gigantic power split like a rotten reed upon the German people. What are the "material guarantees" Prussia, in her wildest dreams, can or dare impose upon France, compared to the "material guarantees" the first Napoleon had wrenched from herself? The result will not prove the less disastrous. History will measure its retribution, not by the extent of the square miles conquered from France, but by the intensity of the crime of reviving, in the second half of the nineteenth century, the policy of conquest!

But, say the mouthpieces of Teutonic patriotism, you must not confound Germans with Frenchmen. What we want is not glory, but safety. The Germans are an essentially peaceful people. In their sober guardianship, conquest itself changes from a condition of future war into a pledge of perpetual peace. Of course, it is not Germans that invaded France in 1792, for the sublime purpose of bayoneting the revolution of the eighteenth century. It is not Germans that hafouled their hands by the subjugation of Italy, the oppression of Hungary, and the dismemberment of Poland. Their present military system, which divides the whole able-bodied male population into two parts—one standing army on service, and another standing army on furlough, both equally bound in passive obedience to rulers by divine right—such a military system is, of course, "a material guarantee," for keeping the peace and the ultimate goal of civilising tendencies! In Germany, as everywhere else, the sycophants of the powers that be poison the popular mind by the incense of mendacious self praise.

Indignant as they pretend to be at the sight of French fortresses in Metz and Strasbourg, those German patriots see no harm in the vast system of Moscovite fortifications at Warsaw, Modlin, and Ivangoord. While gloating at the terrors of imperialist invasion, they blink at the infamy of autocratic tutelage.

As in 1865 promises were exchanged between Louis Bonaparte and Bismarck, so in 1870 promises have been exchanged between Gorchakov\(^1\) and Bismarck. As Louis Bonaparte flattered himself

\(^1\) In 1865, Louis Bonaparte promised Bismarck France's neutrality in case of an Austro-Prussian war. In 1870, the Russian Foreign Minister Gorchakov promised Russia's neutrality in a Franco-Prussian war.—Ed.

that the War of 1866, resulting in the common exhaustion of Austria and Prussia, would make him the supreme arbiter of Germany, so Alexander flattered himself that the War of 1870, resulting in the common exhaustion of Germany and France, would make him the supreme arbiter of the western continent. As the Second Empire thought the North German Confederation incompatible with its existence, so autocratic Russia must think herself endangered by a German empire under Prussian leadership. Such is the law of the old political system. Within its pale the gain of one state is the loss of the other. The tsar's paramount influence over European roots in his traditional hold on Germany. At a moment when in Russia herself volcanic social agencies threaten to shake the very base of autocracy, could the tsar afford to bear with such a loss of foreign prestige? Already the Moscovite journals repeat the language of the Bonapartist journals after the War of 1866.\(^4\) Do the Teuton patriots really believe that liberty and peace will be guaranteed to Germany by forcing France into the arms of Russia? If the fortune of her arms, the arrogance of success, and dynastic intrigue lead Germany to a spoliation of French territory, there will then only remain two courses open to her. She must at all risks became the avowed tool of Russian aggrandisement, or, after some short respite, make again ready for another "defensive" war, not one of those new-fangled "localised" wars, but a war of races—a war with the combined Slavonian and Roman races.

The German working class have resolutely supported the war, which it was not in their power to prevent, as a war for German independence and the liberation of France and Europe from that pestilential incubus, the Second Empire. It was the German workmen who, together with the rural labourers, furnished the sinews and muscles of heroic hosts, leaving behind their half-starved families. Decimated by the battles abroad, they will be once more decimated by misery at home. In their turn they are now coming forward to ask for "guarantees"—guarantees that their immense sacrifices have not been bought in vain, that they

\(^4\) The Russian press attacked the Russian government for its friendly attitude to Prussia.—Ed.
have conquered liberty, that the victory over the imperialist armies will not, as in 1815, be turned into the defeat of the German people; and, as the first of these guarantees, they claim an honourable peace for France, and the recognition of the French republic.

The Central Committee of the German Socialist-Democratic Workmen's Party issued on September 5 a manifesto, energetically insisting upon these guarantees.

"We," they say, "we protest against the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine. And we are conscious of speaking in the name of the German working class. In the common interest of France and Germany, in the interest of western civilisation against eastern barbarism the German workmen will not patiently tolerate the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine. . . . We shall faithfully stand by our fellow workmen in all countries for the common international cause of the proletariat!"

Unfortunately, we cannot feel sanguine of their immediate success. If the French workmen amidst peace failed to stop the aggressor, are the German workmen more likely to stop the victor amidst the clamour of arms? The German workmen's manifesto demands the extradition of Louis Bonaparte as a common felony to the French republic. Their rulers are, on the contrary, already trying hard to restore him to the Tuileries as the best man to ruin France. However that may be, history will prove that the German working class are not made of the same malleable stuff as the German middle class. They will do their duty.

Like them, we hail the advent of the republic in France, but at the same time we labour under misgivings which we hope will prove groundless. That republic has not subverted the throne, but only taken its place become vacant. It has been proclaimed, not as a social conquest, but as a national measure of defence. It is in the hands of a Provisional Government composed partly of notorious Orleanists, partly of middle class republicans, upon

some of whom the insurrection of June 1848 has left its indelible stigma. The division of labour amongst the members of that government looks awkward. The Orleanists have seized the strongholds of the army and the police, while to the professed republicans have fallen the talking departments. Some of their first acts go far to show that they have inherited from the empire, not only ruins, but also its dread of the working class. If eventual impossibilities are in wild phraseology promised in the name of the republic, is it not with a view to prepare the cry for a "possible" government? Is the republic, by some of its middle class undertakers, not intended to serve as a mere stop-gap and bridge over an Orleanist restoration?

The French working class moves, therefore, under circumstances of extreme difficulty. Any attempt at upsetting the new government in the present crisis, when the enemy is almost knocking at the doors of Paris, would be a desperate folly. The French workmen must perform their duties as citizens; but, at the same time, they must not allow themselves to be swayed by the national souvenirs of 1792, as the French peasants allowed themselves to

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1 In regard to this, Lenin wrote as follows, in his Preface to the Russian translation of Marx's Letters to Kugelmann:

"In September 1870, six months before the Commune, Marx emphatically warned the French workers, any attempt at upsetting the new government would be sheer folly, he said in his well-known Address to the International. He revealed in advance the nationalistic illusions concerning the possibility of a movement in the spirit of 1792.

"But when the masses rose Marx wanted to march with them, to learn with them in the process of the struggle and not to give them bureaucratic admonitions. He realised that it would be quackery or hopeless pedantry to attempt to calculate the chances in advance with complete accuracy. Above everything else he put the fact that the working class heroically, self-sacrificingly and taking the initiative itself, makes world history. Marx looked upon this history from the point of view of those who made it without being able to calculate exactly the chances beforehand and not from the point of view of a moralising intellectual and philistine who says: 'It was easy to foresee . . . they should not have resorted to . . .'

"Marx was able to appreciate the fact that moments occurred in history when the desperate struggle of the masses even for a hopeless cause is necessary for the sake of the further education of these masses and their training for the next struggle." (Marxist-Leninist Library No. 5, pp. 15-19.) Ed.

In France in 1792 during the struggle with the attacking armies of the
be deluded by the national *souvenirs* of the First Empire. They have not to recapitulate the past, but to build up the future. Let them calmly and resolutely improve the opportunities of republican liberty, for the work of their own class organisation. It will gift them with fresh herculean powers for the regeneration of France, and our common task—the emancipation of labour. Upon their energies and wisdom hinges the fate of the republic.

The English workmen have already taken measures to overcome by a wholesome pressure from without, the reluctance of their government to recognise the French republic. The present dilatoriness of the British government is probably intended to atone for the Anti-Jacobin war (1792) and the former indecent haste in sanctioning the *coup d'état*. The English workmen call also upon their government to oppose by all its power the dismemberment of France, which a part of the English press is shameless enough to howl for. It is the same press that for twenty years defied Louis Bonaparte as the provost of Europe, that frantically cheered on the slaveholders to rebellion. Now, as then, it drags for the slaveholder.

Let the sections of the *International Working Men's Association* in every country stir the working classes to action. If they forsake coalition of European states, he warns against a mechanical application of the slogan "the fatherland in danger" to the Franco-Prussian war. "To fight the Prussians on behalf of the bourgeoisie would be madness." (Engels)—*Ed.*

1 At the presidential election (December 10, 1848) Louis Bonaparte exploited the prejudices of the French peasants; they gave him their votes in reeollection of Napoleon Bonaparte with whose name they erroneously associated the achievements of the first French bourgeois revolution.—*Ed.*

2 Marx has in mind the great campaign of meetings, which developed in England on the initiative of Marx and the General Council of the International, for securing recognition of the French republic.—*Ed.*

3 The war conducted by the first coalition of the powers (Austria, Prussia, Sardinia, etc.) against the first French bourgeois revolution. In February 1793, England and Holland, and in March Spain, also joined in the war.—*Ed.*

4 During the Civil War in America (1861-65) between the industrial north and the south, which upheld the system of slave plantations, the English bourgeoisie supported the south, i.e., slavery. This was due to the fact that the English bourgeoisie saw a growing rival in the industrial north, while the south represented a supplier of cotton for the English market.—*Ed.*

**THE CIVIL WAR IN FRANCE**

their duty, if they remain passive, the present tremendous war will be but the harbinger of still deadlier international feuds, and lead in every nation to a renewed triumph over the workman by the lords of the sword, of the soil and of capital.

*Vive la République!*

**THE GENERAL COUNCIL**

ROBERT APPLEGARTH, MARTIN J. BOON, FRED. BRADNICK, CATHIL, JOHN HALE, WILLIAM HALE, GEORGE HARRIS, FRED. LESNER, LAYSATINE, B. LUCRAFT, GEORGE MILNER, THOMAS MOTTERSHED, CHARLES MURRAY, GEORGE OBER, JAMES PEARL, PRANDER, RUTH, JOSEPH SHEPHERD, COWELL STEPHEN, STOLL, SCHMITZ.

**CORRESPONDING SECRETARIES:**

EUGÈNE DUFOUR, for France  
HERMANN JUNG, for Switzerland  
HOLLAND AND SPAIN  
ANSON ZABICKI, for Poland  
A. SERRAUX, for Belgium  
JAMES COHEN, for Denmark  
KARL MARX, for Germany and Russia  
J. G. ECCARUS, for the United States  
WILLIAM TOWNSEND, Chairman  
JOHN WESTON, Treasurer  
J. GEORGE ECCARUS, General Secretary  

**ADDRESS OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION ON THE CIVIL WAR IN FRANCE, 1871**

To All the Members of the Association in Europe and the United States

I

On the 4th of September, 1870, when the working men of Paris proclaimed the republic, which was almost instantaneous acclaim throughout France, without a single voice of dissent, a cabal of place-hunting barristers, with Thiers for their statesman and Trochu for their general, took hold of the Hôtel de Ville. At that time they were imbued with so fanatical a faith in the mission of Paris to represent France in all epochs of historical crisis, that, to legitimate their usurped titles as governors of France, they thought it quite sufficient to produce their lapsed
mandates as representatives of Paris. In our second address on
the late war, five days after the rise of these men, we told you who
they were. Yet, in the turmoil of surprise, with the real leaders
of the working class still shut up in Bonapartist prisons and the
Prussians already marching upon Paris, Paris bore with their
assumption of power, on the express condition that it was to be
wielded for the single purpose of national defence. Paris, how-
ever, was not to be defended without arming its working class,
organising them into an effective force, and training their ranks
by the war itself. But Paris armed was the revolution armed. A
victory of Paris over the Prussian aggressor would have been a
victory of the French workman over the French capitalist and his
state parasites. In this conflict between national duty and class
interest, the Government of National Defence did not hesitate
one moment to turn into a Government of National Defection.

The first step they took was to send Thiers on a roving tour to
all the courts of Europe, there to beg mediation by offering the
barter of the republic for a king. Four months after the com-
cencement of the siege, when they thought the opportune mo-
ment come for breaking the first word of capitulation, Trochu,
in the presence of Jules Favre and others of his colleagues,
addressed the assembled mayors of Paris in these terms:

"The first question put to me by my colleagues on the very
evening of the 4th of September was this: Paris, can it, with any
chance of success, stand a siege by the Prussian army? I did not
hesitate to answer in the negative. Some of my colleagues here
present will warrant the truth of my words and the persistence
of my opinion. I told them, in these very terms, that, under the
existing state of things, the attempt of Paris to hold out a siege
by the Prussian army would be a folly. Without doubt, I added, it
would be an heroic folly; but that would be all, . . . The events
[managed by himself] have not given the lie to my prevision."

This nice little speech of Trochu was afterwards published by
M. Corbon, one of the mayors present.

Thus, on the very evening of the proclamation of the republic,
Trochu’s "plan" was known to his colleagues to be the capitula-
tion of Paris. If national defence had been more than a pretext

for the personal government of Thiers, Favre and Co., the up-
starts of the 4th of September would have abdicated on the 5th—
would have initiated the Paris people into Trochu’s "plan," and
called upon them to surrender at once, or to take their own fate
into their own hands. Instead of this, the infamous impostors
resolved upon curing the heroic folly of Paris by a regimen of
famine and broken heads, and to dupe her in the meanwhile by
ranting manifestoes, holding forth that Trochu, "the governor of
Paris, will never capitulate," and Jules Favre, the foreign minister,
will "not cede an inch of our territory, nor a stone of our for-
tresses." In a letter to Gambetta, that very same Jules Favre avows
that what they were "defending" against were not the Prussian
soldiers, but the working men of Paris. During the whole con-
tinuance of the siege the Bonapartist cut-throats, whom Trochu
had wisely intrusted with the command of the Paris army, ex-
changed, in their intimate correspondence, ribald jokes at the
well-understood mockery of defence. (See, for instance, the corre-
spondence of Alphonse Simon Guizot, supreme commander of the
artillery of the Army of Defence of Paris and Grand Cross of the
Legion of Honour, to Suzanne, general of division of artillery, a
correspondence published by the Journal officiel of the Commune.)

The mask of imposture was at last dropped on the 28th of January,
1871. With the true heroism of utter self-debasement, the Govern-
ment of National Defence, in their capitulation, came out as the
government of France by Bismarck’s prisoners—a part so base that
Louis Bonaparte himself had, at Sedan, shrunk from accepting it.
After the events of the 18th of March on their wild flight to
Versailles, the capitulards left in the hands of Paris the docu-
mentary evidence of their treason, to destroy which, as the Com-
mune says in its manifesto to the provinces, "those men would not
recoil from battering Paris into a heap of ruins washed by a
sea of blood."

To be eagerly bent upon such a consummation, some of the
leading members of the Government of Defence had, besides, most
peculiar reasons of their own.

Shortly after the conclusion of the armistice, M. Millière, one
of the representatives of Paris to the National Assembly, now shot
by express order of Jules Favre, published a series of authentic legal documents in proof that Jules Favre, living in concubinage with the wife of a drunken resident at Algiers, had, by a most daring concoction of forgeries, spread over many years, contrived to grasp, in the name of the children of his adultery, a large succession, which made him a rich man, and that, in a lawsuit undertaken by the legitimate heirs, he only escaped exposure by the connivance of the Bonapartist tribunals. As these dry legal documents were not to be got rid of by any amount of rhetorical horse-power, Jules Favre, for the first time in his life, held his tongue, quietly awaiting the outbreak of the civil war, in order, then, frantically to denounce the people of Paris as a band of escaped convicts in utter revolt against family, religion, order and property. This same forger had hardly got into power, after the 4th of September, when he sympathetically let loose upon society Pic and Taillefer, convicted, even under the empire, of forgery in the scandalous affair of the “Étendard.” One of these men, Taillefer, having dared to return to Paris under the Commune, was at once reinstated in prison; and then Jules Favre exclaimed, from the tribune of the National Assembly, that Paris was setting free all her jailbirds!

Ernest Picard, the Joe Miller of the Government of National Defence, who appointed himself finance minister of the republic after having in vain striven to become the home minister of the empire, is the brother of one Arthur Picard, an individual expelled from the Paris Bourse as a blackleg (see report of the Prefecture of Police, dated 13th July, 1867), and convicted, on his own confession, of a theft of 300,000 francs, while manager of one of the branches of the Société Générale, Rue Palestrin, No. 5 (see report of the Prefecture of Police, 11th December, 1868). This Arthur Picard was made by Ernest Picard the editor of his paper, L’Électeur Libre. While the common run of stockjobbers were led astray by the official lies of this finance office paper, Arthur was running backwards and forwards between the finance office and the Bourse, there to discount the disasters of the French army. The whole financial correspondence of that worthy pair of brothers fell into the hands of the Commune.

Jules Ferry, a penniless barrister before the 4th of September, contrived, as mayor of Paris during the siege, to job a fortune out of famine. The day on which he would have to give an account of his maladministration would be the day of his conviction.

These men, then, could find, in the ruins of Paris only, their tickets-of-leave: they were the very men Bismarck wanted. With the help of some shuffling of cards, Thiers, hitherto the secret prompter of the government, now appeared at its head, with the ticket-of-leave men for his ministers.

Thiers, that monstrous gnome, has charmed the French bourgeoisie for almost half a century, because he is the most consummate intellectual expression of their own class corruption. Before he became a statesman he had already proved his lying powers as an historian. The chronicle of his public life is the record of the misfortunes of France. Banded, before 1830, with the republicans, he alighted into office under Louis Philippe by betraying his protector Lafayette, ingratiating himself with the king by exciting mobs against the clergy, during which the church of Saint Germain l’Auxerrois and the Archbishop’s palace were plundered, and by acting the minister-spy upon, and the jail-accoucheur of the Duchesse de Berry. The massacre of the republicans in the Rue Transnonain, 1 and the subsequent infamous laws of September against the press and the right of association, were his work. Reappearing as the chief of the cabinet in March 1840, he astonished France with his plan of fortifying Paris. To the republicans, who denounced this plan as a sinister plot against the liberty of Paris, he replied from the tribune of the Chamber of Deputies:

“What! to fancy that any works of fortification could ever endanger liberty! And first of all you calumniate any possible government in supposing that it could some day attempt to maintain itself by bombarding the capital; ... but that government would be a hundred times more impossible after its victory than before.” Indeed, no government would ever have dared to bombard

1. The ferocious suppression in Paris in 1839 of the rising of the Society for the Rights of Man, during which unarmed persons, including women and children, were slaughtered.—Ed.
Paris from the forts but that government which had previously surrendered these forts to the Prussians.

When King Bomba tried his hand at Palermo, in January 1848, Thiers, then long since out of office, again rose in the Chamber of Deputies:

"You know, gentlemen, what is happening at Palermo. You, all of you, shake with horror [in the parliamentary sense] on hearing that during forty-eight hours a large town has been bombarded—by whom? Was it by a foreign enemy exercising the rights of war? No, gentlemen, it was by its own government. And why? Because the unfortunate town demanded its rights. Well, then, for the demand of its rights it has got forty-eight hours of bombardment. . . . Allow me to appeal to the opinion of Europe. It is doing a service to mankind to arise, and to make reverberate, from what is perhaps the greatest tribune in Europe, some words [indeed words] of indignation against such acts. . . .

When the Regent Espartero, who had rendered services to his country [which M. Thiers never did] intended bombarding Barcelona, in order to suppress its insurrection, there arose from all parts of the world a general outcry of indignation."

Eighteen months afterwards, M. Thiers was amongst the fiercest defenders of the bombardment of Rome by a French army. In fact, the fault of King Bomba seems to have consisted in this only, that he limited his bombardment to forty-eight hours.

A few days before the Revolution of February, fretting at the long exile from place and pelf to which Guizot had condemned him, and sniffing in the air the scent of an approaching popular commotion, Thiers, in that pseudo-heroic style which won him the nickname of Mirabeau-mouche, declared, to the Chamber of Deputies: "I am of the party of revolution, not only in France, but in Europe. I wish the government of the revolution to remain in the hands of moderate men . . . but if that government should fall into the hands of ardent minds, even into those of radicals, I shall, for all that, not desert my cause. I shall always be of the party of the revolution." The Revolution of February came.

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Instead of displacing the Guizot Cabinet by the Thiers Cabinet, as the little man had dreamt, it superseded Louis Philippe by the republic. On the first day of the popular victory he carefully hid himself, forgetting that the contempt of the working men screened him from their hatred. Still, with his legendary courage, he continued to play the public stage, until the June massacres had cleared it for his sort of action. Then he became the leading mind of the "Party of Order" and its parliamentary republic, that anonymous interregnum, in which all the rival factions of the ruling class conspired together to crush the people, and conspired against each other to restore each of them its own monarchy. Then, as now, Thiers denounced the republicans as the only obstacle to the consolidation of the republic; then, as now, he spoke to the republic as the hangman spoke to Don Carlos: "I shall assassinate thee, but for thy own good." Now, as then, he will have to explain on the day after his victory: L'Empire est fait—the empire is consummated. Despite his hypocritical homilies about necessary liberties and his personal grudge against Louis Bonaparte, who had made a dupe of him, and kicked out parliamentarism—and outside of its fictitious atmosphere the little man is conscious of withering into nothingness—he had a hand in all the infamies of the Second Empire, from the occupation of Rome by French troops to the war with Prussia, which he incited by his fierce invective against German unity—not as a cloak of Prussian despotism, but as an encroachment upon the vested right of France in German disunion. Fond of brandishing with his dwarfish arms in the face of Europe the sword of the first Napoleon, whose historical shoe-black he had become,² his foreign policy always culminated in the utter humiliation of France, from the London convention of 1810 to the Paris capitulation of 1871, and the present civil war, where

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¹ This refers to the suppression of the June insurrection of the Paris proletariat in 1848.—Ed.

² Don Carlos (1545-68). Spanish prince who took part in the conspiracy against his father. He is idealised by Schiller in the latter's tragedy, Don Carlos.—Ed.

