovered before him concerning the position of the British working class and made a careful study of all the official documents that were accessible to him. The fruit of his studies and observations was the book which appeared in 1845: *The Condition of the Working Class in England*.

We have already mentioned above the chief service of Engels as the author of *The Condition of the Working Class*

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in England. There were many, even before Engels, who described the sufferings of the proletariat and showed the necessity of helping it. Engels was the *first* to say that the proletariat was *not merely* a suffering class, but that it was the shameful economic position in which the proletariat finds itself which inexorably drives it forward and forces it to fight for its final emancipation. And the fighting proletariat *will help itself by its own efforts.* The political movement of the working class will inevitably lead the workers to the consciousness that there is no way out for them except socialism. On the other hand, socialism will be a power only when it becomes the aim of the *political* struggle of the working class. Such are the main ideas of Engels' book *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, ideas, now owned by the entire thinking and fighting proletariat, but which at that time were quite new. These ideas were enunciated in a book, attractively written and full of the most authentic and terrible pictures of the distress of the British proletariat. That book was a terrible indictment of capitalism and the bourgeoisie. The impression created by it was very great. Engels' book began to be referred to everywhere as the best picture of the conditions of the modern proletariat. And, in fact, neither before nor since 1845 did there appear so striking and truthful a picture of the distress of the working class.

It was only in England that Engels became a socialist. In Manchester he entered into relations with the workers of the British labor movement and began to write for the English socialist publications. In 1844, on returning to Germany via Paris, he became acquainted in that city with Marx, with whom he had already previously entered into