³ The chief historical works of Thiers are: History of the French Revolution and History of the Consulate and the Empire.—Ed.
he hounds on the prisoners of Sedan and Metz against Paris by special permission of Bismarck. Despite his versatility of talent and shiftiness of purpose, this man has his whole lifetime been wedded to the most fossil routine. It is self-evident that to him the deeper undercurrents of modern society remained forever hidden; but even the most palpable changes on its surface were abhorrent to a brain all the vitality of which had fled to the tongue. Thus he never tired of denouncing as a sacrilege any deviation from the old French protective system. When a minister of Louis Philippe, he railed at railways as a wild chimera; and when in opposition under Louis Bonaparte, he branded as a profanation every attempt to reform the rotten French army system. Never in his long political career has he been guilty of a single—even the smallest—measure of any practical use. Thiers was consistent only in his greed for wealth and his hatred of the men that produce it. Having entered his first ministry under Louis Philippe poor as Job, he left it a millionaire. His last ministry under the same king (of the 1st of March, 1840) exposed him to public taunts of peculation in the Chamber of Deputies, to which he was content to reply by tears—a commodity he deals in as freely as Jules Favre, or any other crocodile. At Bordeaux his first measure for saving France from impending financial ruin was to endow himself with three millions a year, the first and the last word of the "Economical Republic," the vista of which he had opened to his Paris electors in 1869. One of his former colleagues of the Chamber of Deputies of 1830, himself a capitalist and, nevertheless, a devoted member of the Paris Commune, M. Beslay, lately addressed Thiers thus in a public placard: "The enslavement of labour by capital has always been the cornerstone of your policy, and from the very day you saw the Republic of Labour installed at the Hôtel de Ville, you have never ceased to cry out to France: 'These are criminals!'" A master in small state roguery, a virtuoso in perjury and treason, a craftsman in all the petty stratagems, cunning devices, and base perfidies of parliamentary party warfare; never scrupling, when out of office, to fan a revolution, and to stifle it in blood when at the helm of the state; with class prejudices standing him in the place of ideas, and vanity in the place of a heart; his private life as infamous as his public life is odious—even now, when playing the part of a French Sulla, he cannot help setting off the abomination of his deeds by the ridicule of his ostentation.

The capitulation of Paris, by surrendering to Prussia not only Paris, but all France, closed the long-continued intrigues of treason with the enemy, which the usurpers of the 4th September had begun, as Trochu himself said, on that very same day. On the other hand, it initiated the civil war they were now to wage, with the assistance of Prussia, against the republic and Paris. The trap was laid in the very terms of the capitulation. At that time above one-third of the territory was in the hands of the enemy, the capital was cut off from the provinces, all communications were disorganised. To elect under such circumstances a real representation of France was impossible, unless ample time were given for preparation. In view of this, the capitulation stipulated that a National Assembly must be elected within eight days; so that in many parts of France the news of the impending election arrived on its eve only. This assembly, moreover, was, by an express clause of the capitulation, to be elected for the sole purpose of deciding on peace or war, and, eventually, to conclude a treaty of peace. The population could not but feel that the terms of the armistice rendered the continuation of the war impossible, and that for sanctioning the peace imposed by Bismarck, the worst men in France were the best. But not content with these precautions, Thiers even before the secret of the armistice had been broached to Paris, set out for an electioneering tour through the provinces, there to galvanise back into life the Legitimist party, which now, along with the Orleanists, had to take the place of the then impossible Bonapartists. He was not afraid of them. Impossible as a government of modern France, and, therefore, contemptible as rivals, what party were more eligible as tools of counter-revolution than the party whose action, in the words of Thiers himself (Chamber of
Deputies, 5th January, 1833), “had always been confined to the three resources of foreign invasion, civil war, and anarchy”? They verily believed in the advent of their long-expected retrospective millennium. There were the heels of foreign invasion trampling upon France; there was the downfall of an empire, and the captivity of a Bonaparte; and there they were themselves. The wheel of history had evidently rolled back to stop at the “Chambre intractable”1 of 1816. In the assemblies of the republic, 1848 to 1851, they had been represented by their educated and trained parliamentary champions; it was the rank-and-file of the party which now rushed in—all the Pourceaugnacs of France.

As soon as this Assembly of “Rurals”2 had met at Bordeaux, Thiers made it clear to them that the peace preliminaries must be assented to at once, without even the honours of a parliamentary debate, as the only condition on which Prussia would permit them to open the war against the republic and Paris, its stronghold. The counter-revolution had, in fact, no time to lose. The Second Empire had more than doubled the national debt, and plunged all the large towns into heavy municipal debts. The war had fearfully swelled the liabilities, and mercilessly ravaged the resources of the nation. To complete the ruin, the Prussian Shylock was there with his bond for the keep of half a million of his soldiers on French soil, his indemnity of five milliards, and interest at 5 per cent on the unpaid instalments thereof. Who was to pay the bill? It was only by the violent overthrow of the republic that the appropriators of wealth could hope to shift off to the shoulders of its producers the cost of a war which they, the appropriators, had themselves originated. Thus, the immense ruin of France spurred on these patriotic representatives of land and capital, under the very eyes and patronage of the invader, to graft upon the foreign war a civil war—a slaveholders’ rebellion.

1 The Chamber of Deputies in France which consisted mainly of extreme monarchists, representatives of the nobility, and was marked by its reactionary character.—Ed.
2 The National Assembly which opened in Bordeaux on February 12 had a majority of outspoken royalists (450 out of 750 deputies), chiefly representatives of the landowners. Hence its name of Assembly of “Rurals.”—Ed.

There stood in the way of this conspiracy one great obstacle—Paris. To disarm Paris was the first condition of success. Paris was therefore summoned by Thiers to surrender its arms. Then Paris was exasperated by the frantic anti-republican demonstrations of the “Rural” Assembly and by Thiers’ own equivocations about the legal status of the republic; by the threat to decapitate and decapitalise Paris; the appointment of Orleansist ambassadors; Dufaure’s laws on over-due commercial bills and house rents, inflicting ruin on the commerce and industry of Paris; Prouyer-Quertier’s tax of two centimes upon every copy of every imaginable publication; the sentences of death against Blanqui and Flourens; the suppression of the republican journals; the transfer of the National Assembly to Versailles; the renewal of the state of siege declared by Palikao, and expired on the 4th of September; the appointment of Vinoy, the Décembreur, as governor of Paris—of Valentin, the imperialist gendarme, as its prefect of police—and of D’Aurelle de Paladine, the Jesuit general, as the commander-in-chief of its National Guard.

And now we have to address a question to M. Thiers and the men of national defence, his under-strappers. It is known that, through the agency of M. Prouyer-Quertier, his finance minister, Thiers had contracted a loan of two milliards. Now, is it true or not—

1. That the business was so managed that a consideration of several hundred millions was secured for the private benefit of Thiers, Jules Favre, Ernest Picard, Prouyer-Quertier, and Jules Simon? and—

2. That no money was to be paid down until after the “pacification” of Paris?

At all events, there must have been something very pressing in the matter, for Thiers and Jules Favre, in the name of the majority of the Bordeaux Assembly, unblushingly solicited the immediate occupation of Paris by Prussian troops. Such, however, was not the game of Bismarck, as he sneeringly, and in public, told the admiring Frankfort philistines on his return to Germany.
Armed Paris was the only serious obstacle in the way of the counter-revolutionary conspiracy. Paris was, therefore, to be disarmed. On this point the Bordeaux Assembly was sincerity itself. If the roaring rant of its Rurals had not been audible enough, the surrender of Paris by Thiers to the tender mercies of the triumvirate of Vinoy the Décembriseur, Valentin the Bonapartist gendarme, and Aurelles de Paladine the Jesuit general, would have cut off even the last subterfuge of doubt. But while insincerely exhibiting the true purpose of the disarmament of Paris, the conspirators asked her to lay down her arms on a pretext which was the most glaring, the most barefaced of lies. The artillery of the Paris National Guard, said Thiers, belonged to the state, and to the state it must be returned. The fact was this: From the very day of the capitulation, by which Bismarck’s prisoners had signed the surrender of France, but reserved to themselves a numerous bodyguard for the express purpose of cowing Paris, Paris stood on the watch. The National Guard reorganised themselves and intrusted their supreme control to a Central Committee elected by their whole body, save some fragments of the old Bonapartist formations. On the eve of the entrance of the Prussians into Paris, the Central Committee took measures for the removal to Montmartre, Belleville, and La Villette of the cannon and mitrailleuses treacherously abandoned by the capitulards in and about the very quarters the Prussians were to occupy. That artillery had been furnished by the subscriptions of the National Guard. As their private property, it was officially recognised in the capitulation of the 28th of January, and on that very title exempted from the general surrender, into the hands of the conqueror, of arms belonging to the government. And Thiers was so utterly destitute of even the flimsiest pretext for initiating the war against Paris, that he had to resort to the flagrant lie of the artillery of the National Guard being state property!

The seizure of her artillery was evidently but to serve as the preliminary to the general disarmament of Paris, and, therefore, of the Revolution of the 4th of September. But that revolution had become the legal status of France. The republic, its work, was recognised by the conqueror in the terms of the capitulation. After the capitulation, it was acknowledged by all the foreign powers, and in its name the National Assembly had been summoned. The Paris working men’s revolution of the 4th of September was the only legal title of the National Assembly seated at Bordeaux, and of its executive. Without it, the National Assembly would at once have to give way to the Corps Législatif elected in 1859 by universal suffrage under French, not under Prussian, rule, and forcibly dispersed by the arm of the revolution. Thiers and his ticket-of-leave men would have had to capitulate for safe conducts signed by Louis Bonaparte, to save them from a voyage to Cayenne. The National Assembly, with its power of attorney to settle the terms of peace with Prussia, was but an incident of that revolution, the true embodiment of which was still armed Paris, which had initiated it, undergone for it a five-months’ siege, with its horrors of famine, and made her prolonged resistance, despite Trochu’s plan, the basis of an obdurate war of defence in the provinces. And Paris was now either to lay down her arms at the insulting behest of the rebellious slaveholders of Bordeaux, and acknowledge that her Revolution of the 4th of September meant nothing but a simple transfer of power from Louis Bonaparte to his royal rivals; or she had to stand forward as the self-sacrificing champion of France, whose salvation from ruin and whose regeneration were impossible without the revolutionary overthrow of the political and social conditions that had engendered the Second Empire, and, under its fostering care, matured into utter rottenness. Paris, emaciated by a five-months’ famine, did not hesitate one moment. She heroically resolved to run all the hazards of a resistance against the French conspirators, even with Prussian cannon frowning upon her from her own forts. Still, in its abhorrence of the civil war into which Paris was to be goaded, the Central Committee continued to persist in a merely defensive attitude, despite the provocations of the Assembly, the usurpations

1 Cayenne, capital of French Guiana in South America, notorious penal settlement.—Ed.
of the Executive, and the menacing concentration of troops in and around Paris.

Thiers opened the civil war by sending Vinoy, at the head of a multitude of sergents-de-ville and some regiments of the line, upon a nocturnal expedition against Montmartre, there to seize, by surprise, the artillery of the National Guard. It is well known how this attempt broke down before the resistance of the National Guard and the fraternisation of the line with the people. Aurelles de Paladine had printed beforehand his bulletin of victory, and Thiers held ready the placards announcing his measures of coup d'état. Now these had to be replaced by Thiers' appeals, imparting his magnanimous resolve to leave the National Guard in the possession of their arms, with which, he said, he felt sure they would rally round the government against the rebels. Out of 300,000 National Guards only 300 responded to this summons to rally round little Thiers against themselves. The glorious working men's Revolution of the 18th March took undisputed sway of Paris. The Central Committee was its provisional government.

Europe seemed, for a moment, to doubt whether its recent sensational performances of state and war had any reality in them or whether they were the dreams of a long bygone past.

From the 18th of March to the entrance of the Versailles troops into Paris, the proletarian revolution remained so free from the acts of violence in which the revolutions, and still more the counter-revolutions, of the "better classes" abound, that no facts were left to its opponents to cry out about, but the execution of Generals Lecomte and Clement Thomas, and the affair of the Place Vendôme.

One of the Bonapartist officers engaged in the nocturnal attempt against Montmartre, General Lecomte, had four times ordered the 81st line regiment to fire at an unarmed gathering in the Place Pigalle, and on their refusal fiercely insulted them. Instead of shooting women and children, his own men shot him. The inveterate habits acquired by the soldiery under the training of the enemies of the working class are, of course, not likely to change the very moment these soldiers change sides. The same men executed Clement Thomas.

"General" Clement Thomas, a malcontent ex-quartermaster-sergeant, had, in the latter times of Louis Philippe's reign, enlisted at the office of the republican newspaper Le National, there to serve in the double capacity of responsible man-of-straw (gérant responsable) ¹ and of duelling bully to that very combative journal. After the Revolution of February, the men of the National having got into power, they metamorphosed this old quartermaster-sergeant into a general on the eve of the butchery of June, of which he, like Jules Favre, was one of the sinister plotters, and became one of the most dastardly executioners. Then he had his generalship disappeared for a long time, to again rise to the surface on the 1st November, 1870. The day before ² the Government of Defence, caught at the Hôtel de Ville, had solemnly pledged their parole to Blanqui, Florens, and other representatives of the working class, to abdicate their usurped power into the hands of a commune to be freely elected by Paris. Instead of keeping their word, they let loose on Paris the Bretons of Truchy, who now replaced the Corsicans of Bonaparte. General Tamisier alone, refusing to sully his name by such a breach of faith, resigned the commandship-in-chief of the National Guard, and in his place Clement Thomas for once became again a general. During the whole of his tenure of command, he made war, not upon the Prussians, but upon the Paris National Guard.

¹ His function was to serve imprisonment if the newspaper was prosecuted.—Ed.

² On October 31, 1870, an attempt was made to overthrow the Government of National Defence and to seize power. The impetus for the movement was provided by rumours of an armistice about to be concluded with the Prussians, of the defeat of the National Guard at Le Bourget (October 30) and of the capitulation of Metz. Led by Blanquiets, a battalion of National Guards composed chiefly of workers, occupied the Town Hall, proclaimed the overthrow of the old government and the establishment of a new one which would organise elections to the Commune. The new government, which did not base itself on the masses, proved irresolute and vacillating. It entered into negotiations with the arrested members of the Government of National Defence and obtained from them a verbal promise to institute elections for the Commune (on November 1) and to declare a general amnesty. In the meantime, battalions of the Civil Guard were concentrated at the Town Hall and on the morning of November 1, they occupied it and restored the Government of National Defence to power.—Ed.
He prevented their general armament, pitted the bourgeois battalions against the working men’s battalions, weeded out the officers hostile to Trochu’s “plan,” and disbanded, under the stigma of cowardice, the very same proletarian battalions whose heroism has now astonished their most inveterate enemies. Clement Thomas felt quite proud of having reconquered his June pre-eminence as the personal enemy of the working class of Paris. Only a few days before the 18th of March, he laid before the War Minister, Lefrâ, a plan of his own for “finishing off la fine fleur [the cream] of the Paris canaille.” After Vinoy’s rout, he must needs appear upon the scene of action in the quality of an amateur spy. The Central Committee and the Paris working men were as much responsible for the killing of Clement Thomas and Lecomte as the Princess of Wales for the fate of the people crushed to death on the day of her entrance into London.

The massacre of unarmed citizens in the Place Vendôme is a myth which M. Thiers and the Rurals persistently ignored in the Assembly, entrusting its propagation exclusively to the servants’ hall of European journalism. “The men of order,” the reactionists of Paris, trembled at the victory of the 18th of March. To them it was the signal of popular retribution at last arriving. The ghosts of the victims assassinated at their hands from the days of June 1848, down to the 22nd of January, 1871, arose before their faces. Their panic was their only punishment. Even the sergents-de-ville, instead of being disarmed and locked up, as ought to have been done, had the gates of Paris flung wide open for their safe retreat to Versailles. The men of order were left not only unarmed, but allowed to rally and quietly to seize more than one stronghold in the very centre of Paris. This indulgence of the Central Committee—this magnanimity of the armed working men—so strangely at variance with the habits of the “Party of Order,” the latter misinterpreted as mere symptoms of conscious weakness. Hence their silly plan to try, under the cloak of an unarmed demonstration, what Vinoy had failed to perform with his cannon and mitrailleuses. On the 22nd of March a riotous mob of swells started from the quarters of luxury, all the petits crévéés in their ranks, and at their head the notorious familiar of the empire—the Heckerens, Coïtlogen, Henri de Pève, etc. Under the cowardly pretense of a pacific demonstration, this rabble, secretly armed with the weapons of the brave, fell into marching order, ill treated and disarmed the detached patrols and sentries of the National Guard they met with on their progress, and, on debouching from the Rue de la Paix, with the cry of “Down with the Central Committee! Down with the assassins! The National Assembly for ever!” attempted to break through the line drawn up there, and thus to carry by a surprise the headquarters of the National Guard in the Place Vendôme. In reply to their pistol-shots, the regular somnations (the French equivalent of the English Riot Act) were made, and, proving ineffective, fire was commanded by the general of the National Guard. One volley dispersed into wild flight the silly coxcombs, who expected that the mere exhibition of their “respectability” would have the same effect upon the Revolution of Paris as Joshua’s trumpets upon the walls of Jericho. The runaways left behind them two National Guards killed, nine severely wounded (among them a member of the Central Committee), and the whole scene of their exploit strewed with revolvers, daggers, and sword-canes, in evidence of the “unarmed” character of their “pacific” demonstration. When, on the 13th of June, 1849, the National Guard made a really pacific demonstration in protest against the felonious assault of French troops upon Rome, Changarnier, then general of the Party of Order, was acclaimed by the National Assembly, and especially by M. Thiers, as the saviour of society, for having launched his troops from all sides upon these unarmed men, to shoot and sabre them down, and to trample them under their horses’ feet. Paris, then, was placed under a state of siege. Dufaure hurried through the Assembly new laws of repression.

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3 On January 22, 1871, a new attempt was made to overthrow the Government of National Defence. The immediate occasion for this attempt was the defeat of the National Guard at Bougainville (January 19, 1871), rumours of an armistice and the appointment of General Vissoy as military governor of Paris. The attempt of January 22, exactly like that of October 31, was marked by lack of determination and unity, and absence of organisational contact with the masses. During its suppression, thirty persons were killed or wounded, including women and children.—Ed.
New arrests, new proscriptions—a new reign of terror set in. But the lower orders manage these things otherwise. The Central Committee of 1871 simply ignored the heroes of the “peaceful demonstration”; so much so, that only two days later they were enabled to muster under Admiral Saisset, for that armed demonstration, crowned by the famous stampede to Versailles. In their reluctance to continue the civil war opened by Thiers’ burglary attempt on Montmartre, the Central Committee made themselves, this time, guilty of a decisive mistake in not at once marching upon Versailles, then completely helpless, and thus putting an end to the conspiracies of Thiers and his Rurals. Instead of this, the Party of Order was again allowed to try its strength at the ballot box, on the 26th of March, the day of the election of the Commune. Then, in the mairies of Paris, they exchanged bland words of conciliation with their too generous conquerors, muttering in their hearts solemn vows to exterminate them in due time.

Now, look at the reverse of the medal. Thiers opened his second campaign against Paris in the beginning of April. The first batch of Parisian prisoners brought into Versailles was subjected to revolting atrocities, while Ernest Picard, with his hands in his trousers’ pockets, strolled about jeering them, and while M. de Thiers and Favre, in the midst of their ladies of honor (?) applauded, from the balcony, the outrages of the Versailles mob. The captured soldiers of the line were massacred in cold blood; our brave friend, General Duval, the iron-founder, was shot without any form of trial. Gallifet, the kept man of his wife, so notorious for her shameless exhibitions at the orgies of the Second Empire, boasted in a proclamation of having commanded the murder of a small troop of National Guards, with their captain and lieutenant, surprised and disarmed by his Chasseurs. Vinoy, the runaway, was appointed by Thiers, Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour, for his general order to shoot down every soldier of the line taken in the ranks of the Federals. Desmaret, the Gendarme, was decorated for the treacherous butcher-like chopping in pieces of the high-souled and chivalrous Flourenras, who had saved the heads of

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1 About these fatal mistakes of the Central Committee, Marx wrote to Kugelmann on April 19, 1871. See p. 530 in the present volume.—Ed.

the Government of Défendu on the 31st of October, 1870. “The encouraging particulars” of his assassination were triumphantly expatiated upon by Thiers in the National Assembly. With the elated vanity of a parliamentary Tom Thumb, permitted to play the part of a Tamerlane, he denied the rebels against his littleness every right of civilised warfare, up to the right of neutrality for ambulances. Nothing more horrid than that monkey allowed for a time to give full fang to his tigerish instincts, as foreseen by Voltaire.

After the decree of the Commune of the 7th April ordering reprisals and declaring it to be its duty “to protect Paris against the cannibal exploits of the Versailles banditti, and to demand an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,” Thiers did not stop the barbarous treatment of prisoners, moreover insulting them in his bulletins as follows: “Never have more degraded countenances of a degraded democracy met the afflicted gazes of honest men,—honest, like Thiers himself and his ministerial ticket-of-leave men. Still the shooting of prisoners was suspended for a time. Hardly, however, had Thiers and his Decembrist-generals become aware that the Communal decree of reprisals was but an empty threat, that even their gendarme spies caught in Paris under the disguise of National Guards, that even sergents-de-ville, taken with incendiary shells upon them, were spared—when the wholesale shooting of prisoners was resumed and carried on uninterrupted to the end. Houses to which National Guards had fled were surrounded by gendarmes, inundated with petroleum (which here occurs for the first time in this war), and then set fire to, the charred corpses being afterwards brought out by the ambulance of the Press at the Ternes. Four National Guards having surrendered to a troop of mounted Chasseurs at Belle Épine, on the 25th of April, were afterwards shot down, one after another, by the captain, a worthy man of Gallifet’s. One of his four victims, left for dead, Scheffer, crawled back to the Parisian outposts, and deposed to this fact before a commission of the Commune. When Tolain interpellated the War Minister upon the report of this commission, the Rurals drowned his voice and forbade Leflo to answer. It would be an insult to their “glorious” army to speak
of its deeds. The flippant tone in which Thiers’ bulletins announced the bayoneting of the Federals surprised asleep at Moulin Saquet, and the wholesale fusillades at Clamart shocked the nerves even of the not over-sensitive London Times. But it would be ludicrous today to attempt recounting the merely preliminary atrocities committed by the bombarders of Paris and the fomenters of a slaveholders’ rebellion protected by foreign invasion. Amidst all these horrors, Thiers, forgetful of his parliamentary laments on the terrible responsibility weighing down his dwarfish shoulders, boasts in his bulletins that l’Assemblée siège paisiblement (the Assembly continues meeting in peace), and proves by his constant carousals, now with Decembrist generals, now with German princes, that his digestion is not troubled in the least, not even by the ghosts of Lecomte and Clément Thomas.

III

On the dawn of the 18th of March, Paris arose to the thunder-burst of “Vive la Commune!” What is the Commune, that sphinx so tantalising to the bourgeois mind?

“The proletarians of Paris,” said the Central Committee in its manifesto of the 18th March, “amidst the failures and treasons of the ruling classes, have understood that the hour has struck for them to save the situation by taking into their own hands the direction of public affairs... They have understood that it is their imperious duty and their absolute right to render themselves masters of their own destinies, by seizing upon the governmental power.” But the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes.1

1 Marx here formulates one of the fundamental lessons of the Paris Commune. The tremendous significance attached by Marx and Engels to this lesson is evident from their remarks in the Preface to The Communist Manifesto, dated June 24, 1872. (See Volume I, p. 190 of the present edition.) There it is said that the Programme of The Communist Manifesto has “in some details become antiquated. One thing especially,” they continue, “was proved by the Commune, etc., that the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes.”

In this connection, Lenin wrote: “It is extremely characteristic that it is precisely this vital correc-

The centralised state power, with its ubiquitous organs of standing army, police, bureaucracy, clergy, and judicature—organs wrought after the plan of a systematic and hierarchic division of labour—originates from the days of absolute monarchy, serving nascent middle class society as a mighty weapon in its struggles against feudalism. Still, its development remained clogged by all manner of mediæval rubbish, seignorial rights, local privileges, municipal and guild monopolies and provincial constitutions. The gigantic broum of the French Revolution of the eighteenth century swept away all these relics of bygone times, thus clearing simultaneously the social soil of its last hindrances to the superstructure of the modern state edifice raised under the First Empire, itself the offspring of the coalition wars of old semi-feudal Europe against modern France. During the subsequent régimes the government, placed under parliamentary control—that is, under the di-
tion that has been distorted by the opportunists, and its meaning, probably, is not known to nine-tenths, if not ninety-nine hundredths, of the readers of The Communist Manifesto... The current vulgar ‘interpretation’ of Marx’s famous utterance quoted above is that Marx here emphasises the idea of gradual development in contradistinction to the seizure of power, and so on...”

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

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

“If you look at the last chapter of my Eighteenth Brumaire, you will find that I say that the next attempt of the French Revolution will be no longer, as before, to transfer the bureaucratic-military machine from one hand to the other, but to smash it (Marx’s italics—the original is zerbrechen); and this is essential for every real people’s revolution on the Continent. And this is what our heroic Party comrades in Paris are attempting.” (Die Neue Zeit, XX, I, 1901-02, p. 789. The letters of Marx to Kugelmann have come out in Russian in no less than two editions, one of them edited and with an introduction by me.)

The words, ‘to smash’ ‘the bureaucratic-military state machinery,’ briefly express the principal lesson of Marxism on the tasks of the proletariat in relation to the state during a revolution. And it is precisely this lesson which has been not only forgotten, but positively distorted, in the prevailing Kautskyan ‘interpretation’ of Marxism.” (Lenin, The State and Revolution, p. 41-42. — Ed.)

The wars waged by England, Russia, Prussia, Austria, Spain and other states against revolutionary France and later against the empire of Napoleon I. — Ed.
rect control of the propertied classes—became not only a hotbed of huge national debts and crushing taxes; with its irresistible allurements of place, pelf, and patronage, it became not only the bone of contention between the rival factions and adventurers of the ruling classes; but its political character changed simultaneously with the economic changes of society. At the same pace at which the progress of modern industry developed, widened, intensified the class antagonism between capital and labour, the state power assumed more and more the character of the national power of capital over labour, of a public force organised for social enslavement, of an engine of class despotism. After every revolution marking a progressive phase in the class struggle, the purely repressive character of the state power stands out in bolder and bolder relief. The Revolution of 1830, resulting in the transfer of government from the landlords to the capitalists, transferred it from the more remote to the more direct antagonists of the working men. The bourgeois republicans, who, in the name of the Revolution of February, took the state power, used it for the June massacres, in order to convince the working class that “social” republic meant the republic ensuring their social subjection, and in order to convince the royalist bulk of the bourgeois and landlord class that they might safely leave the cares and emoluments of government to the bourgeois “republicans.” However, after their one heroic exploit of June, the bourgeois republicans had, from the front, to fall back to the rear of the “Party of Order”—a combination formed by all the rival fractions and factions of the appropriating class in their now openly declared antagonism to the producing classes. The proper form of their joint-stock government was the parliamentary republic, with Louis Bonaparte for its president. Thiers was a régime of avowed class terrorism and deliberate insult towards the “vile multitude.” If the parliamentary republic, as M. Thiers said, “divided them [the different fractions of the ruling class] least,” it opened an abyss between that class and the whole body of society outside their spare ranks. The restraints by which their own divisions had under former régimes still checked the state power, were removed by their union; and in view of the threatening upheaval of the proletariat,

they now used that state power mercilessly and ostentatiously as the national war engine of capital against labour. In their uninterrupted crusade against the producing masses they were, however, bound not only to invest the executive with continually increased powers of repression, but at the same time to divest their own parliamentary stronghold—the National Assembly—one by one, of all its own means of defence against the Executive. The Executive, in the person of Louis Bonaparte, turned them out. The natural offspring of the “Party of Order” republic was the Second Empire.

The empire, with the coup d’état for its certificate of birth, universal suffrage for its sanction, and the sword for its sceptre, professed to rest upon the peasantry, the large mass of producers not directly involved in the struggle of capital and labour. It professed to save the working class by breaking down parliamentarism, and, with it, the undisguised subserviency of government to the propertied classes. It professed to save the propertied classes by upholding their economic supremacy over the working classes; and, finally, it professed to unite all classes by reviving for all the chimera of national glory. In reality, it was the only form of government possible at a time when the bourgeoisie had already lost, and the working class had not yet acquired, the faculty of ruling the nation. It was acclaimed throughout the world as the saviour of society. Under its sway, bourgeois society, freed from political cares, attained a development unexpected even by itself. Its industry and commerce expanded to colossal dimensions; financial swindling celebrated cosmopolitan orgies; the misery of the masses was set off by a shameless display of gorgeous, meretricious and debased luxury. The state power, apparently soaring high above society, was at the same time itself the greatest scandal of that society and the very hotbed of all its corruptions. Its own rottenness, and the rottenness of the society it had saved, were laid bare by the bayonet of Prussia, herself eagerly bent upon transferring the supreme seat of that régime from Paris to Berlin. Imperialism is, at the same time, the most

1 Refers to the Bonapartist empire.—Ed.
prostitute and the ultimate form of the state power which nascent middle class society had commenced to elaborate as a means of its own emancipation from feudalism, and which full-grown bourgeois society had finally transformed into a means for the enslavement of labour by capital.

The direct antithesis to the empire was the Commune. The cry of "social republic," with which the Revolution of February was ushered in by the Paris proletariat, did but express a vague aspiration after a republic that was not only to supersede the monarchal form of class rule, but class rule itself. The Commune was the positive form of that republic.

Paris, the central seat of the old governmental power, and, at the same time, the social stronghold of the French working class, had risen in arms against the attempt of Thiers and the Rurals to restore and perpetuate that old governmental power bequeathed to them by the empire. Paris could resist only because, in consequence of the siege, it had got rid of the army, and replaced it by a National Guard, the bulk of which consisted of working men. This fact was now to be transformed into an institution. The first decree of the Commune, therefore, was the suppression of the standing army, and the substitution for it of the armed people.

The Commune was formed of the municipal councillors, chosen by universal suffrage in the various wards of the town, responsible and revocable at short terms. The majority of its members were naturally working men, or acknowledged representatives of the working class. The Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary body, executive and legislative at the same time. Instead of continuing to be the agent of the Central Government, the police was at once stripped of its political attributes, and turned into the responsible and at all times revocable agent of the Commune. So were the officials of all other branches of the administration. From the members of the Commune downwards, the public service had to be done at workmen's wages. The vested interests and the representation allowances of the high dignitaries of state disappeared along with the high dignitaries themselves. Public functions ceased to be the private property of the tools of the Central Government. Not only municipal administration, but the whole initiative hitherto exercised by the state was laid into the hands of the Commune.

Having once got rid of the standing army and the police, the physical force elements of the old government, the Commune was anxious to break the spiritual force of repression, the "parson-power," by the disestablishment and disendowment of all churches as proprietary bodies. The priests were sent back to the recesses of private life, there to feed upon the alms of the faithful in imitation of their predecessors, the apostles. The whole of the educational institutions were opened to the people gratuitously, and at the same time cleared of all interference of church and state. Thus, not only was education made accessible to all, but science itself freed from the fetters which class prejudice and governmental force had imposed upon it.

The judicial functionaries were to be divested of that sham independence which had but served to mask their abject suberviency to all succeeding governments to which, in turn, they parliamentarians would have had to work themselves, would have had to execute their own laws, they themselves would have had to test their results in real life; they would have been directly responsible to their constituents. Representative institutions would have remained, but there was to have been no parliamentanism as a special system, as the division of labour between the legislative and the executive, as a privileged position for deputies. 

"There can be no thought of destroying officialdom immediately, everywhere, completely. That is utopia. But to smash the old bureaucratic machine at once and to begin immediately to construct a new one that will enable all officialdom to be gradually abolished is not utopia. It is the experience of the Commune, it is the direct and immediate task of the revolutionary proletariat." (The State and Revolution, pp. 37-38.)—Ed.
had taken, and broken, the oaths of allegiance. Like the rest of public servants, magistrates and judges were to be elective, responsible and revocable.

The Paris Commune was, of course, to serve as a model to all the great industrial centres of France. The communal régime once established in Paris and the secondary centres, the old centralised government would in the provinces, too, have to give way to the self-government of the producers. In a rough sketch of national organisation which the Commune had no time to develop, it states clearly that the Commune was to be the political form of even the smallest country hamlet, and that in the rural districts the standing army was to be replaced by a national militia, with an extremely short term of service. The rural communes of every district were to administer their common affairs by an assembly of delegates in the central town, and these district assemblies were again to send deputies to the National Delegation in Paris, each delegate to be at any time revocable and bound by the mandat imperatif (formal instructions) of his constituents. The few but important functions which still would remain for a central government were not to be suppressed, as has been intentionally misstated, but were to be discharged by Communal and therefore strictly responsible agents. The unity of the nation was not to be broken, but, on the contrary, to be organised by the Communal Constitution, and to become a reality by the destruction of the state power which claimed to be the embodiment of that unity independent of, and superior to, the nation itself, from which it was but a parasitic excrescence. While the merely repressive organs of the old governmental power were to be amputated, its legitimate functions were to be wrested from an authority usurping pre-eminence over society itself, and restored to the responsible agents of society. Instead of deciding once in three or six years which member of the ruling class was to misrepresent the people in Parliament, universal suffrage was to serve the people, constituted in Communes, as individual suffrage serves every other employer in the search for the workmen and managers in his business. And it is well known that companies, like individuals, in matters of real business generally know how to put the right man in the right place, and, if they for once make a mistake, to redress it promptly. On the other hand, nothing could be more foreign to the spirit of the Commune than to supersede universal suffrage by hierarchic investiture.

It is generally the fate of completely new historical creations to be mistaken for the counterpart of older and even defunct forms of social life, to which they may bear a certain likeness. Thus, this new Commune, which breaks the modern state power, has been mistaken for a reproduction of the medieval Communes, which first preceded, and afterwards became the substratum of, that very state power.—The Communal Constitution has been mistaken for an attempt to break up into a federation of small states, as dreamt of by Montesquieu and the Girondins, that unity of great nations which, if originally brought about by political force, has now become a powerful coefficient of social production.—The antagonism of the Commune against the state power has been mistaken for an exaggerated form of the ancient struggle against over-centralisation. Peculiar historical circumstances may have prevented the classical development, as in France, of the bourgeois form of government, and may have allowed, as in England, to complete the great central state organs by corrupt vestries, jobbing councillors, and ferocious poor-law guardians in the towns, and virtually hereditary magistrates in the counties. The Communal Constitution would have restored to the social body all the forces hitherto absorbed by the state

1 In regard to this characterisation of parliamentarism, Lenin wrote: "Thanks to the prevalence of social-chauvinism and opportunism, this remarkable criticism of parliamentarism made in 1671 also belongs now to the 'forgotten words' of Marxism. . . ."

2 "To decide once every few years which member of the ruling class is to misrepresent the people in parliament is the real essence of bourgeois parliamentarism, not only in parliamentary-monarchical monarchies, but also in the most democratic republics." (The State and Revolution, p. 36.)—Ed.

3 The Girondins were the party of the industrial and trading bourgeoisie during the epoch of the first French bourgeois revolution. Wishing to beseech the revolution and to strengthen the centralisation of revolutionary forces, they endeavoured to convert France into a Federation and to destroy the leading role of revolutionary Paris.—Ed.
parasite feeding upon, and clogging the free movement of, society. By this one act it would have initiated the regeneration of France. The provincial French middle class saw in the Commune an attempt to restore the sway their order had held over the country under Louis Philippe, and which, under Louis Napoleon, was supplanted by the pretended rule of the country over the towns. In reality, the Communal Constitution brought the rural producers under the intellectual lead of the central towns of their districts, and there secured to them, in the working men, the natural trustees of their interests. The very existence of the Commune involved, as a matter of course, local municipal liberty, but no longer as a check upon the now superseded state power. It could only enter into the head of a Bismarck, who, when not engaged on his intrigues of blood and iron, always likes to resume his old trade, so befitting his mental calibre, of contributor to Kladderadatsch (the Berlin Punch), it could only enter into such a head to ascribe to the Paris Commune aspirations after that caricature of the old French municipal organisation of 1791, the Prussian municipal constitution which degrades the town governments to mere secondary wheels in the police machinery of the Prussian state. The Commune made that catchword of bourgeois revolutions, cheap government, a reality by destroying the two greatest sources of expenditure—the standing army and state functionaries. Its very existence presupposed the non-existence of a monarchy, which, in Europe at least, is the normal incumbrance and indispensable cloak of class rule. It supplied the republic with the basis of really democratic institutions. But neither cheap government nor the “true republic” was its ultimate aim; they were its mere concomitants.

The multiplicity of interpretations to which the Commune has been subjected, and the multiplicity of interests which construed it in their favour, show that it was a thoroughly expansive political form, while all previous forms of government had been emphatically repressive. Its true secret was this. It was essentially a working class government, the produce of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class, the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economical emancipation of labour.1

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

It is a strange fact. In spite of all the tall talk and all the immense literature, for the last sixty years, about emancipation of labour, no sooner do the working men anywhere take the subject into their own hands with a will, than uprises at once all the

1 Analyzing the tremendous historical importance of the lessons derived by Marx from the experience of the Paris Commune, Lenin wrote:

“The utopians busied themselves with ‘inventing’ the political forms under which the socialist transformation of society was to take place. The anarchists waived the question of political forms altogether. The opportunists of present-day Social Democracy accepted the bourgeois political forms of the parliamentary democratic state as the unsurpassable limit; they battered their foreheads praying before this idol and denounced every attempt to smash these forms as anarchism.

“Marx deduced from the whole history of Socialism and of the political struggle that the state was bound to disappear, and that the transitional form of its disappearance (the transition from the state to no state) would be the ‘proletariat organised as the ruling class.’ But Marx did not set out to discover the political forms of this future stage. He limited himself to a precise observation of French history, to analysing it, and to the conclusion to which the year 1851 had led, viz., that matters were moving towards the smashing of the bourgeois state machine.

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

“The Commune is the form ‘at last discovered’ by the proletarian revolution, under which to work out the economic emancipation of labour.

“The Commune is the first attempt of a proletarian revolution to smash the bourgeois state machine and it constitutes the political form, ‘at last discovered,’ which can and must supersede the smashed machine.

“We shall see below that the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917, in different circumstances and under different conditions, continued the work of the Commune and corroborated Marx’s brilliant historical analysis.”

(The State and Revolution, pp. 43-44.)—Ed.
apologetic phraseology of the mouthpieces of present society with its two poles of capital and wages-slavery (the landlord now is but the sleeping partner of the capitalist), as if capitalist society was still in its purest state of virgin innocence, with its antagonisms still undeveloped, with its delusions still unexploded, with its prostitute realities not yet laid bare. The Commune, they proclaim, intends to abolish property, the basis of all civilisation! Yes, gentlemen, the Commune intended to abolish that class property which makes the labour of the many the wealth of the few. It aimed at the expropriation of the expropriators. It wanted to make individual property a truth by transforming the means of production, land and capital, now chiefly the means of enslaving and exploiting labour, into mere instruments of free and associated labour. But this is communism, "impossible" communism! Why, those members of the ruling classes who are intelligent enough to perceive the impossibility of continuing the present system—and they are many—have become the obstreperous and full-mouthed apostles of co-operative production. If co-operative production is not to remain a sham and a snare; if it is to supersede the capitalist system; if united co-operative societies are to regulate national production upon a common plan, thus taking it under their own control, and putting an end to the constant anarchy and periodical convulsions which are the fatality of capitalist production—and what else, gentlemen, would it be but communism, "possible" communism?

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

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

And yet, this was the first revolution in which the working class was openly acknowledged as the only class capable of social initiative, even by the great bulk of the Paris middle-class—shopkeepers, tradesmen, merchants—the wealthy capitalist alone excepted. The Commune had saved them by a sagacious settlement of that ever recurring cause of dispute among the middle class themselves—the debtor and creditor accounts. The same portion of the middle class, after they had assisted in putting down the working men's insurrection of June 1848, had been at once unceremoniously sacrificed to their creditors by the then Constituent Assembly. But this was not their only motive for now rallying round the working class. They felt there was but one alternative—the Commune, or the empire—under whatever name it might reappear. The empire had ruined them economically by the havoc it made of public wealth, by the wholesale financial swindling it fostered, by the props it lent to the artificially accelerated centralisation of capital, and the concomitant expropriation of their own ranks. It had suppressed them politically, it had shocked them morally by its orgies, it had insulted

1 The Central Committee of the National Guard as late as March 20 had postponed payment on bills of exchange until October 1, 1871. On April 18, the Commune promulgated a decree postponing payments on debt obligations for three years.—Ed.
their Voltairianism by handing over the education of their children to the frères Ignorantins, it had revolted their national feeling as Frenchmen by precipitating them headlong into a war which left only one equivalent for the ruins it made—the disappearance of the empire. In fact, after the exodus from Paris of the high Bonapartist and capitalist bohème, the true middle class Party of Order came out in the shape of the "Union Républicaine," enrolling themselves under the colours of the Commune and defending it against the wilful misconstruction of Thiers. Whether the gratitude of this great body of the middle class will stand the present severe trial, time must show.

The Commune was perfectly right in telling the peasants that "its victory was their only hope." Of all the lies hatched at Versailles and re-echoed by the glorious European penny-a-liner, one of the most tremendous was that the Rurals represented the French peasantry. Think only of the love of the French peasant for the men to whom, after 1815, he had to pay the milliard of indemnity! In the eyes of the French peasant, the very existence of a great landed proprietor is in itself an encroachment on his conquests of 1789. The bourgeoisie, in 1848, had burdened his plot of land with the additional tax of forty-five cents, in the franc; but then he did so in the name of the revolution; while now he had fomented a civil war against the revolution, to shift on to the peasant's shoulders the chief load of the five miilliards of indemnity to be paid to the Prussians. The Commune, on the other hand, in one of its first proclamations, declared that the true originators of the war would be made to pay its cost. The Commune would have delivered the peasant of the blood tax—

1. I.e., free-thinking, hostile to the priests and the church.—Ed.
2. The Bourbon dynasty, which was restored to power after the overthrow of Napoleon I, decided to compensate the French nobility for the land taken from it during the first French bourgeois revolution. One milliard francs was paid to the nobility.—Ed.
3. The 45 centime tax was introduced in 1848 by the bourgeois provisional government with the object of creating dissension between the proletariat and the peasantry. The government gave as the reason for the tax the necessity of feeding the workers. The increase of taxation on the peasants by almost 50 per cent turned the peasantry against the revolution and the republic.—Ed.

would have given him a cheap government—transformed his present blood-suckers, the notary, advocate, executor, and other judicial vampires, into salaried communal agents, elected by, and responsible to, himself. It would have freed him of the tyranny of the garde champêtre, the gendarme, and the prefect; would have put enlightenment by the schoolmaster in the place of stultification by the priest. And the French peasant is, above all, a man of reckoning. He would find it extremely reasonable that the pay of the priest, instead of being extorted by the tax-gatherer, should only depend upon the spontaneous action of the parishioners' religious instincts. Such were the great immediate boons which the rule of the Commune—and that rule alone—held out to the French peasantry. It is, therefore, quite superfluous here to expatiate upon the more complicated but vital problems which the Commune alone was able, and at the same time compelled, to solve in favour of the peasant, viz., the hypothecary debt, lying like an incubus upon his parcel of soil, the prolétariat foncier (the rural proletariat), daily growing upon it, and his expropriation from it enforced, at a more and more rapid rate, by the very development of modern agriculture and the competition of capitalist farming.

The French peasant had elected Louis Bonaparte president of the republic; but the Party of Order created the empire. What the French peasant really wants he commenced to show in 1849 and 1850, by opposing his maire to the government's prefect, his schoolmaster to the government's priest, and himself to the government's gendarme. All the laws made by the Party of Order in January and February 1850 were avowed measures of repression against the peasant. The peasant was a Bonapartist, because the Great Revolution, with all its benefits to him, was, in his eyes, personified in Napoleon. This delusion, rapidly breaking down under the Second Empire (and in its very nature hostile to the Rurals), this prejudice of the past, how could it have withstood the appeal of the Commune to the living interests and urgent wants of the peasantry?

1. The Party of Order during the 1848 Revolution united the royalist big bourgeoisie and the landowners.—Ed.

Marx Selected Works
The Rurals—this was, in fact, their chief apprehension—knew that three months' free communication of Communal Paris with the provinces would bring about a general rising of the peasants, and hence their anxiety to establish a police blockade around Paris, so as to stop the spread of the rinderpest.

If the Commune was thus the true representative of all the healthy elements of French society, and therefore the truly national government, is was, at the same time, as a working men's government, as the bold champion of the emancipation of labour, emphatically international. Within sight of the Prussian army, that had annexed to Germany two French provinces, the Commune annexed to France the working people all over the world.

The Second Empire had been the jubilee of cosmopolitan blacklegism, the rakes of all countries rushing in at its call for a share in its orgies and in the plunder of the French people. Even at this moment the right hand of Thiers is Ganesco, the foul Wallachian, and his left hand is Markovsky, the Russian spy. The Commune admitted all foreigners to the honour of dying for an immortal cause. Between the foreign war lost by their treason, and the civil war fomented by their conspiracy with the foreign invader, the bourgeoisie had found the time to display their patriotism by organising police hunts upon the Germans in France. The Commune made a German working man its Minister of Labour. Thiers, the bourgeois, the Second Empire, had continually deluded Poland by loud professions of sympathy, while in reality betraying her to, and doing the dirty work of, Russia. The Commune honoured the heroics of Poland by placing them at the head of the defenders of Paris. And, to broadly mark the new era of history it was conscious of initiating, under the eyes of the conquering Prussians on the one side, and of the Bonapartist army, led by Bonapartist generals, on the other, the Commune pulled down that colossal symbol of martial glory, the Vendôme Column.

The great social measure of the Commune was its own working existence. Its special measures could but betoken the tendency of a government of the people by the people. Such were the abolition of the nightwork of journeymen bakers; the prohibition, under penalty, of the employers' practice to reduce wages by levying upon their workpeople fines under manifold pretexts—a process in which the employer combines in his own person the parts of legislator, judge, and executor, and fitches the money to boot. Another measure of this class was the surrender to associations of workmen, under reserve of compensation, of all closed workshops and factories, no matter whether the respective capitalists had abscended or preferred to strike work.

The financial measures of the Commune, remarkable for their sagacity and moderation, could only be such as were compatible with the state of a besieged town. Considering the colossal robberies committed upon the city of Paris by the great financial companies and contractors, under the protection of Hausmann, the Commune would have had an incomparably better title to confiscate their property than Louis Napoleon had against the Orleans family. The Hohenzollern and the English oligarchs, who both have derived a good deal of their estates from church plunder, were, of course, greatly shocked at the Commune clearing but 8,000 f. out of securisation.

While the Versailles government, as soon as it had recovered some spirit and strength, used the most violent means against the Commune; while it put down the free expression of opinion all over France, even to the forbidding of meetings of delegates from the large towns; while it subjected Versailles and the rest of France to an espionage far surpassing that of the Second Empire; while it burned by its gendarme inquisitors all papers printed at Paris, and sifted all correspondence from and to Paris; while in the National Assembly the most timid attempts to put in a word for Paris were howled down in a manner unknown even to the Chambre introuvable of 1816; with the savage warfare of Versailles outside, and its attempts at corruption and conspiracy inside Paris—would the Commune not have shamefully betrayed its trust by affecting

1 During the Second Empire, Baron Hausmann was Prefect of the Department of the Seine, i.e., of the City of Paris. He caused a number of new streets and buildings to be constructed.—Ed.
to keep up all the deencies and appearances of liberalism as in a time of profound peace? Had the government of the Commune been akin to that of M. Thiers, there would have been no more occasion to suppress Party of Order papers at Paris than there was to suppress Communal papers at Versailles.

It was irritating indeed to the Rurals that at the very same time they declared the return to the church to be the only means of salvation for France, the infidel Commune unearthed the peculiar mysteries of the Picpus nunnery, and of the Church of St. Laurent. It was a satire upon M. Thiers that, while he showered grand crosse upon the Bonapartist generals in acknowledgment of their mastery in losing battles, signing capitulations, and turning cigarettes at Wilhelmshöhe, the Commune dismissed and arrested its generals whenever they were suspected of neglecting their duties. The expulsion from, and arrest by, the Commune of one of its members who had slipped in under a false name, and had undergone at Lyons six days' imprisonment for simple bankruptcy, was it not a deliberate insult hurled at the forger. Jules Favre, then still the foreign minister of France, still selling France to Bismarck, and still dictating his orders to that paragon government of Belgium? But indeed the Commune did not pretend to infallibility, the invariable attribute of all governments of the old stamp. It published its doings and sayings, it initiated the public into all its shortcomings.

In every revolution there intrude, at the side of its true agents, men of a different stamp; some of them survivors of and devotees to past revolutions, without insight into the present movement, but preserving popular influence by their known honesty and courage, or by the sheer force of tradition; others mere brawlers, who, by dint of repeating year after year the same set of stereotyped declamations against the government of the day, have sneaked into the reputation of revolutionists of the first water. After the 18th of March, some such men did also turn up, and in some cases contrived to play pre-eminent parts. As far as their power went, they hampered the real action of the working class, exactly as men of that sort have hampered the full development of every previous revolution. They are an unavoidable evil; with time they are shaken off; but time was not allowed to the Commune.

Wonderful, indeed, was the change the Commune had wrought in Paris! No longer any trace of the meretricious Paris of the Second Empire! No longer was Paris the rendezvous of British landlords, Irish absentees, American ex-slaveholders and shoddy men, Russian ex-serfowners, and Wallachian boyards. No more corpses at the morgue, no nocturnal burglaries, scarcely any robberies; in fact, for the first time since the days of February 1848, the streets of Paris were safe, and that without any police of any kind. “We,” said a member of the Commune, “hear no longer of assassination, theft and personal assault; it seems indeed as if the police had dragged along with it to Versailles all its Conservative friends.” The cocottes had refound the scent of their protectors—the abscinding men of family, religion, and, above all, of property. In their stead, the real women of Paris showed again at the surface—heroic, noble, and devoted, like the women of antiquity. Working, thinking, fighting, bleeding Paris—almost forgetful, in its incubation of a new society, of the cannibals at its gates—radiant in the enthusiasm of its historic initiative!

Opposed to this new world at Paris, behold the old world at Versailles—that assembly of the ghouls of all defunct régimes, Legitimists and Orleanists, eager to feed upon the carcass of the nation—with a tail of anteluvian republicans, sanctioning, by their presence in the Assembly, the slaveholders' rebellion, relying for the maintenance of their parliamentary republic upon the vanity of the semile mountebank at its head, and caricaturing 1789 by holding their ghastly meetings in the Jeu de Paume. There it was, this Assembly, the representative of everything dead in France, propped up to the semblance of life by nothing but the

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1 In the church of St. Laurent were discovered skeletons of women who had been violated by the monks and buried alive in the vaults. In the Picpus nunnery women were held on the pretext that they were insane, and they suffered the same fate.—Ed.

2 The tennis court where in 1789 the National Assembly took an oath not to dissolve, in spite of the royal command, before the constitution had been drafted.—Ed.
swords of the generals of Louis Bonaparte. Paris all truth, Versailles all lie; and that lie vented through the mouth of Thiers.

Thiers tells a deputation of the mayors of the Seine-et-Oise—"You may rely upon my word, which I have never broken!" He tells the Assembly itself that "it was the most freely elected and most liberal Assembly France ever possessed"; he tells his motley soldiery that it was "the admiration of the world, and the finest army France ever possessed"; he tells the provinces that the bombardment of Paris by him was a myth: "If some cannon-shots have been fired, it is not the deed of the army of Versailles, but of some insurgents trying to make believe that they are fighting, while they dare not show their faces." He again tells the provinces that "the artillery of Versailles does not bombard Paris, but only cannonades it." He tells the Archbishop of Paris that the pretended executions and reprisals (!) attributed to the Versailles troops were all moonshine. He tells Paris that he was only anxious "to free it from the hideous tyrants who oppress it," and that, in fact, the Paris of the Commune was "but a handful of criminals."

The Paris of M. Thiers was not the real Paris of the "vile multitude," but a phantom Paris, the Paris of the francs-fleuries, the Paris of the Boulevards, male and female—the rich, the capitalist, the gilded, the idle Paris, now thronging with its lackeys, its black-legs, its literary bohème, and its cocottes at Versailles, Saint-Denis, Rueil, and Saint-Germain; considering the civil war but an agreeable diversion, eyeing the battle going on through telescopes, counting the rounds of cannon, and swearing by their own honour and that of their prostitutes, that the performance was far better got up than it used to be at the Porte St. Martin. The men who fell were really dead; the cries of the wounded were cries in good earnest; and, besides, the whole thing was so intensely historical.

This is the Paris of M. Thiers, as the emigration of Coblenz¹ was the France of M. de Calonne.²

¹ The centre of the counter-revolutionary nobility in emigration during the first French bourgeois revolution.—Ed.
² De Calonne was Comptroller General (a kind of Prime Minister) in France on the eve of the 1789 Revolution.—Ed.

IV

The first attempt of the slaveholders' conspiracy to put down Paris by getting the Prussians to occupy it was frustrated by Bismarck's refusal. The second attempt, that of the 18th of March, ended in the rout of the army and the flight to Versailles of the government, which ordered the whole administration to break up and follow in its track. By the semblance of peace negotiations with Paris, Thiers found the time to prepare for war against it. But where to find an army? The remnants of the line regiments were weak in number and unsafe in character. His urgent appeal to the provinces to succour Versailles, by their National Guards and volunteers, met with a flat refusal. Brittany alone furnished a handful of Chouans fighting under a white flag, every one of them wearing on his breast the heart of Jesus in white cloth, and shouting "Vive le Roi!" (Long live the King!) Thiers was, therefore, compelled to collect, in hot haste, a motley crew, composed of sailors, marines, Pontifical Zouaves, Valentin's gendarmes, and Pietri's sergents-de-ville and mouchards. This army, however, would have been ridiculously ineffectual without the instamments of imperialist war prisoners, which Bismarck granted in numbers just sufficient to keep the civil war going, and keep the Versailles government in abject dependence on Prussia. During the war itself, the Versailles police had to look after the Versailles army, while the gendarmes had to drag it on by exposing themselves at all posts of danger. The forts which fell were not taken, but bought. The heroism of the Federals convinced Thiers that the resistance of Paris was not to be broken by his own strategic genius and the bayonets at his disposal.

Meanwhile, his relations with the provinces became more and more difficult. Not one single address of approval came in to gladden Thiers and his Rurals. Quite the contrary. Deputations and addresses demanding, in a tone anything but respectful, conciliation with Paris on the basis of the unequivocal recognition of the republic, the acknowledgment of the Communal liberties, and the dissolution of the National Assembly, whose mandate was extinct, poured in from all sides, and in such
numbers that Dufaure, Thiers' Minister of Justice, in his circular of April 23 to the public prosecutors, commanded them to treat "the cry of conciliation" as a crime! In regard, however, of the hopeless prospect held out by his campaign, Thiers resolved to shift his tactics by ordering, all over the country, municipal elections to take place on the 30th of April, on the basis of the new municipal law dictated by himself to the National Assembly. What with the intrigues of his prefects, what with police intimidation, he felt quite sanguine of imparting, by the verdict of the provinces, to the National Assembly that moral power it had never possessed, and of getting at last from the provinces the physical force required for the conquest of Paris.

His banditti-warfare against Paris, exalted in his own bulletins, and the attempts of his ministers at the establishment, throughout France, of a reign of terror, Thiers was from the beginning anxious to accompany with a little by-play of conciliation, which had to serve more than one purpose. It was to dupe the provinces, to inveigle the middle class element in Paris, and, above all, to afford the professed republicans in the National Assembly the opportunity of hiding their treason against Paris behind their faith in Thiers. On the 21st of March, when still without an army, he had declared to the Assembly: "Come what may, I will not send an army to Paris." On the 27th March he rose again: "I have found the republic an accomplished fact, and I am firmly resolved to maintain it." In reality, he put down the revolution at Lyons and Marseilles 1 in the name of the republic, while the roars of his Rurals drowned the very mention of its name at Versailles. After this exploit, he toned down the "accomplished fact" into an hypothetical fact. The Orleans princess, whom he had cautiously warned off Bordeaux, were now, in flagrant breach of the law, permitted to intrigue at Dreuex. The concessions held out by Thiers in his interminable interviews with the delegates from Paris and the provinces, although constantly varied in tone and colour, according to time and circumstances, did in fact never come to more than the prospective restriction of revenge to the "handful of criminals implicated in the murder of Lecomte and Clement Thomas," on the well-understood premise that Paris and France were unreservedly to accept M. Thiers himself as the best of possible Republics, as he, in 1830, had done with Louis Philippe. Even these concessions he not only took care to render doubtful by the official comments put upon them in the Assembly through his ministers. He had his Dufaure to act. Dufaure, this old Orleanist lawyer, had always been the justiciary of the state of siege, as now in 1871, under Thiers, so in 1839 under Louis Philippe, and in 1849 under Louis Bonaparte’s presidency. While out of office he made a fortune by pleading for the Paris capitalists, and made political capital by pleading against the laws he had himself originated. He now hurried through the National Assembly not only a set of repressive laws which were, after the fall of Paris, to extirpate the last remnants of republican liberty in France; he foreshadowed the fate of Paris by abridging the, for him, too slow procedure of courts-martial, and by a new-fangled, Draconic code of deportation. The Revolution of 1848, abolishing the penalty of death for political crimes, had replaced it by deportation. Louis Bonaparte did not dare, at least not in theory, to re-establish the regime of the guillotine. The Rural Assembly, not yet bold enough even to hint that the Parisians were not rebels, but assassins, had therefore to confine its prospective vengeance against Paris to Dufaure’s new code of deportation. Under all these circumstances Thiers himself could not have gone on with his comedy of conciliation, had it not, as he intended it to do, drawn forth shrieks of rage from the Rurals, whose ruminating mind did neither understand the play, nor its necessities of hypocrisy, tergiversation, and procrastination.

In sight of the impending municipal elections of the 30th April, Thiers enacted one of his great conciliation scenes on the 27th April. Amidst a flood of sentimental rhetoric, he exclaimed from the tribune of the Assembly:

"There exists no conspiracy against the republic but that of Paris, which compels us to shed French blood. I repeat it again
and again. Let those impious arms fall from the hands which hold them, and chastisement will be arrested at once by an act of peace excluding only the small number of criminals."

To the violent interruption of the Rurals he replied:

"Gentlemen, tell me, I implore you, am I wrong? Do you really regret that I could have stated the truth that the criminals are only a handful? Is it not fortunate in the midst of our misfortunes that those who have been capable to shed the blood of Clement Thomas and General Lecomte are but rare exceptions?"

France, however, turned a deaf ear to what Thiers flattered himself to be a parliamentary siren's song. Out of 700,000 municipal councillors returned by the 35,000 communes still left to France, the united Legitimists, Orleanists, and Bonapartists did not carry 8,000. The supplementary elections which followed were still more decidedly hostile. Thus, instead of getting from the provinces the badly-needed physical force, the National Assembly lost even its last claim to moral force, that of being the expression of the universal suffrage of the country. To complete the discomfiture, the newly-chosen municipal councils of all the cities of France openly threatened the usurping Assembly at Versailles with a counter assembly at Bordeaux.

Then the long-expected moment of decisive action had at last come for Bismarck. He peremptorily summoned Thiers to send to Frankfort plenipotentiaries for the definitive settlement of peace. In humble obedience to the call of his master, Thiers hastened to despatch his trusty Jules Favre, backed by Pouyer-Quertier. Pouyer-Quertier, an "eminent" Rouen cotton-spinner, a fervent and ever servile partisan of the Second Empire, had never found any fault with it save its commercial treaty with England, prejudicial to his own shop-interest. Hardly installed at Bordeaux as Thiers' Minister of Finance, he denounced that "unholy" treaty, hinted at its near abrogation, and had even the effrontery to try, although in vain (having counted without Bismarck), the immediate enforcement of the old protective duties against Alsace, where, he said, no previous international treaties stood in the

way. This man who considered counter-revolution as a means to put down wages at Rouen, and the surrender of French provinces as a means to bring up the price of his wares in France, was he not the one predestined to be picked out by Thiers as the helpmate of Jules Favre in his last and crowning treason?

On the arrival at Frankfort of this exquisite pair of plenipotentiaries, bully Bismarck at once met them with the imperious alternative: Either the restoration of the empire or the unconditional acceptance of my own peace terms! These terms included a shortening of the intervals in which the war indemnity was to be paid and the continued occupation of the Paris forts by Prussian troops until Bismarck should feel satisfied with the state of things in France; Prussia thus being recognised as the supreme arbiter in internal French politics! In return for this he offered to let loose, for the extermination of Paris, the captive Bonapartist army, and to lend them the direct assistance of Emperor William's troops. He pledged his good faith by making payment of the first installment of the indemnity dependent on the "pacification" of Paris. Such a bait was, of course, eagerly swallowed by Thiers and his plenipotentiaries. They signed the treaty of peace on the 10th of May and had it endorsed by the Versailles Assembly on the 18th.

In the interval between the conclusion of peace and the arrival of the Bonapartist prisoners, Thiers felt the more bound to resume his comedy of conciliation, as his republican tools stood in sore need of a pretext for blinking their eyes at the preparations for the carnage of Paris. As late as the 8th May he replied to a deputation of middle class conciliators—"Whenever the insurgents will make up their minds for capitulation, the gates of Paris shall be flung wide open during a week for all except the murderers of Generals Clement Thomas and Lecomte."

A few days afterwards, when violently interpellated on these promises by the Rurals, he refused to enter into any explanations; not, however, without giving them this significant hint: "I tell you there are impatient men amongst you, men who are in too great a hurry. They must have another eight days; at the end of these eight days there will be no more danger, and the task will be proportionate to their courage and to their capaci-
ties." As soon as McMahon was able to assure him that he could shortly enter Paris, Thiers declared to the Assembly that "he would enter Paris with the law in his hands, and demand a full expiation from the wretches who had sacrificed the lives of soldiers and destroyed public monuments." As the moment of decision drew near he said—to the Assembly, "I shall be pitiless!"—to Paris, that it was doomed; and to his Bonapartist banditti, that they had state licence to wreak vengeance upon Paris to their hearts' content. At last, when treachery had opened the gates of Paris to General Douai, on the 21st May, Thiers, on the 22nd, revealed to the Rurals the "goal" of his conciliation comedy, which they had so obstinately persisted in not understanding. "I told you a few days ago that we were approaching our goal; today I come to tell you the goal is reached. The victory of order, justice and civilisation is at last won!"

So it was. The civilisation and justice of bourgeois order comes out in its lurid light whenever the slaves and drudges of that order rise against their masters. Then this civilisation and justice stand forth as undisguised savagery and lawless revenge. Each new crisis in the class struggle between the appropriator and the producer brings out this fact more glaringly. Even the atrocities of the bourgeois in June 1871 vanish before the ineffable enormity of 1874. The self-sacrificing heroism with which the population of Paris—men, women and children—fought for eight days after the entrance of the Versailles, reflects as much the grandeur of their cause, as the infernal deeds of the soldiery reflect the innate spirit of that civilisation of which they are the mercenary vindicators. A glorious civilisation, indeed, the great problem of which is how to get rid of the heaps of corpses it made after the battle was over!

To find a parallel for the conduct of Thiers and his bloodhounds we must go back to the times of Sulla and the two triumvirates of Rome. The same wholesale slaughter in cold blood; the same disregard, in massacre, of age and sex, the same system of torturing prisoners; the same proscriptions, but this time of a whole class; the same savage hunt after concealed leaders, lest one might escape; the same denunciations of political and private enemies; the same indifference for the butchery of entire strangers to the feud. There is but this difference, that the Romans had no mitrailles for the despatch, in the lump, of the proscribed, and that they had not "the law in their hands," nor on their lips the cry of "civilisation."

And after those horrors look upon the other still more hideous face of that bourgeois civilisation as described by its own press!

"With stray shots," writes the Paris correspondent of a London Tory paper, "still ringing in the distance, and untended wounded wretches dying amid the tombstones of Père la Chaise—with 6,000 terror-stricken insurgents wandering in an agony of despair in the labyrinth of the catacombs, and wretches hurried through the streets to be shot down in scores by the mitrailles—it is revolting to see the cafés filled with the notaries of absinthe, billiards and dominoes; female profligacy promenading the boulevards, and the sound of revelry disturbing the night from the cabinets particuliers of fashionable restaurants." M. Edouard Hervé writes in the Journal de Paris, a Versaillais journal suppressed by the Commune: "The way in which the population of Paris [1] manifested its satisfaction yesterday was rather more than frivolous, and we fear it will grow worse as time progresses. Paris has now a fête day appearance, which is sadly out of place; and, unless we are to be called the Parisiens de la décadence, this sort of thing must come to an end." And then he quotes the passage from Tacitus: "Yet, on the morrow of that horrible struggle, even before it was completely over, Rome—degraded and corrupt—began once more to wallow in the voluptuous slough which was destroying its body and polluting its soul—alibi proelia et vulnerea, alibi balneo popinioque [here fights and wounds, there baths and restaurants]." M. Hervé only forgets to say that the "population of Paris" he speaks of is but the population of the Paris of M. Thiers—the francs-fueurs returning in throngs from Versailles, Saint-Denis, Rueil, and Saint Germain—the Paris of the "Decline."

In all its bloody triumphs over the self-sacrificing champions of a new and better society, that nefarious civilisation, based upon
the enslavement of labour, drowns the moans of its victims in a hue-and-cry of calumny, reverberated by a world-wide echo. The serene working men's Paris of the Commune is suddenly changed into a pandemonium by the bloodhounds of "order." And what does this tremendous change prove to the bourgeois mind of all countries? Why, that the Commune has conspired against civilisation! The Paris people die enthusiastically for the Commune in numbers unequalled in any battle known to history. What does that prove? Why, that the Commune was not the people's own government but the usurpation of a handful of criminals! The women of Paris joyful give up their lives at the barricades and on the place of execution. What does this prove? Why, that the demon of the Commune has changed them into Megetas and Hecates! The moderation of the Commune during two months of undisputed sway is equalled only by the heroism of its defence. What does that prove? Why, that for months the Commune carefully hid, under a mask of moderation and humanity, the blood-thirstiness of its fiendish instincts, to be let loose in the hour of its agony!

The working men's Paris, in the act of its heroic self-holocaust, involved in its flames buildings and monuments. While tearing to pieces the living body of the proletariat, its rulers must no longer expect to return triumphantly into the intact architecture of their abodes. The government of Versailles cries, "Incendi-ism!" and whispers this cue to all its agents, down to the remotest hamlet, to hunt up its enemies everywhere as suspect of professional incendiarism. The bourgeoisie of the whole world, which looks complacently upon the wholesale massacre after the battle, is convulsed by horror at the desecration of brick and mortar!

When governments give state licences to their navies to "kill, burn, and destroy," is that a licence for incendiarism? When the British troops wantonly set fire to the Capitol at Washington and to the summer palace of the Chinese emperor, was that incendiarism? When the Prussians not for military reasons, but out of the mere spite of revenge, burned down, by the help of petroleum, towns like Chateauguay and innumerable villages, was that incendiarism? When Thiers, during six weeks, bombarded Paris, under the pretext that he wanted to set fire to those houses only in which there were people, was that incendiarism?—In war, fire is an arm as legitimate as any. Buildings held by the enemy are shelled to set them on fire. If their defenders have to retire, they themselves light the flames to prevent the attack from making use of the buildings. To be burned down has always been the invariable fate of all buildings situated in the front of battle of all the regular armies of the world. But in the war of the enslaved against their enslavers, the only justifiable war in history, this is by no means to hold good! The Commune used fire strictly as a means of defence. They used it to stop up to the Versailles troops those long, straight avenues which Hausmann had expressly opened to artillery-fire; they used it to cover their retreat, in the same way as the Versailles, in their advance, used their shells which destroyed at least as many buildings as the fire of the Commune. It is a matter of dispute, even now, which buildings were set fire to by the defence, and which by the attack. And the defence resorted to fire only then when the Versailles troops had already commenced their wholesale murdering of prisoners.—Besides, the Commune had, long before, given full public notice that if driven to extremities, they would bury themselves under the ruins of Paris, and make Paris a second Moscow, as the Government of Defence, but only as a cloak for its treason, had promised to do. For this purpose Trochu had found them the petroleum. The Commune knew that its opponents cared nothing for the lives of the Paris people, but cared much for their own Paris buildings. And Thiers, on the other hand, had given them notice that he would be implacable in his vengeance. No sooner had he got his army ready on one side, and the Prussians shutting up the trap on the other, than he proclaimed: "I shall be pitiless! The expiation will be complete, and justice will be stern!" If the acts of the Paris working men were vandalism, it was the vandalism of defence in despair, not the vandalism of triumph, like that which the Christians perpetrated upon the really priceless art treasures of heathen antiquity; and even that vandalism has been justified by the historian as an unavoidable and comparatively trifling concomitant
to the titanic struggle between a new society arising and an old one breaking down. It was still less the vandalism of Haussmann, razing historic Paris to make place for the Paris of the sightseer!

But the execution by the Commune of the sixty-four hostages, with the Archbishop of Paris at their head! The bourgeoisie and its army in June 1848 re-established a custom which had long disappeared from the practice of war—the shooting of their defenceless prisoners. This brutal custom has since been more or less strictly adhered to by the suppressors of all popular combinations in Europe and India; thus proving that it constitutes a real "progress of civilisation"! On the other hand, the Prussians, in France, had re-established the practice of taking hostages—innocent men, who, with their lives, were to answer to them for the acts of others. When Thiers, as we have seen, from the very beginning of the conflict, enforced the humane practice of shooting down the Communal prisoners, the Commune, to protect their lives, was obliged to resort to the Prussian practice of securing hostages. The lives of the hostages had been forfeited over and over again by the continued shooting of prisoners on the part of the Versailles. How could they be spared any longer after the carnage with which MacMahon's prétorians celebrated their entrance into Paris? Was even the last check upon the unscrupulous ferocity of bourgeois governments—the taking of hostages—to be made a mere sham of? The real murderer of Archbishop Darboy is Thiers. The Commune again and again had offered to exchange the archbishop, and ever so many priests in the bargain, against the single Blanqui, then in the hands of Thiers. Thiers obstinately refused. He knew that with Blanqui he would give to the Commune a head; while the archbishop would serve his purpose best in the shape of a corpse. Thiers acted upon the precedent of Cavaignac. How, in June 1848, did not Cavaignac and his men of order raise shouts of horror by stigmatising the insurgents as the assassins of Archbishop Affre! They knew perfectly well that the archbishop had been shot by the soldiers of order. M. Jacquemart, the archbishop's vicar-general, present on the spot, had immediately afterwards handed them in his evidence to that effect.

All this chorus of calumny, which the Party of Order never fail, in their orgies of blood, to raise against their victims, only proves that the bourgeoisie of our days considers himself the legitimate successor to the baron of old, who thought every weapon in his own hand fair against the plebeian, while in the hands of the plebeian a weapon of any kind constituted in itself a crime.

The conspiracy of the ruling class to break down the revolution by a civil war carried on under the patronage of the foreign invader—a conspiracy which we have traced from the very 4th of September down to the entrance of MacMahon's prétorians through the gate of St. Cloud—culminated in the carnage of Paris. Bismarck gloats over the ruins of Paris, in which he saw perhaps the first instalment of that general destruction of great cities he had prayed for when still a simple Rural in the Prussian Chambre d'arrondissement of 1849. He gloats over the cadavers of the Paris proletariat. For him this is not only the extermination of revolution, but the extinction of France, now decapitated in reality, and by the French government itself. With the shallowness characteristic of all successful statesmen, he sees but the surface of this tremendous historic event. Whenever before has history exhibited the spectacle of a conqueror crowning his victory by turning into, not only the gendarme, but the hired bravo of the conquered government? There existed no war between Prussia and the Commune of Paris. On the contrary, the Commune had accepted the peace preliminaries, and Prussia had announced her neutrality. Prussia was, therefore, no belligerent. She acted the part of a bravo, a cowardly bravo, because incurring no danger; a hired bravo, because stipulating beforehand the payment of her blood-money of 500 millions on the fall of Paris. And thus, at last, came out the true character of the war, ordained by Providence as a chastisement of godless and debauched France by pious and moral Germany! And this unparalleled breach of the law of nations, even as understood by the old-world lawyers, instead of arousing the "civilised" governments of Europe to declare the felonious Prussian government, the mere tool of the St. Petersbourg Cabinet, an outlaw amongst nations, only incites them to consider whether the few victims
who escape the double cordon around Paris are not to be given up to the hangman at Versailles!

That after the most tremendous war of modern times, the conquering and the conquered hosts should fraternise for the common massacre of the proletariat—that unparalleled event does indicate, not, as Bismarck thinks, the final repression of a new society upheaving, but the crumbling into dust of bourgeois society. The highest heroic effort of which old society is still capable is national war; and this is now proved to be a mere governmental humbug, intended to defer the struggle of classes, and to be thrown aside as soon as that class struggle bursts out into civil war. Class rule is no longer able to disguise itself in a national uniform; the national governments are one as against the proletariat!

After Whit-Sunday, 1871, there can be neither peace nor truce possible between the working men of France and the appropriators of their produce. The iron hand of a mercenary soldiery may keep for a time both classes tied down in common oppression. But the battle must break out again and again in ever-growing dimensions, and there can be no doubt as to who will be the victor in the end—the appropriating few, or the immense working majority. And the French working class is only the advanced guard of the modern proletariat.

While the European governments thus testify, before Paris, to the international character of class rule, they cry down the International Working Men's Association—the international counter-organisation of labour against the cosmopolitan conspiracy of capital—as the head fountain of all these disasters. Thiers denounced it as the despot of labour, pretending to be its liberator. Pleard ordered that all communications between the French Internationals and those abroad should be cut off; Count Jaubert, Thiers' mumified accomplice of 1835, declares it the great problem of all civilised governments to weed it out. The Rurals roar against it, and the whole European press joins the chorus. An honourable French writer, completely foreign to our Association, speaks as follows: *"The members of the Central Committee of the National Guard, as well as the greater part of the members of the Commune, are the most active, intelligent, and energetic minds of the International Working Men's Association... men who are thoroughly honest, sincere, intelligent, devoted, pure, and fanatical in the good sense of the word."* The police-tinged bourgeois mind naturally figures to itself the International Working Men's Association as acting in the manner of a secret conspiracy, its central body ordering, from time to time, explosions in different countries. Our Association is, in fact, nothing but the international bond between the most advanced working men in the various countries of the civilised world. Wherever, in whatever shape, and under whatever conditions the class struggle obtains any consistency, it is but natural that members of our Association should stand in the foreground. The soil out of which it grows is modern society itself. It cannot be stamped out by any amount of carnage. To stamp it out, the governments would have to stamp out the despotism of capital over labour—the condition of their own parasitical existence.

Working men's Paris, with its Commune, will be for ever celebrated as the glorious harbinger of a new society. Its martyrs are enshrined in the great heart of the working class. Its exterminators history has already nailed to that eternal pillory from which all the prayers of their priest will not avail to redeem them.

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Zesty Maurice, for Hungary
Karl Marx, for Germany and Holland
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"The column of prisoners halted in the Avenue Uhrlieh, and was drawn up, four or five deep, on the footway facing the road. General Marquis de Gallifet and his staff dismounted and commenced an inspection from the left of the line. Walking down slowly and eyeing the ranks, the general stopped here and there, tapping a man on the shoulder or beckoning him out of the rear ranks. In most cases, without further parley, the individual thus selected was marched out into the centre of the road, where a small supplementary column was thus soon formed. . . . It was evident that there was considerable room for error. A mounted officer pointed out to General Gallifet a man and woman for some particular offence. The woman, rushing out of the ranks, threw herself on her knees, and, with out-stretched arms, protested her innocence in passionate terms. The general waited for a pause, and then with most impassible face and unmoved demeanour, said: 'Madame, I have visited every theatre in Paris, your acting will have no effect on me' ('ce n'est pas la peine de jouer la comédie') . . . It was not a good thing on that day to be noticeably taller, dirtier, cleaner, older, or uglier than one's neighbours. One individual in particular struck me as probably owing his speedy release from the ills of this world to his having a broken nose. . . . Over a hundred being thus chosen, a firing party told off, and the column resumed its march, leaving them behind. A few minutes afterwards a dropping fire in our rear commenced, and continued for over a quarter of an hour. It was the execution of the summarily-convicted wretches."

—Paris Correspondent Daily News, June 8. —This Gallifet, "the kept man of his wife, so notorious for her shameless exhibitions at the orgies of the Second Empire," went, during the war, by the name of the French "Ensign Pistol."

"The Temps, which is a careful journal, and not given to sensation, tells a dreadful story of people imperfectly shot and buried before life was extinct. A great number were buried in the Square round St. Jacques-la-Bouchière; some of them very superficially. In the daytime the roar of the busy streets prevented
LETTERS TO DR. KUGELMANN ON THE PARIS COMMUNE

April 12, 1871

If you look at the last chapter of my *Eightheenth Brumaire* you will find that I say that the next attempt of the French revolution will be no longer, as before, to transfer the bureaucratic-military machine from one hand to another, but to smash it, and this is essential for every real people's revolution on the Continent. 1 And this is what our heroic Party comrades in Paris are attempting. What elasticity, what historical initiative, what a capacity for sacrifice in these Parisians! After six months of hunger and ruin, caused rather by internal treachery than by the external enemy, they rise, beneath Prussian bayonets, as if there had never been a war between France and Germany and the enemy were not at the gates of Paris. History has no like example of a like greatness. If they are defeated only their "good..."

The homage paid to the historical initiative of the masses by this profound thinker who foresees failure six months ahead—and the lifeless, soulless pedantic: 'They should not have resorted to arms!' Are these not as far apart as heaven is from earth..."

"... Marx was able to appreciate the fact that moments occurred in history when the desperate struggle of the masses even for a hopeless cause is necessary for the sake of the further education of these masses and their training for the next struggle." (Lenin, Preface to the Russian translation of Marx's *Letters to Kugelmann.*)

And just as Marx drew extremely important lessons from the experience of the defeated Paris Commune for his teachings on the state, so the even more significant world-historic experience of the successful proletariat of the Soviet Union, provided, at the hands of Lenin, and Stalin, extremely rich material for further development of Marx's teachings on the revolution, on the state and on the dictatorship of the proletariat.—Ed.

1 In *The State and Revolution* Lenin explained as follows why Marx rejected this conclusion to the Continent:

"This was natural in 1871, when England was still the model of a purely capitalist country, but without militarism and, to a considerable degree, without a bureaucracy. Hence, Marx excluded England, where a revolution, even a people's revolution, could be conceived of, and was then possible, without the condition of first destroying the 'ready-made state machine.'"

Today, in 1917, in the epoch of the first great imperialist war, Marx's exception is no longer valid. Both England and America, the greatest and last representatives of Anglo-Saxon 'liberty', in the sense that militarism and bureaucracy are absent, have today plunged headlong into the all-European, filthy, bloody miasma of bureaucratic-military institutions to which everything is subordinated and which trample everything underfoot. Today, both in England and America, the 'essential' thing for 'every real people's revolution' is the smashing, the destruction of the 'ready-made state machine' (brought in those countries, between 1914 and 1917, to general 'European' imperialist perfection)."

Further, Lenin emphasises that Marx makes use of the concept of "people's revolution" and explains this concept as follows:

"In Europe, in 1871, there was not a single country on the Continent in which the proletariat constituted the majority of the people. A 'people's..."
nature" will be to blame. They should have marched at once on Versailles, after first Vinoy and then the reactionary section of the Paris National Guard had themselves retreated. The right moment was missed because of conscientious scruples. They did not want to start the civil war, as if that mischievous abortion Thiers had not already started the civil war with his attempt to disarm Paris, Second mistake: The Central Committee surrendered its power too soon, to make way for the Commune. Again from a too "honourable" scrupulosity! However that may be, the present rising in Paris—even if it be crushed by the wolves, swine and viles curs of the old society—is the most glorious deed of our Party since the June insurrection in Paris. Compare these Parisians, storming heaven, with the slaves to heaven of the German-Prussian Holy Roman Empire, with its posthumous masquerades reeking of the barracks, the Church, cabbage-junkerdom and above all, of the philtaine.

A proposit. In the official publication of the list of those receiving direct subsidies from Louis Bonaparte's treasury there is a note that Vogt received 40,000 francs in August 1859. I have informed Liebknecht of the fait, for further use.

revolution, that swept actually the majority into its stream, could be such only if it embraced the proletariat and the peasantry. Both classes then constituted the 'people.' Both classes were united by the fact that the 'bureaucratic-military state machine' oppressed, crushed, exploited them. To smash this machine, to break it up—this is what is truly in the interests of the 'people,' of the majority, the workers and most of the peasants, this is what is 'essential' for the free alliance between the poor peasantry and the proletarians; without such an alliance democracy is unstable and the socialist reformation is impossible.

"As is well known, the Paris Commune strove for such an alliance, although it failed to achieve it owing to a number of circumstances, internal and external." (The State and Revolution, pp. 30-32.)—Ed.

1 In his notes on the letters of Marx to Kugelmann, Lenin summarises the essence of the mistakes of the Commune and the historical merits of the Communards in the following words:

"Both mistakes consist in the lack of offensive, in the lack of consciousness and determination to smash the state bureaucratic-military machine and the power of the bourgeoisie. What aroused Marx's enthusiasm in the Paris Commune? The flexibility, the historical initiative, the capacity for self-sacrifice among these Parisians. The Parisians storming heaven." (Lenin's Notebook, Marxism on the State.)—Ed.

1 See Marx, The Class Struggles in France, 1848-50, chap. III, in the present volume.—Ed.

LETTERS TO KUGELMANN ON PARIS COMMUNE

[London] April 17, 1871

... How you can compare petty-bourgeois demonstrations à la 13 June, 1849, etc., with the present struggle in Paris is quite incomprehensible to me.

World history would indeed be very easy to make, if the struggle were taken up only on condition of infallibly favourable chances. It would, on the other hand, be of a very mystical nature, if "accidents" played no part. These accidents themselves fall naturally into the general course of development and are compensated again by other accidents. But acceleration and delay are very dependent upon such "accidents," which include the "accident" of the character of those who at first stand at the head of the movement.

The decisive, unfavourable "accident" this time is by no means to be found in the general conditions of French society, but in the presence of the Prussians in France and their position right before Paris. Of this the Parisians were well aware, but of this, the bourgeois canaille of Versailles were also well aware. Precisely for that reason they presented the Parisians with the alternative of taking up the fight or succumbing without a struggle. In the latter case, the demoralisation of the working class would have been a far greater misfortune than the fall of any number of "leaders." The struggle of the working class against the capitalist class and its state has entered upon a new phase with the struggle in Paris. Whatever the immediate results may be, a new point of departure of world-historic importance has been gained,
FREDERICK ENGELS

PREFATORY NOTE TO THE PEASANT WAR IN GERMANY

The following work was written in London in the summer of 1850 while still under the immediate impression of the counter-revolution just then completed; it appeared in the fifth and sixth numbers of the Neue Rheinische Zeitung, a politico-economic review, edited by Karl Marx, Hamburg, 1850. My political friends in Germany desire it to be reprinted, and I accede to their desire, because the work is, to my great regret, still timely today.

It makes no claim to provide material from independent research. On the contrary, the entire matter on the peasant risings and on Thomas Münzer is taken from Zimmermann. His book, despite gaps here and there, is still the best compilation of the factual material. Moreover, old Zimmermann enjoyed his subject. The same revolutionary instinct, which makes him here always take the side of the oppressed classes, made him later one of the best of the extreme Left wing in Frankfort. It is true that since then he is said to have somewhat aged.

If, nevertheless, Zimmermann’s account lacks the inner interconnections; if it does not succeed in showing the religious-political controversies of that epoch as the reflection of the contemporary class struggles; if it sees in these class struggles only oppressors and oppressed, good and evil, and the final victory of the evil ones; if its insight into the social conditions which determined both the outbreak and the outcome of the struggle is extremely defective, then that was the fault of the time in which the book came into existence. On the contrary, for its time, it is written even very realistically, an honourable exception among the German idealist works on history.

My account, while sketching the historic course of the struggle only in its outlines, attempted to explain the origin of the Peasant War, the attitude of the various parties taking part in it, the political and religious theories through which those parties strove to become clear about their position, and finally the result of the struggle itself as necessarily following from the historically established social conditions of these classes; that is to say, to demonstrate the political constitution of Germany of that time, the revolts against it and the contemporary political and religious theories not as causes but as results of the stage of development of agriculture, industry, land and waterways, commerce and finance, which then existed in Germany. This, the only materialist conception of history, originates not from myself but from Marx, and can be found also in his works on the French Revolution of 1848-49, published in the same review, and in The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte.

The parallel between the German Revolution of 1525 and that of 1848-49 was too obvious to be rejected altogether at that time. Nevertheless, despite the uniformity in the course of events, where various local revolts were crushed by one and the same princely army despite the often ludicrous similarity in the behaviour of the city burghers in both cases, the difference also stood out clear and unmistakable.

1 This Prefatory Note to The Peasant War in Germany, a work written by Engels in the year 1850, consists of two parts. The first part was prepared for the new edition of 1870, the second, written in June 1874, for the edition which appeared in the year 1875. On February 12, 1870, Marx wrote to Engels about this Prefatory Note to The Peasant War in Germany: “Your introduction is very good. I know of nothing that should be altered or added. With your treatment of 1865 I agree word for word. The double thrust at Wilhelm of the People’s Party and at Schweitzer with his bodyguard of rascals is very pretty.” The thrust at Schweitzer, a follower of Lasalle, is in the passage where Engels says that “in Germany there is only one serious adversary of the revolution—the Prussian government.” The cut at Liebknecht [Wilhelm] is in the passage where Engels describes the National-Liberals and the People’s Party as “the opposite poles of one and the same narrow-mindedness.”—Ed.

2 Wilhelm Zimmermann (1807-88). A German historian. The reference here is to Zimmermann’s chief work, History of the Great Peasant Wars (first published in 1841).—Ed.
"Who profited by the Revolution of 1525? The princes. Who profited by the Revolution of 1848? The big princes, Austria and Prussia. Behind the minor princes of 1525, chaining them to themselves by the taxes, stood the urban petty bourgeoisie; behind the big princes of 1848, behind Austria and Prussia there stood the modern big bourgeoisie, rapidly getting them under their yoke by means of the national debt. And behind the big bourgeoisie stand the proletariat."

I regret to have to say that in this paragraph much too much honour was done the German bourgeoisie. Both in Austria and Prussia, it has had the opportunity of getting the monarchy "under its yoke by means of the national debt"; nowhere did it ever make use of this opportunity.

By the War of 1866, Austria fell as a gift into the lap of the bourgeoisie. But it does not know how to rule, it is powerless and incapable of anything. It can do only one thing: savagely attack the workers as soon as they begin to stir. It only remains at the helm because the Hungarians need it.

And in Prussia? Yes, it is true the national debt has increased by leaps and bounds, the deficit has become a permanent feature, state expenditure grows from year to year, the bourgeoisie have a majority in the Chamber and without their consent taxes cannot be increased nor loans floated—but where is their power over the state? Only a couple of months ago, when there was again a deficit, they had a most favourable position. By holding out only just a little, they could have forced fine concessions. What do they do? They regard it as a sufficient concession that the government allows them to lay at its feet close on nine millions, not for one year, but every year and for all time to come.

I do not want to blame the poor "National-Liberals" in the Chamber more than they deserve. I know they have been left in the lurch by those who stand behind them, by the mass of the bourgeoisie. This mass does not want to rule. It has 1848 still in its bones.

Why the German bourgeoisie exhibits this remarkable cowardice will be discussed later.

In general, however, the above statement has been fully confirmed. Beginning with 1850, the small states have fallen more and more definitely into the background, serving only as levers for Prussian or Austrian intrigues, the struggles for hegemony between Austria and Prussia have become ever more violent, until finally came the armed conflict of 1866, with the result that Austria retained its own provinces, while Prussia obtained direct or indirect control of the whole of the North, the three states of the Southwest being left out in the cold for the time being.

In the whole of this principal and state action the only thing of importance for the German working class is as follows:

Firstly, universal suffrage has given the workers the power of being directly represented in the legislative assembly.

Secondly, Prussia has set a good example by swallowing three other crowns held by the grace of god. That after this operation she still has the same immaculate crown, held by the grace of god as she formerly claimed it to be, not even the National-Liberals believe any more.

Thirdly, there is now only one serious adversary of the revolution in Germany—the Prussian government.

And fourthly, the German Austrians will now at last have to ask themselves what they want to be, Germans or Austrians. Whom they would rather prefer to adhere to—to Germany or the ranks of the Progressives, the party of the German bourgeoisie. One section was in favour of a compromise with Bismarck's government and advocated support of his foreign policy. In 1867, this section of the bourgeoisie formed the National-Liberal Party.—Ed.

As after its victory over Austria in 1866, Prussia annexed the kingdom of Hanover, the principality of Hesse-Kassel and the Duchy of Nassau. The North German Alliance was established, consisting of the German states situated north of the Main. Austria, as also the South German states of Bavaria, Württemberg and Baden, remained outside this alliance.—Ed.
to their extra German Transleithanian appendages? It has been obvious for a long time that they will have to give up one or the other, but this has been continually glossed over by petty-bourgeois democracy.

As regards the other important controversies on account of 1866, which since then have been thrashed out ad nauseam between the "National-Liberals" on the one side and the "People's Party" on the other, the history of the next few years will probably prove that these two standpoints are so bitterly hostile to one another because they are the opposite poles of the same narrow-mindedness.

The year 1866 has changed almost nothing in the social conditions of Germany. The few bourgeois reforms—uniform weights and measures, freedom of movement, freedom of occupation, etc., all within limits acceptable to the bureaucracy—do not even come up to what the bourgeoisie of other West European countries have long possessed, and leave the main evil, the system of bureaucratic concessions, untouched. Apart from that, for the proletariat, freedom of movement, the right to settle anywhere, the abolition of passports and other such legislation is made quite illusory by current police practice.

What is much more important than the principal and state action in 1866 is the growth of German industry and commerce, of railways, telegraphs and ocean steamship navigation since 1848. However much this progress lags behind that of England, or even of France, during the same period, it is unprecedented for Germany and has accomplished more in twenty years than a whole century has done previously. Germany has just now been drawn, seriously and irreversibly, into world commerce. Capital invested in industry has multiplied rapidly, the social position of the bourgeoisie has been raised accordingly. The surest sign of industrial prosperity—swindling—has established itself abundantly and chained counts and dukes to its triumphal chariot. German capital is now constructing Russian and Rumanian rail-

This refers to the Transleithanian Austrian possessions, i.e., those on the other side of the Leitha (a tributary of the Danube), viz., Siebenbürgen, Croatia and Slavonia.—Ed.

For the People's Party see note 3 on p. 578 of the present volume.—Ed.

ways—may it not come to grief—whereas, only fifteen years ago, German railways went a-begging to English firms. How then is it possible that the bourgeoisie has not conquered political power as well, that it behaves in so cowardly a manner towards the government?

The misfortune of the German bourgeoisie is that in the favourite German manner it arrived too late. The period of its ascendancy occurs at a time when the bourgeoisie of the other West European countries is already politically in decline. In England, the bourgeoisie could only get its real representative, Bright, into the government by extending the franchise, which in its consequences is bound to put an end to the whole bourgeois rule. In France, where the bourgeoisie as such, as a complete class, has only held power for two years, 1849-50, under the republican regime, it was able to continue its social existence only by surrendering its political power to Louis Bonaparte and the army. And under the present conditions of the enormously increased interrelation of the three most progressive European countries, it is today no longer possible for the bourgeoisie in Germany to settle down to a comfortable political rule when this rule has already outlived itself in England and France.

It is a peculiarity of the bourgeoisie, distinguishing it from all former ruling classes, that there is a turning point in its development after which every further increase in its means of power, that is in the first place every increase of its capital, only tends to make it more and more incapable of ruling politically. "Behind the big bourgeoisie stand the proletarians." To the extent that the bourgeoisie develops its industry, its commerce and its means of communication, to the same extent it also produces the proletariat. And at a certain point—which need not appear everywhere at the same time or at the same stage of development—it begins to notice that this, its proletarian double, is outgrowing it. From that moment on, it loses the power for exclusive political domination; it looks round for allies with whom it shares its domination, or to whom it cedes its whole domination, as circumstances may demand.

In Germany this turning point came for the bourgeoisie as
early as 1848. And actually the German bourgeoisie was fright-
ened not so much by the German as by the French proletariat. The
June battle in Paris, in 1848, showed the bourgeoisie what it had
to expect; the German proletariat was just restless enough
make it clear that the seed of the same harvest had been sown
in German soil also; and from that day on the edge was taken
off all bourgeois political action. The bourgeoisie looked round
for allies, bargained itself away to them regardless of price—
and even today it is not a step further forward.
These allies are all of a reactionary nature. There is
the monarchy with its army and its bureaucracy; there is the big
feudal nobility; there are the little cabbage-junkers and there
are even the priests. With all of these the bourgeoisie made so
many pacts and bargains to save its dear skin that at last it had
nothing left to barter. And the more the proletariat developed,
the more it began to feel as a class and to act as a class, the
more faint-hearted did the bourgeoisie become. When the aston-
ishingly bad strategy of the Prussians triumphed over the aston-
ishingly still worse strategy of the Austrians at Sadowa, it was
difficult to say who gave a deeper sigh of relief—the Prussian
bourgeoisie, who was also defeated at Sadowa, or the Austrian.¹
Our big bourgeoisie of 1870 acts exactly like the middle bour-
geoisie of 1525 acted. As to the petty bourgeoisie, artisans and
shopkeepers, they will always remain the same. They hope to
raise themselves into the big bourgeoisie by swindling, they are
afraid of being pushed down into the proletariat. Between fear
and hope, they will in times of struggle seek to save their pre-
cious skin and to join the victors when the struggle is over. Such
is their nature.
The social and political activity of the proletariat has kept
pace with the rapid growth of industry since 1848. The role that
the German workers play today in their trade unions, co-
operative societies, political associations and public meetings, at
elections and in the so-called Reichstag, is by itself sufficient
proof of the transformation which has come unperceived over
Germany in the last twenty years. It greatly redounds to the credit
of the German workers that they alone have succeeded in sending
workers and workers' representatives into parliament—a feat
which neither the French nor the English have so far accom-
plished.
Still, even the proletariat has not yet outgrown the parallel-
ism with 1525. The class of the population entirely and perma-
nently dependent on wages is still far from forming the majority
of the German people. This class is, therefore, also compelled
to seek allies. The latter can only be found among the petty
bourgeoisie, the lumpenproletariat of the cities, the small peasa-
ants and the agricultural labourers.
The petty bourgeois have been spoken of above. They are ex-
remely unreliable except when a victory has been won, and then
their shouting in the beer houses knows no bounds. Nevertheless,
there are very good elements among them, who of their own
accord join up with the workers.
The lumpenproletariat, this scum of the demoralised elements
of all classes, which establishes its headquarters in all the big
cities, is the worst of all possible allies. This rabble is absolute-
ly venal and absolutely brazen. If the French workers, in every
revolution, inscribed on the houses: Mort aux voleurs! Death to
the thieves! and even shot many, they did it, not out of enthu-
siasm for property, but because they rightly considered it neces-
sary to keep that gang at distance. Every leader of the workers
who uses these scoundrels as guards or bases himself on them,
proves himself by this action alone a traitor to the movement.
The small peasants—for the bigger peasants belong to the
bourgeoisie—are of different kinds. Either they are feudal peas-
ants and still have to perform corvée services for their gracious
lord. Now that the bourgeoisie has failed to do its duty in free-
ing these people from servitude, it ought not to be difficult to

1 On July 3, 1886, Prussia won a decisive battle over Austria at Sadowa
(Königgrätz). The Prussian bourgeoisie, which had been afraid to base it-
self upon the democratic mass movement, finally capitulated to the Bismarck
government and openly capitulated the counter-revolutionary path to the
unification of Germany (from above with the assistance of the Prussian
monarchy), although this union meant a further strengthening of the
Junkers politically, and the collapse of the liberal hopes of the bourgeoisie.
—Ed.
convince them that they can only expect salvation from the working class.

Or they are tenants. In this case the situation is for the most part the same as in Ireland. Rents are pushed so high that in times of average crops the peasant and his family can only just manage to live; when the crops are bad he almost starves, is unable to pay his rent and consequently finds himself entirely at the mercy of the landlord. For such people the bourgeoisie only does something when it is compelled. From whom then should they expect salvation except from the workers?

There remain the peasants who cultivate their own little piece of land. In most cases they are so burdened with mortgages that they are as dependent on the usurer as the tenant on the landlord. For them also there remains only a meagre wage, which moreover, on account of there being good and bad years, is highly uncertain. These people least of all have anything to expect from the bourgeoisie, because it is precisely the bourgeoisie, the capitalist usurers, who suck the life-blood out of them. Still these peasants cling tightly to their property, though in reality it does not belong to them but to the usurers. Nevertheless, it will be possible to bring home to them that only when a government dependent on the people will have transformed all mortgages into a state debt, and thereby have lowered the interest rates, will they be able to free themselves from the usurer. And this can only be achieved by the working class.

Wherever medium-sized and large estates prevail, agricultural labourers form the most numerous class in the countryside. This is the case throughout the entire North and East of Germany and it is here, that the industrial workers of the towns find their most numerous and most natural allies. In the same way as the capitalist confronts the industrial worker, the landowner or large tenant confronts the agricultural labourer. The same measures that help the one must also help the other. The industrial workers can free themselves only by transforming the capital of the bourgeoisie, i.e., the raw materials, machines and tools, and the foodstuffs, necessary for production, into social property, i.e., into their own property, used by them in common. Similarly, the agricultural labourers can be rescued from their hideous misery only when their chief subject of labour, the land itself, is withdrawn from the private ownership of the large peasants and the still larger feudal lords, transformed into social property and cultivated by co-operative associations of agricultural workers on a common account. And here we come to the famous decision of the International Workers’ Congress in Basle: it is in the interest of society to transform landed property into common national property. This resolution was adopted primarily for the countries where there is large-scale landed property, and, connected with that, the cultivation of large farms, with one master and many labourers on every estate. This state of affairs, however, is still as a whole predominant in Germany, and therefore, next to England, the decision was most timely precisely for Germany. The agricultural proletariat, the farm labourers—that is the class from which the bulk of the armies of the princes is recruited. It is the class which, thanks to universal suffrage, sends into parliament the great mass of feudal lords and Junkers. But it is also the class nearest to the industrial workers of the towns, which shares their living conditions, which is even steeper still deeper in misery than they. To call into life and to draw into the movement this class, powerless because split and scattered, but whose hidden power is so well known to the government and nobility that they purposely allow the schools to fall into decay in order that it should remain ignorant, this is the immediate, most urgent task of the German workers’ movement. From the day when the mass of agricultural labourers have learned to understand their own interests, from that day a reactionary, feudal, bureaucratic or bourgeois movement in Germany becomes an impossibility.

* * *

The preceding lines were written over four years ago. They are still valid today. What was true after Sadowa and the partition of Germany, is being confirmed also after Sedan and the establishment of a classless state. The first International adopted a resolution that “it is in the interest of society to abolish private property in land and to convert it into social ownership.”—Ed.
lishing of the Holy German Empire of the Prussian nation. So little can "world-shaking" principal and state actions in the realm of so-called high politics change the direction of the movement of history.

What, on the other hand, these principal and state actions are in a position to do is to hasten the tempo of this movement. And in this respect, the authors of the above-mentioned "world-shaking" events have had involuntary successes, which they themselves surely find most undesirable, but which, however, for better or worse, they have to take into the bargain.

The War of 1866 had already shaken the old Prussia to its foundations. After 1848 it had already been difficult to bring the rebellious industrial element of the Western provinces, bourgeois as well as proletarian, under the old discipline; still, this had been accomplished, and the interests of the Junkers of the Eastern provinces, together with those of the army, again became dominant in the state. In 1866 almost all Northwest Germany became Prussian. Apart from the irreparable moral injury suffered by the Prussian crown by the grace of god owing to having swallowed three other crowns by the grace of god, the centre of gravity of the monarchy now shifted considerably westward. The five million Rhinelanders and Westphalians were reinforced by the Germans annexed through the North German Alliance, first of all by the four millions annexed directly, and then by the six millions annexed indirectly. And in 1870 were further added the eight million Southwest Germans, so that in the "new Reich," the fourteen and a half million old Prussians (from the six East Elbian provinces, including moreover two million Poles) were confronted by some twenty-five millions who had long outgrown the old Prussian Junker feudalism. In this

1 Engels refers to the following passage from his pamphlet, The Housing Question, written in 1872:

"In reality, however, the state as it now exists in Germany is also the necessary product of the social basis out of which it has developed. In Prussia—and Prussia is now decisive—there exists side by side with a landowning aristocracy which is still powerful, a comparatively young and markedly very cowardly bourgeois, which up to the present has not won either direct political domination, as in France, or more or less indirect as in England. Side by side with these two classes, however, there exists further a rapidly increasing proletariat, which is intellectually highly developed and which is becoming more and more organised every day. We find, therefore, in Germany alongside of the basic condition of the old absolute monarchy, an equilibrium between the landowning aristocracy and the bourgeoisie, also the basic condition of modern Bonapartism, an equilibrium between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

But both in the old absolute monarchy and in the modern Bonapartism, the real governing power lies in the hands of a special caste of army officers and state officials. In Prussia this caste is supplemented partly from its own ranks, partly from the lesser aristocracy owning the entailed estates, more rarely the higher aristocracy and least of all from the bourgeoisie. The independence of this caste, which appears to occupy a position outside, and so to speak, above society, gives the state the semblance of independence in relation to society." (Engels, The Housing Question, Marxist-Leninist Library No. 7, pp. 71-72.)—Ed.
that this transition was the greatest progress made by Prussia after 1848, so much had Prussia lagged behind in point of modern development. It was still a semi-feudal state, whereas Bonapartism is, at all events, a modern form of state which presupposes the abolition of feudalism. Hence Prussia has to decide to get rid of its numerous remnants of feudalism, to sacrifice Junkerdom as such. This naturally is being done in the mildest possible form and to the favourite tune of; always slowly forward! Thus, for example in the notorious Kreisordnung, it abolishes the feudal privileges of the individual Junker in relation to his estate, but only to restore them as privileges of the whole of the big landowners in relation to the entire district. The substance remains, being only translated from the feudal into the bourgeois dialect. The old Prussian Junker is being compulsorily transformed into something akin to an English squire, and he need not have offered so much resistance because the one is as stupid as the other.

Thus it has been the peculiar fate of Prussia to complete its bourgeois revolution, begun in 1803 to 1813 and advanced further in 1848, in the pleasant form of Bonapartism at the end of this century. And if everything goes well, and the world remains nice and quiet, and we all become old enough, we may live to see—perhaps in 1900—that the government of Prussia has actually abolished all feudal institutions and Prussia has finally arrived at the point where France stood in 1792.

The abolition of feudalism, expressed positively, means the establishment of bourgeois conditions. In the measure that the privileges of the nobility fall, legislation becomes more and more bourgeois. And here we come to the central point of the relation of the German bourgeoisie to the government. We have seen that the government is compelled to introduce these slow and petty reforms. As against the bourgeoisie, however, it portrays each of these small concessions as a sacrifice made to the bourgeoisie.

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1 Legislation establishing distinct local authorities.—Ed.
2 During these years the feudal authorities of Prussia, weakened by the blows of Napoleon, carried out a number of reforms, even if insignificant ones.—Ed.
place after the other by endurance and strict conformity to the law. All the persecution had the opposite effect to that intended. Far from breaking the workers’ party or even bending it, it only brought ever new recruits to it and consolidated the organisation. In their struggle both against the authorities and individual bourgeois, the workers showed themselves superior, intellectually and morally, and proved particularly in their conflicts with the so-called “providers of work,” that they, the workers, were now the educated class and the capitalists the Knoten. And in their fights they fought for the most part with a sense of humour, which is the best proof of how sure they were of their cause and how conscious they were of their superiority. A struggle thus conducted, on historically prepared soil, must yield great results. The successes of the January elections stand out unique in the history of the modern workers’ movement and the astonishment aroused by them throughout Europe was fully justified.

The German workers have two important advantages over those of the rest of Europe. First, they belong to the most theoretical people of Europe; they have retained that sense of theory which the so-called “educated” people of Germany have completely lost. Without German philosophy which preceded it, particularly that of Hegel, German scientific socialism—the only scientific socialism that has ever existed—would never have come into being. Without a sense of theory among the workers, this scientific socialism would never have passed so entirely into their flesh and blood as has been the case. What an immeasurable advantage this is may be seen, on the one hand, from the indifference towards all theory, which is one of the main reasons why the English workers’ movement moves so slowly in spite of the splendid organisation of the individual unions; on the other hand, from the mischief and confusion wrought by Proudhonism in its original form among the French and Belgians.

1 From the very start of the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71), the German workers, headed by the Social-Democratic Party (the Eisenachers), protested against the war and expressed their solidarity with the French workers in a number of resolutions and manifestoes. After the victory of Prussia at Sedan they demanded “an equitable peace with the French republic and no annexations” and protested against the seizure of Alsace-Lorraine. Bebel and Liebknecht made a sharp protest in the Reichstag against the war and abstained from voting the war credits; after Sedan they voted against the war credits.—Ed.

2 The central organ of the Social-Democratic Workers’ Party of Germany, published from 1869-76 in Leipzig. Its editor-in-chief was Wilhelm Liebknecht.—Ed.

3 Handicraftsmen. Marx and Engels often used this term for the backward, non-class-conscious workers still under the influence of guild ideology.—Ed.
and in the further caricatured form at the hands of Bakunin, among the Spaniards and Italians.

The second advantage is that chronologically speaking the Germans were almost the last to come into the workers’ movement. Just as German theoretical socialism will never forget that it rests on the shoulders of Saint-Simon, Fourier and Owen, three men who, in spite of all their fantastic notions and utopianism,¹ have their place among the most eminent thinkers of all times, and whose genius anticipated innumerable things the correctness of which is now being scientifically proved by us—so the practical workers’ movement in Germany must never forget that it has developed on the shoulders of the English and French movements, that it was able simply to utilise their dearly-bought experience, and could now avoid their mistakes, which in their time were mostly unavoidable. Without the English trade unions and the French workers’ political struggles which came before, without the gigantic impulse given especially by the Paris Commune, where would we be now?

It must be said to the credit of the German workers that they have exploited the advantages of their situation with rare understanding. For the first time since a workers’ movement has existed, the struggle is being conducted from its three sides, the theoretical, the political and the practical-economic (resistance to the capitalists), in harmony, co-ordination and in a planned way. It is precisely in this, as it were, concentric attack, that the strength and invincibility of the German movement lies.

It is due to this advantageous situation on the one hand, to the insular peculiarities of the English and to the forcible suppression of the French movement on the other, that the German workers have for the moment been placed in the vanguard of the proletarian struggle. How long events will allow them to occupy this post of honour cannot be foretold. But as long as they occupy it, let us hope that they will fill it in a fitting manner. This demands redoubled efforts in every field of struggle and agitation. It is in particular the duty of the leaders to gain

CRITIQUE OF THE GOTHÁ PROGRAMME

FOREWORD BY FREDERICK ENGELS

The manuscript published here—the covering letter to Bracke as well as the critique of the draft programme—was sent in 1875, shortly before the Gotha Unity Congress, to Bracke for communication to Geiß, Auer, Bebel and Liebknecht and subsequent return to Marx. Since the Halle Party Congress has put the discussion of the Gotha Programme on the agenda of the party, I think I would be guilty of suppression if I any longer withheld from publicity this important—perhaps the most important—document relevant to this discussion.

But the manuscript has yet another and more far-reaching significance. Here for the first time Marx’s attitude to the line adopted by Lassalle since the latter embarked on his agitation is clearly and firmly formulated, both as regards Lassalle’s economic principles and his tactics.

The ruthless severity with which the draft programme is dissected here, the mercilessness with which the results obtained are enunciated and the shortcomings of the draft laid bare, all this today, after fifteen years, can no longer give offence. Specific Lassalleans now only exist abroad as isolated ruins and in Halle the Gotha Programme has been given up even by its creators as altogether inadequate.

1 Engels wrote this foreword to the Critique when it was published in 1891 in the Neue Zeit.—Ed.
2 See Marx’s letter of May 5, 1875, to Bracke. In this letter Marx says that he is going to come out publicly against the programme. For the explanation why Marx did not do so, see p. 593 of the present volume.—Ed.
3 The congress of the German Social-Democratic Party at Halle—the first congress after the abrogation of the Anti-Socialist Law—decided on

NEGATIVE SIDE OF THE PROBLEMS OF THE INTERNATIONAL

Nevertheless, I have omitted a few sharp personal expressions and judgments, where these were of no importance to the matter, and replaced them by dots. Marx himself would have done so if he had published the manuscript today. The violence of the language in some passages was provoked by two circumstances. In the first instance, Marx and I had been more intimately connected with the German movement than with any other; we were, therefore, bound to be particularly intensely perturbed by the decidedly retrograde step manifested by this draft programme. And secondly, we were at that time, hardly two years after the Hague Congress of the International, engaged in the most violent struggle against Bakunin and his anarchists who made us responsible for everything that happened in the labour movement in Germany; hence we had to expect that we would also be saddled with the secret paternity of this programme. These considerations do not now exist and so there is no necessity for the passages in question.

For reasons arising from the Press Law, also, a few sentences have been only indicated by dots. Where I have had to choose a milder expression this has been enclosed in square brackets. Otherwise the text has been published word for word.

F. ENGELS

London, January 6, 1891.

October 16, 1899, on the motion of Liebknecht, the main author of the Gotha programme, to prepare a draft of a new programme for the next party congress. The new programme of German Social-Democracy was adopted at the Erfurt Congress (the "Erfurt Programme").—Ed.

1 The fifth, Hague Congress of the First International, in September 1872, was dominated by the struggle between the Bakunists on the one hand and the General Council under the leadership of Marx and Engels on the other. The majority of the Congress supported the General Council. Bakunin was expelled, but the Bakunists continued their struggle against the General Council even after the Hague Congress. In regard to Bakunin and his struggle against Marx in the First International, see also Engels’ letter of January 24, 1872, to Cuno, p. 619 of this volume.—Ed.
2 In the text of the Critique published here, all the passages omitted have been restored.—Ed.
KARL MARX TO WILHELM BRACKE

London, May 5, 1875

Dear Bracke:

When you have read the following critical marginal notes on the Unity Programme, would you be so good as to send them to Geib and Auer, Bebel and Liebknecht for them to see. I am excessively busy and have already had to go a long way beyond the extent of work allowed me by the doctor. Hence it was anything but a "pleasure" to write such a lengthy screed. It was, however, necessary so that the steps that have to be taken by me later on will not be misinterpreted by our friends in the party for whom this communication is intended. After the Unity Congress has been held, Engels and I will publish a short declaration to the effect that our position is altogether remote from the said programme of principles and that we have nothing to do with it.

This is indispensable because the opinion—the entirely erroneous opinion—is held abroad, assiduously nurtured by enemies of the party, that we secretly guide from here the movements of the so-called Eisenach party. In a Russian pamphlet that has recently appeared, 2 Bakunin again makes me responsible for example, not only for all the programmes, etc., of that party but even for every step taken by Liebknecht from the day of his co-operation with the People's Party.

Apart from this, it is my duty not to give recognition, even by diplomatic silence, to what is in my opinion a thoroughly objectionable programme tending to demoralise the party.

1 Together with this letter, Marx sent Bracke, one of the leaders of the Eisenachers, his Critique of the Gotha Programme. In 1891, Engels published the Critique together with this letter.—Ed.

2 August Geib (1842-79), Treasurer of the Eisenach Party, a member of the Reichstag from 1874. Ignaz Auer (1846-1907), Secretary of the Eisenach Party, subsequently one of the leaders of the reformist wing of German Social-Democracy.—Ed.

3 The reference is to Bakunin's work, Statehood and Anarchy, the Struggle of Two Parties in the International Working Men's Association (1873), in which Bakunin calls Liebknecht an "agent of Marx" and makes Marx responsible for all the theoretical and tactical mistakes of Liebknecht, "who acts under the direct leadership of Marx."—Ed.

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Every step of real movement is more important than a dozen programmes. 1 If, therefore, it was not possible—and the conditions of the time did not permit it—to go beyond the Eisenach programme, one should simply have concluded an agreement for action against the common enemy. But by drawing up a programme of principles (instead of postponing this until it has been prepared for by a considerable period of common activity) one sets up before the whole world a landmark by which the level of the party movement is measured. The Lassallean leaders came because circumstances forced them to come. If they had been told from the beginning that there would be no bargaining about principles, they would have had to be content with a programme of action or a plan of organisation for common action. Instead of this, they have been permitted to arrive armed with mandates, these mandates have been recognised on our part as valid, and thus one surrenders unconditionally to those who are in need of help. To crown the whole business, they are holding a congress again before the Congress of Compromise, while our own party is holding its congress post festum. 2 There has obviously been a desire to stifle all criticism and to prevent our own party from considering the matter. One knows that the mere fact of unification is satisfying to the workers, but it would be a mistake to believe that this immediate success is not being bought at too high a price.

For the rest, the programme is no good, even apart from its sanctification of the Lassallean articles of faith.

1 In 1902 when the Russian "Economists" appealed to this statement of Marx in order to justify their own opportunist practice, Lenin gave a telling answer to this attempt by explaining the real content of Marx's words in connection with the concrete situation in which they were written by Marx: "If you must combine, Marx wrote to the party leaders, 'then enter into an agreement to satisfy the practical aims of the movement, but do not haggle over principles, do not make 'concessions' in theory. That was Marx's idea..." (Lenin, Selected Works, Vol. IV, "What Is To Be Done?" p. 47.)—Ed.

2 The Unity Congress of German Social-Democracy was held on May 22-27, 1875, in Gotha; the congress of the Lassalleans had taken place previously in May and the congress of the Eisenachers took place afterwards in Hamburg on June 8.—Ed.
CRITIQUE OF THE GOTHAM PROGRAMME

MARGINAL NOTES TO THE PROGRAMME OF THE GERMAN WORKERS' PARTY

I

1. "Labour is the source of all wealth and all culture and since useful labour is only possible in society and through society, the proceeds of labour belong undiminished with equal right to all members of society."

2 The first French translation of Volume I of *Capital* was edited by Marx himself and was published in Paris in separate parts during the years 1872-75—Ed.

3 Bernhard Becker (1826-32), German historian and publicist, one of the founders of Lassalle's General Association of German Workers. After Lassalle's death, in accordance with the testament left by Lassalle, he was elected chairman of the party. In the beginning of 1866 he broke with the Lassalleans and subsequently joined the Eisenachers—Ed.

4 The *Critique of the Gotha Programme* ranks with the *Communist Manifesto* as one of Marx's most important programmatic works. It gives in the space of a few pages, in very concise formulation, the theoretical basis of the programme of the party of the proletariat.

The central place in the *Critique* is devoted to an analysis of the "development of future communism" in the closest connection with the question of the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

FIRST PART OF THE PARAGRAPH: "Labour is the source of all wealth and all culture."

Labour is not the source of all wealth. Nature is just as much the source of use values (and it is surely of such that material wealth consists!) as labour, which itself is only the manifestation of a natural force, human labour power. That phrase is to be found in all children's primers and is correct in so far

The immense theoretical and practical significance of this part of the *Critique* was emphasized by Lenin with special force in 1917 in his book *The State and Revolution*, chap. V, where he develops Marx's idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Lenin says:

"Marx explains this question (the economic basis of the withering away of the state) most thoroughly in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme*. . . . The polemical part of this remarkable work, consisting of a criticism of Lassalleanism, has, so to speak, overshadowed its positive part, namely, the analysis of the connection between the development of communism and the withering away of the state. . . . Without dropping into utopias, Marx defined more fully what can be defined now regarding this future, namely, the difference between the lower and higher phases (degrees, stages) of communist society. He "makes a sober estimate of exactly how a socialist society will have to manage its affairs. Marx proceeds to make a concrete analysis of the conditions of life of a society in which there is no capitalisms. . . ." The analysis of capitalist society and of the inevitable course of its development, the position and role of the proletariat in it and the analysis of the "economic basis of the withering away of the state" lead Marx to the conclusion of the necessity and inevitability of the "political transition period . . . between capitalist and communist society." The state of this transition period "can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat."

In these "remarkable observations of Marx," writes Lenin in his book *The Proletarian Revolution and The Renegade Kautsky*, "is summarized his complete revolutionary doctrine."

In 1918 the renegade Kautsky had the effrontery to declare that the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat (he called it a "catchword") was only put forward by Marx on one occasion—in the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*. This, of course, is a lie. In actual fact the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat runs like a red thread through all the teachings and all the works of Marx and Engels. There is no doubt that in the *Critique* Marx gave this idea its sharpest formulation and substantiated it by a thorough-going analysis of the development of communist society, in the course of which he dealt in especial detail with the question of "utilisation of the power of the proletariat for the organisation of socialism, for the abolition of classes and for the transition to a society without classes, to a society without a state." (Stalin, *Leninism*, "Problems of Leninism," p. 130.)

Particularly at the present moment, when, under the dictatorship of
as it is implied that labour proceeds with the appropriate subjects and instruments. But a socialist programme cannot allow such bourgeois phrases to cause the conditions that alone give them meaning to be ignored. And in so far as man from the beginning behaves towards nature, the primary source of all instruments and subjects of labour, as her owner, treats her as belonging to him, his labour becomes the source of use values, therefore also of wealth. The bourgeois have very good grounds for fancifully ascribing supernatural creative power to labour, since it follows precisely from the fact that labour depends on nature, that the man who possesses no other property than his labour power must, in all conditions of society and culture, be the slave of other men who have made themselves the owners of the material conditions of labour. He can only work with their permission, and hence only live with their permission.

Let us now leave the sentence as it stands, or rather limp. What would one have expected as conclusion? Obviously this:

the proletariat in the U.S.S.R., the transition from capitalism to communism is being realised in practice, Marx's scientific forecasts, developed by Lenin and Stalin, have particular importance and take on the character of practical directives which are becoming immediately put into effect. And now that in the Soviet Union, the foundations of socialist economy have already been laid, and socialist economy is proving victorious, and now that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is realising the basic political task of the abolition of classes and the construction of classless, socialist society, it is particularly clear that it is the political line of Bolshevism which represents the immediate continuation of the line pursued by Marx and Engels throughout their lives.

In his Critique, Marx, in May 1875, came out against the gross opportunism mistakes in questions of principle and questions of programme committed by the leaders of German Social-Democracy on the occasion of the union of the two German workers' parties then in existence—the Social-Democratic Workers' Party of Germany (the so-called Eisenachers) led by Liebknecht and Bebel, and the Lassallean party, the General Association of German Workers headed by Hassenclever, Hasselmann and Tröltzsch. Both these parties arose in the sixties, when the question of the creation of a united German state had not yet been solved—a question which had also played the chief role at the time of the Revolution of 1848-49 but had then remained unsolved. It was possible to solve it in either of two ways: "either by the path of revolution led by the proletariat giving rise to an All-German republic, or by the path of Prussia's dynastic wars consolidat-

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"Since labour is the source of all wealth, in society also no one can appropriate wealth except as the product of labour. Therefore, if he himself does not work, he lives by the labour of others and also acquires his culture at the expense of the labour of others."

Instead of this, by means of the words "and since" a second proposition is added in order to draw a conclusion from this and not from the first one.

Second Part of the Paragraph: "Useful labour is only possible in society and through society."

According to the first proposition, labour was the source of all wealth and all culture, therefore also of any society is possible without labour. Now we learn, conversely, that no "useful" labour is possible without society.

One could just as well have said that only in society can useless and even generally harmful labour become a branch of gainful occupation, that only in society can one live by being

ing the hegemony of the Prussian Junkers in a united Germany." (Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. XVI, "August Bebel"). The party of Liebknecht and Bebel, strongly influenced by Marx and Engels, fought for the first solution. The Lassalleans, continuing Lassalle's policy which counted on the aid of the Junker state in the struggle of the workers for the improvement of their economic position, pursued a policy which in fact assisted the solution of the question of German unification in the Junker way. Hence, Marx dubbed the Lassalleans "Royal Prussian Socialists." A series of wars, especially the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71, the alliance concluded between the bourgeoisie and the Junkers out of fear of the proletariat, the cowardice of the German petty bourgeoisie, the weakness and immaturity of the German proletariat—all this enabled Bismarck to achieve the unification of Germany under the leadership of Prussia by the counter-revolutionary path. Thus one of the most important grounds of political difference between the two workers' parties ceased to exist. The masses of the party membership demanded unity and Marx was not against it. Nevertheless, he saw a dangerous opportunism in the lack of principle with which the leaders of the Eisensch party patched up a programme that represented a mixture of pre-Marxist, and especially Lassallean, dogmas, vulgar-democratic demands and completely distorted communist theses. Marx considered such an eclectic programme altogether unsuitable and therefore came forward against it with his Critique. The Critique was first published in 1891. For the history of its publication see the letter of Engels to Kautsky of February 23, 1891, and the notes to this letter p. 596 in the present volume.—Ed.
idle, etc., etc.,—in short one could just as well have copied the whole of Rousseau.1

And what is “useful” labour? Surely only labour which produces the intended useful effect. A savage—and man was a savage after he had ceased to be an ape—who has killed an animal with a stone, who collects fruits, etc., performs “useful” labour.

Thirdly: The Conclusion: “And since useful work is only possible in society and through society—the proceeds of labour belong undiminished with equal right to all members of society.”

A fine conclusion! If useful labour is only possible in society and through society, the proceeds of labour belong to society—and only so much therefrom accrues to the individual workers as is not required to maintain the “condition” of labour, society.

In fact, also, this proposition has at all times been made use of by the champions of the prevailing state of society. First come the claims of the government and everything connected with it, since it is the social organ for the maintenance of the social order; then come the claims of the various kinds of private property, for the various kinds of private property are the foundations of society, etc. One sees that such hollow phrases can be twisted and turned as desired.

The first and second parts of the paragraph have some intelligible connection only in the following wording:

“Labour only becomes the source of wealth and culture as social labour,” or, what is the same thing, “in and through society.”

1 Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-78). French philosopher of the period of the Enlightenment. As a petty-bourgeois ideologist, Rousseau was the theoretician of consistent bourgeois democracy. He was a passionate champion of the struggle against feudal exploitation and absolutism and defended the theory of the “sovereignty of the people.” He based his criticism of the feudal system on an abstract, unhistorical theory of natural equality, of a primitive happy communist condition of humanity, and of the superiority of nature and inborn qualities over culture. In his Marginal Notes, Marx points out that the Gotha Programme, instead of giving a scientific class analysis of the social order and of the law of its development, confines itself to the repetition of an abstract preaching which recalls that of Rousseau.—Ed.

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This proposition is incontestably correct, for although isolated labour (its material conditions presupposed) can also create use values, it can create neither wealth nor culture.

But equally incontestable is this other proposition:

“In proportion as labour develops socially, and becomes thereby a source of wealth and culture, poverty and neglect develop among the workers and wealth and culture among the non-workers.”

This is the law of all history hitherto. What, therefore, had to be done here, instead of making general phrases about “labour” and “society,” was to prove concretely how in present capitalist society the material, etc., conditions have at last been created which will enable and compel the workers to lift this social curse.

In fact, however, the whole paragraph, incorrect in style and content, is only there in order to inscribe the Lassallean catchword of the “undiminished proceeds of labour” as a slogan at the top of the party banner. I shall return to the “proceeds of labour,” “equal right,” etc., later on, since the same thing recurs in a somewhat different form.

2. “In present-day society, the instruments of labour are the monopoly of the capitalist class; the resulting dependence of the working class is the cause of misery and servitude in all its forms.”

This sentence, borrowed from the Statutes of the International, is incorrect in this “improved” edition.

In present-day society the instruments of labour are the monopoly of the landowners (the monopoly of property in land is even the basis of the monopoly of capital) and the capitalists. In the passage in question, the Statutes of the International do not mention by name either the one or the other class of monopolists. They speak of the “monopoly of the instruments of labour, i.e., of the sources of life.” The addition, “sources of life” makes it sufficiently clear that land is included in the instruments of labour.

1 See p. 442 of the present volume.—Ed.
The correction was introduced because Lassalle, for reasons now generally known, attacked only the capitalist class and not the landowners. In England, the capitalist is usually not even the owner of the land on which his factory stands.

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

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

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

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

What is "equitable distribution"?

Do not the bourgeois assert that the present-day distribution is "equitable"? And is it not, in fact, the only "equitable" distribution on the basis of the present-day mode of production? Are economic relations regulated by legal conceptions?

1 Marx refers to the "contract" concluded by Lassalle with Bismarck, the existence of which was suspected by Marx and Engels. Their suspicions were only confirmed after the death of Lassalle. (See Marx’s letter of February 28, 1865, to Kugelmann, p. 506 in this volume.) Marx did not know (it was only brought to light in 1821) that Lassalle had concluded his contract with Bismarck not shortly before his death but considerably earlier, in the beginning of May 1863. Consequently, he had conducted negotiations with Bismarck even before the foundation of the General Association of German Workers; one can even assume that the association was founded by a secret agreement with Bismarck. For a characterisation of "Royal Prussian socialism" one may quote here a passage of Lassalle’s letter of June 3, 1863, to Bismarck: "The working class ... would be inclined ... to see in the crown the natural bearer of social dictatorship, in opposition to the egoism of bourgeois society, if the crown, its part ... could make up its mind ... to pursue a really revolutionary and national direction and to transform itself from a monarchy of the privileged estates into a social and revolutionary people’s monarchy." (Gustav Mayer, "Bismarck und Lassalle. Ihr Briefwechsel und ihre Gespräche" (Bismarck and Lassalle. Their Correspondence and Conversations), Berlin, 1928, p. 60.)—Ed.

or do not, on the contrary, legal relations arise from economic ones? Have not also the socialist sectarians 1 the most varied notions about “equitable” distribution?

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

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

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

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

1 Marx in 1872 wrote about sectarian socialism in his pamphlet directed against the Bakunists, Les prétendues sécessions dans l'internationale (The Alleged Splits in the International). "The first phase in the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie is marked by the sectarian movement. This is justifiable at a time when the proletariat is not yet sufficiently developed to act as a class. Isolated thinkers subject the social antagonisms to criticism and at the same time give a fantastic solution of them which the mass of the workers have only to accept as complete, to propagate and to put into practical operation. It is in the nature of these sects, which are founded on the initiative of individuals, that they keep themselves aloof and remote from every real activity, from politics, strikes, trade unions, in a word, from every collective movement. The mass of the proletariat always remains indifferent, even hostile, to their propaganda. The workers of Paris and Lyons were as little interested in the Saint-Simons, Fourierists and Icarians, as the English Chartists and trade unionists in the Owenites. The sects, at the outset a lever for the movement, become an obstacle as soon as this movement has overtaken them; they then become reactionary. The proof of this is the sects in France and England and recently the Lassalleans in Germany, who, after having for years hindered the organisation of the proletariat, have finally become simple police tools. In short, they represented the infancy of the proletarian movement just as astrology and alchemy represented the infancy of science." — Ed.
From this is then to be deducted:

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

Secondly, additional portion for expansion of production.

Thirdly, reserve or insurance fund to provide against misadventures, disturbances through natural events, etc.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Only now do we come to the "distribution" which the programme, under Lassallean influence, alone has in view in its narrow fashion, namely that part of the means of consumption which is divided among the individual producers of the co-operative society.

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

Just as the phrase the "undiminished proceeds of labour" has disappeared, so now does the phrase "proceeds of labour" disappear altogether.¹

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

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

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

¹ Compare with this refutation of Lassalle's demand for the "undiminished" or "whole proceeds of labour," Lenin, The State and Revolution, chap. V, section III, "The First Phase of Communist Society."—Ed.
labour, and because, on the other hand, nothing can pass into the ownership of individuals except individual means of consumption. But, as far as the distribution of the latter among the individual producers is concerned, the same principle prevails as in the exchange of commodity-equivalents, so much labour in one form is exchanged for an equal amount of labour in another form.

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

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

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

To avoid all these defects, right instead of being equal would have to be unequal.¹

But these defects are inevitable in the first phase of communist society as it is when it has just emerged after prolonged birth pangs from capitalist society. Right can never be higher than the economic structure of society and the cultural development thereby determined.²

¹ On "right" and "equality" in the first phase of communism, Lenin wrote:

"Hence, the first phase of communism cannot produce justice and equality; differences, and unjust differences, in wealth will still exist, but the exploitation of man by man will have become impossible, because it will be impossible to seize the means of production, the factories, machines, land, etc., as private property. In smashing Lassalle's petty-bourgeois, confused phrases about 'equality' and 'justice' in general, Marx shows the course of development of communist society, which, at first, is compelled to abolish only the injustice of the means of production having been seized by private individuals, and which cannot at once abolish the other injustice of the distribution of articles of consumption 'according to the amount of work performed' (and not according to needs)." (The State and Revolution.)

The C.P.S.U., in waging the struggle against Leftist equalitarianism in the sphere of wages, bases itself entirely on the teachings of Marx and Lenin concerning the first phase of communist society. This was emphasised by Stalin in his historic speech delivered at the conference of leaders of industry:

"Marx and Lenin said that the difference between skilled labour and unskilled labour would exist even under Socialism, even after classes had been abolished; that only under Communism would this difference disappear and that, therefore, even under Socialism wages must be paid according to work performed and not according to needs. But the equalitarians among our business executives and trade union officials do not agree with this and believe that under our Soviet system this difference has already disappeared. Who is right, Marx and Lenin, or the equalitarians? We must take it that it is Marx and Lenin who are right. But if that is so, it follows that whoever draws up wage scales on the principle of wage equalization, without taking into account the difference between skilled labour and unskilled labour, breaks with Marxism, breaks with Leninism." (Leninism, "New Conditions, New Tasks," p. 572.)

On this point also Stalin, Interview with the German author, Emil Ludwig and Report to the Seventeenth Congress of the C.P.S.U., 1934.—Ed.

² In The State and Revolution, Lenin explains and develops this proposition of Marx as follows:

"And so, in the first phase of communist society (generally called socialism) 'bourgeois right' is not abolished in its entirety, but only in part, only in proportion to the economic transformation so far attained, i.e., only in respect of the means of production. 'Bourgeois right' recognises them as the private property of separate individuals. Socialism converts
In a higher phase of communist society, after the enlaving subordination of individuals under division of labour, and thera-
with also the antithesis between mental and physical labour, has
vanished, after labour has become quite a means to live
but has become itself the primary necessity of life, after the
productive forces have also increased with the all-round develop-
ment of the individual, and all the springs of co-operative wealth
flow more abundantly—only then can the narrow horizon of
bourgeois right be fully left behind and society inscribe on its
banners: from each according to his ability, to each according
to his needs.  

then into common property. To that extent, and to that extent alone,
'bourgeois right' disappears.

"However, it continues to exist so far as its other part is concerned:
it remains in the capacity of regulator (determining factor) in the
distribution of products and allotment of labour among the members
of society. The socialist principle: 'He who does not work, neither shall he
eat,' is already realised; the other socialist principle: 'An equal amount
of labour for an equal quantity of products,' is also already realised. But
this is not yet communism, and it does not abolish 'bourgeois right,' which
gives to unequal individuals, in return for an unequal (actually unequal)
amount of work, an equal quantity of products.

"This is a 'defect,' says Marx, but it is unavoidable in the first phase
of communism; for, if we are not to fall into utopianism, we cannot
imagine that, having overthrown capitalism, people will at once learn to
work for society without any standard of right; indeed, the abolition of
capitalism does not immediately create the economic prerequisites for
such a change." (The State and Revolution, p. 72.)—Ed.

Developing further the Marxian teachings on the first and second
phases of communist society and the economic basis for the withering away
of the state, Lenin wrote:

"The economic basis for the complete withering away of the state is
the high stage of development of communism in which the antithesis
between mental and physical labour disappears, that is to say, when one
of the principal sources of modern social inequality—a source, moreover,
which cannot be removed immediately by the mere conversion of the means
of production into public property, by the mere expropriation of the
capitalists—disappears . . .

"The state will be able to wither away completely when society can
apply the rule: 'From each according to his ability, to each according to
his needs,' i.e., when people have become accustomed to observing the
fundamental rules of social life and when their labour is so productive
that they will voluntarily work according to their ability. The narrow
horizon of bourgeois right, which compels one to calculate with the
shrewdness of a Shylock whether he has not worked half an hour more
than another, whether he is not getting less pay than another—this narrow

horizon will then be left behind. There will then be no need for society
to make an exact calculation of the quantity of products to be distributed
to each of its members; each will take freely according to his needs."
(Ibid., pp. 73-74.)—Ed.

In his article, "The Economic Content of Narodism and the Criticism
of It in Mr. Stowe's Book" (1894), Lenin referring to the passage in the
Critique of the Gotha Programme quoted above, wrote:
the real position has long been made clear, why go back again?

4. "The emancipation of labour must be the work of the working class, in contrast to which all other classes are only . . . one reactionary mass."

The first strophe is taken from the introductory words of the Statutes of the International, but "improved." There it is said: "The emancipation of the working class must be the act of the workers themselves." Here, on the contrary, the "working class" has to emancipate—what? "Labour." Let him understand who can.

In compensation, the antistrophie on the other hand is a Lassallean quotation of the first water: "in contrast to which (the working class) all other classes form only one reactionary mass."

... Marx contrasts vulgar socialism to scientific socialism, which does not attach great importance to distribution and which explains the social system by the organisation of the relations of production and which considers that a given system of organisation of relations of production already includes a definite system of distribution . . . this idea runs like a thread through the whole of Marx's teachings. (Lenin, Selected Works, Vol. I, p. 466.)—Ed.

1 In Greek tragedies the chorus consisted of a strophe and an antistrophie.—Ed.

2 Marx and Engels criticised this slogan; they continually pointed out the importance of the allies of the proletariat, they emphasised the enormous importance of the growth of the bourgeois-democratic revolution into the socialist revolution. On this subject, Engels wrote to Bernstein on November 2, 1882:

"The real weakness is the childish notion of the coming revolution which is supposed to begin by . . . the whole world dividing itself into armies: we here, the 'one reactionary mass' there. That means that the revolution is to begin with the fifth act, and not with the first in which the mass of all the oppositional parties stand together against the government and its agents and thus is victorious, upon which the separate parties among the victors one after another wear themselves out, make themselves impossible, until finally by this means the mass of the people is thrust wholly onto our side and then Vollmar's much vaunted decisive battle can proceed."

Lenin also says:

"To imagine that social revolution is conceivable without revolts by small nations in the colonies and Europe, without the revolutionary outbursts of a section of the petty bourgeoisie with all its prejudices, without a movement of non-claess conscious proletarian and semi-proletarian masses against the oppression of the landlords, the church, the monarchy, the foreign nations, etc. to imagine that means repudiating social revolution. Only those who imagine that in one place an army will line up and say, 'We are for socialism,' and in another place another army will say, 'We are for imperialism,' and that this will be social revolution! . . . Whoever expects a 'pure' social revolution will never live to see it. Such a person pays lip service to revolution, without understanding what revolution is. The Russian Revolution of 1905 was a bourgeois-democratic revolution. It consisted of a series of battles in which all the discontented classes, groups and elements of the population participated. Objectively, the mass movement broke the back of tsarism and paved the way for democracy; and for that reason the class conscious workers led it. The socialist revolution in Europe cannot be anything else than an outburst of mass struggle on the part of all and sundry of the oppressed and discontented elements. (Selected Works, Vol. V, "Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up," pp. 303-4.)—Ed.

1 See Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, The Communist Manifesto, in Volume I of the present edition.—Ed.
peasants during the last elections. 1 In contrast to us, you, with the bourgeois and feudal lords, form only one reactionary mass.

Lassalle knew The Communist Manifesto by heart, as his faithful followers know the gospels written by him. If, therefore, he has falsified it so grossly, this has occurred only to put a good colour on his alliance with absolutist and feudal opponents against the bourgeois.

In the above paragraph, moreover, his oracular saying is dragged in by force without any connection with the botched quotation from the Statutes of the International. Thus it is here simply an impertinence and indeed not at all displeasing to Herr Bismarck, one of those cheap pieces of insolence in which the Marat 2 of Berlin deals.

5. “The working class strives for its emancipation first of all within the framework of the present-day national state, conscious that the necessary result of its efforts, which are common to the workers of all civilised countries, will be the international brotherhood of peoples.”

Lassalle, in opposition to The Communist Manifesto and to all earlier socialism, conceived the workers’ movement from the narrowest national standpoint. He is being followed in this—and that after the work of the International!

It is altogether self-evident that, to be able to fight at all, the working class must organise itself at home as a class and that its own country is the immediate arena of its struggle. In so far its class struggle is national, not in content, but, as The Communist Manifesto says, “in form.” 3 But the “framework of the present-day national state,” e.g., the German empire, is itself in its turn economically “within the framework” of the world market, politically “within the framework” of the system of states. Every

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1 The Reichstag elections mentioned here took place in January 1874.—Ed.
2 Marat (1743-93). The mightiest figure in the first French bourgeois revolution, one of the most vigorous revolutionary agitators. By the “Marat of Berlin” Marx ironically refers to Hasselmann, the chief editor of the Neuer Sozialdemokrat, the central organ of the Lassalleans.—Ed.
3 See Volume I of the present edition.—Ed.

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CRITIQUE OF THE GOTHA PROGRAMME

businessman knows that German trade is at the same time foreign trade, and the greatness of Herr Bismarck consists, to be sure, precisely in a kind of international policy.

And to what does the German Workers’ Party reduce its internationalism? To the consciousness that the result of its efforts will be “the international brotherhood of peoples”—a phrase borrowed from the bourgeois League of Peace and Freedom, 1 which is intended to pass as equivalent to the international brotherhood of the working classes in the joint struggle against the ruling classes and their governments. Not a word, therefore, about the international functions of the German working class! And it is in this way it is to challenge its own bourgeoisie, which is already linked up in brotherhood against it with the bourgeois of all other countries, and Herr Bismarck’s international policy of conspiracy 2.

In fact the international consciousness expressed in the programme stands even infinitely below that of the Free Trade Party. The latter also asserts that the result of its efforts will be “the international brotherhood of peoples.” But it also does something to make trade international and by no means contents itself with the consciousness—that all peoples are carrying on trade at home.

The international activity of the working classes does not in any way depend on the existence of the International Working Men’s Association. This was only the first attempt to create a central organ for that activity; an attempt which was of lasting success on account of the impulse which it gave but which was

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1 The International League of Peace and Freedom was an international organisation of bourgeois democrats and pacifist free traders which existed in the sixties and seventies. The First International, under the pressure of Marx and under his leadership, carried on a decisive struggle against this League. The watchwords of the League were “Universal Brotherhood of People” and the “United States of Europe.”—Ed.
2 After the fall of the Paris Commune, Bismarck attempted in 1871-72 to conclude a formal treaty between Germany, Austria and Russia for the purpose of united persecution of the revolutionary movement in general and the First International in particular. It is true that a formal treaty was not arrived at, but the government organs of the Big Powers, nevertheless, were already taking joint action against the revolutionaries.—Ed.

Marx Selected Works
no longer realisable in its first historical form after the fall of the Paris Commune.

Bismarck’s Norddeutsche was absolutely correct when it announced for the satisfaction of its master that the German Workers’ Party had repudiated internationalism in the new programme.

II

“Starting from these basic principles, the German Workers’ Party strives by all legal means for the free state—and—socialist society; the abolition of the wage system together with the iron law of wages—and—exploitation in every form; the removal of all social and political inequality.”

I shall return to the “free” state later.

Thus, in future, the German Workers’ Party has got to believe in Lassalle’s “iron law of wages”! That this shall not be lost, the nonsense is perpetrated of speaking of the “abolition of the wage system” (it should read: system of wage labour) together with the “iron law of wages.” If I abolish wage labour, then naturally I abolish its laws also, whether they are of “iron” or sponge. But Lassalle’s attack on wage labour turns almost solely on this so-called law. In order, therefore, to prove that Lassalle’s sect has conquered, the “wage system” must be abolished together with the iron law of wages and not without it.

1 The Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung, an organ of Bismarck’s, published, on March 20, 1875 (No. 67), a leading article on the draft programme of the Social-Democratic Party. This article makes special reference to point 5. of the programme which Marx is referring to here, and in connection with this point the comment was made that “the Social-Democrats, at least in part, appear to desire to free themselves to a certain extent from the influence of the International,” that “the Social-Democratic agitation has in many respects become more prudent,” and that “it is renouncing the International.”—Ed.

2 Lassalle formulated this law as follows: “The iron economic law which, under present-day conditions, under the rule of the supply and demand of labour, determines wages is this, that the average wage always remains reduced to the necessary basis of subsistence that . . . is requisite for existence and propagation.” (An Open Answer to the Central Committee for Convensing a General Congress of German Workers at Leipzig, Zurich, 1863.) See also the criticism of this law in Engels’ letter to Behel, of March 10, 1875, p. 564 in the present volume.—Ed.

1 F. A. Lange (1828-75), German Neo-Kantian philosopher, petty-bourgeois democratic writer, author of a work on social reform, The Labour Question: Its Significance for the Present and the Future (1865).—Ed.

2 Thomas Robert Malthus (1766-1834). English economist. In his work, An Essay on the Principle of Population (1798), he developed the idea that there exists an immutable law of population according to which the population figure increases in geometrical progression while the means of subsistence necessary for its maintenance increase only in arithmetical progression. Consequently, according to Malthus, the basis for poverty lies in the natural contradiction between the boundless striving of men for propagation and the restricted increase of the necessary means of subsistence. Marx, who called Malthus’ work a libel on the human race, pointed out the falsity of this “law,” and proved that “in fact each special historic mode of production has its own special, historically valid laws of population.” (Capital, Vol. 1, chap. XXIII, p. 693.)—Ed.

3 Lassalle was killed in a duel in September 1864.—Ed.
board once for all and it was made clear that the wage worker has permission to work for his own life, i.e., to live, only in so far as he works for a certain time gratis for the capitalist (and hence also for the latter’s fellow consumers of surplus value); that the whole capitalist system of production turns on the prolongation of this gratis labour by extending the working day or by developing the productivity, or the greater intensity, of labour power, etc., that, consequently, the system of wage labour is a system of slavery, and indeed a slavery which becomes more severe in proportion as the social productive forces of labour develop, whether the worker receives better or worse payment. And after this understanding has more and more made progress in our party, one returns to Lassalle’s dogmas, although one must have known that Lassalle did not know what wages are, but following in the wake of the bourgeois economists took the appearance for the essence of the matter.

It is as if, among slaves who have at last got behind the secret of slavery and broken out in rebellion, a slave still in thrall to obsolete notions were to inscribe on the programme of the rebellion: Slavery must be abolished because the upkeep of slaves in the system of slavery cannot exceed a certain low maximum.

Does not the mere fact that the representatives of our party were capable of perpetrating such a monstrous attack on the understanding that has spread among the mass of our party prove by itself with what criminal levity and with what lack of conscience they set to work in drawing up this compromise programme!

Instead of the indefinite concluding phrase of the paragraph “the removal of all social and political inequality” it ought to have been said that with the abolition of class differences all the social and political inequality arising from them would disappear of itself.

III

“The German Workers’ Party, in order to pave the way to the solution of the social question, demands the establishment

of producers’ co-operative societies with state aid under the democratic control of the toiling people. The producers’ co-operative societies are to be called into being for industry and agriculture in such dimensions that the socialist organisation of the total labour will arise from them.”

After the Lassallean “iron law of wages,” the remedy of the prophet. The way to it is “paved” in worthy fashion. In place of the existing class struggle appears a newspaper scribbler’s phrase: “the social question,” to the “solution” of which one “paves the way.” Instead of the revolutionary process of transformation of society, the “socialist organisation of the total labour” “arises” from the “state aid” that the state gives to the producers’ co-operative societies and which the state, not the worker, “calls into being.” This is worthy of Lassalle’s imagination that one can build a new society by state loans just as well as a new railway!

From the remnants of a sense of shame, “state aid” has been put—under the democratic control of the “toiling people.”

In the first place the majority of the “toiling people” in Germany consists of peasants and not of proletarians.

Secondly, “democratic” is in German “volksherrschaftlich,” [“by the rule of the people”]. But what does “control by the rule of the people of the toiling people” mean? And particularly in the case of a toiling people which, through these demands that it puts to the state, expresses its full consciousness that it neither rules nor is ripe for ruling!

It would be superfluous to deal here with the criticism of the recipe prescribed by Buchez in the reign of Louis Philippe in opposition to the French Socialists and accepted by the reactionary workers of the Atelier. The chief offence does not lie

1 Buchez (1796-1865). French historian and writer. In the forties of the last century, he was the representative of French Catholic “socialism,” which demanded the formation of producers’ co-operative societies with state aid as a means of struggle against the growing revolutionary movement.—Ed. 2 Atelier (Workshop). A monthly journal published in Paris (1840-48). Its editors and contributors were all workers. The Atelier group were under the influence of the reactionary Catholic socialism of Buchez. In politics they supported the bourgeois radicals.—Ed.
in having inscribed these specific nostrums in the programme, but in that in general a retrograde step from the standpoint of a class movement to that of a sectarian movement is being taken.

That the workers desire to establish the conditions of co-operative production on a social, and first of all on a national scale in their own country, only means that they are working to revolutionise the present conditions of production, and has nothing in common with the foundation of co-operative societies with state aid. But as far as the present co-operative societies are concerned they are of value only in so far as they are the independent creations of the workers and not proteges either of the government or of the bourgeoisie.

IV

I come now to the democratic section

A. "The free basis of the state."

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

Free state—what is this?

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

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

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

"Present-day society" is capitalist society, which exists in all civilised countries, more or less free from mediaeval admixture, more or less modified by the special historical development of each country and more or less developed. On the other hand, the "present-day state" changes with a country's frontier. It is different in the Prusso-German empire from what it is in Switzerland, it is different in England from what it is in the United States. "The present-day state" is therefore a fiction.

Nevertheless, the different states of the different civilised countries, in spite of their manifold diversity of form, all have this in common that they are based on modern bourgeois society, only one more or less capitalistically developed. They have, therefore, also certain essential features in common. In this sense it is possible to speak of the "present-day state," in contrast to the future in which its present root, bourgeois society, will have died away.

The question then arises: what transformation will the state undergo in communist society? In other words, what social functions will remain in existence there that are analogous to the present functions of the state? This question can only be answered scientifically and one does not get a flea-hop nearer to the problem by a thousand-fold combination of the word people with the word state.

Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. There corresponds to this also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.\(^1\)

\(^1\) In regard to this thesis Lenin wrote, in the autumn of 1916: "Up to now this axiom has never been disputed by socialists and yet it implies the recognition of the state, right up to the time when victorious socialism will have grown into complete communism." (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XIX, "The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up."") Lenin discusses this thesis in more detail in his work *The State and Revolution*. In 1922 the renegade Kautsky produced the following "variations" of this thesis of Marx: "In the interval between the purely bourgeois administration and the purely proletarian administration of a democratic state there is the period of transition from one to the other. To this also corresponds a poli-
Now the programme does not deal with this nor with the future state in communist society.1

Its political demands contain nothing beyond the old familiar democratic litany: universal suffrage, direct legislation, people's justice, a people's militia, etc. They are a mere echo of the bourgeois People's Party,2 of the League of Peace and Freedom. They are all demands which, in so far as they are not exaggerated in fanciful presentation, have already been realised. Only the state to which they belong does not lie within the frontiers of the German empire, but in Switzerland, the United States, etc. This sort of "state of the future" is a present-day state although existing outside the "framework" of the German empire, an ideal transition period when the government, as a rule, takes the form of a coalition government." (K. Kautsky, The Proletarian Revolution and Its Programme, Stuttgart, 1922.)—Ed.

1 In his Notebook on the Critique Lenin makes the following observation: "It is clear that this is a rebuke; this is clear from the following phrase: the programme 'deals' with the old democratic litany but not with the questions of the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat and the state in communist society." (Lenin, Marxism on the State.)—Ed.

2 For the text of these political demands, see note 5 on pp. 587-88 of the present volume.—Ed.

The German People's Party or Democratic Party was founded in September 1865 in Darmstadt and reorganised at the Stuttgart Party Congress in September 1898. It was the party of the petty bourgeoisie, of oppositional and partly also revolutionary inclination, of the smaller and medium-sized states of Germany, and particularly of South Germany. In opposition to Bismarck's policy of the unity of Germany under the hegemony of monarchist Junker Prussia, it put forward the establishment of a democratic German republic. It was connected with the International League of Peace and Freedom (see note 1 on p. 571) and it made efforts to gain influence among the workers. It assisted the creation of various workers' educational associations and played the leading role in the annual congresses of the "German Workers' Associations." The organisation of the People's Party in Saxony, which consisted almost exclusively of members of the workers' associations, was used by W. Liebknecht and A. Bebel, who carried on agitation within the framework of the People's Party as the basis for the foundation of an independent workers' party. Later, in September 1868, after Liebknecht and Bebel had succeeded, under the pressure of Marx and Engels, at the Nuremberg Congress of the German Workers' Associations, in securing the adherence of these Associations to the First International and, a year later, in August 1869, at the London Congress of the Workers' Associations, in the foundation of a Social-Democratic Workers' Party, the People's Party rapidly lost its influence over the workers.—Ed.

But one thing has been forgotten. Since the German Workers' Party expressly declares that it acts within "the present-day national state," hence its own state, the Prusso-German empire—its demands would indeed otherwise be largely meaningless, since one only demands what one has not got—it should not have forgotten the chief thing, namely that all those pretty little toys rest on the recognition of the so-called sovereignty of the people and hence there is only room for them in a democratic republic.

Since one has not the courage—and wisely, for the circumstances demand caution—to demand the democratic republic, as the French workers' programmes under LouisPhilippe and under Louis Napoleon did, one should not have taken refuge either in the subterfuge, neither "honourable" nor "worthy," of demanding things which have meaning only in a democratic republic from a state which is nothing but a police guarded military despotism,1 embellished with parliamentary forms, alloyed with a feudal admixture, bureaucratically constructed and already influenced by the bourgeoisie, and then to assure this state into the bargain that one thinks one will be able to extort these things from it "by legal means."

Even vulgar democracy, which sees the millenium in the democratic republic and has no suspicion that it is precisely in this last state form of bourgeois society that the class struggle has to be fought out to a conclusion—even it towers mountains above this kind of democratism within the limits of what is permitted by the police and what is logically impermissible.2

1 Referring to this characterisation of the constitution of the new Hohenzollern German Empire, Lenin wrote in 1913: "Marx estimated the actual essence of the German 'constitution' a hundred thousand times more profoundly than hundreds of professors, priests and publicists of the bourgeoisie, who chanted the praises of the 'state based on law.' They crawled on their bellies before the success and triumph of the highly placed favourites in Germany. Marx estimated the class essence of the policy, being guided not by a particular 'kind' in events, but by the whole experience of international democracy and of the international workers' movement." (Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. XVII, "Zabern.")—Ed.

2 In his Notebook on the Critique, Lenin makes the following comment: "In these words, Marx, as it were, foresaw the whole course of Kaut-
That, in fact, by the word “state” the government machinery is understood, or the state, in so far as it forms a special organism separated from society through division of labour, is already shown by the words “the German Workers’ Party demands as the economic basis of the state: a single progressive income tax, etc.” Taxes are the economic basis of the government machinery and of nothing else. In the state of the future as it exists in Switzerland, this demand has been pretty well fulfilled. Income tax presupposes the various sources of income of the various social classes, and hence capitalist society. It is, therefore, not extraordinary that the Liverpool financial reformers, bourgeois headed by Gladstone’s brother,¹ are putting forward the same demand as the programme.

B. “The German Workers’ Party demands as the intellectual and moral basis of the state:

I. Universal and equal elementary education through the state. Universal compulsory school attendance, free instruction.”

Equal elementary education? What idea lies behind these words? Is it believed that in present-day society (and it is only with this one has to deal) education can be equal for all classes? Or is it demanded that the upper classes also shall be compulsorily reduced to the modicum of education—the elementary school—that alone is compatible with the economic conditions not only of the wage workers but of the peasants as well.

“Universal compulsory school attendance. Free instruction.” The former exists even in Germany, the second in Switzerland and in the United States in the case of elementary schools. If in some states of the latter country the higher educational institutions are also “free” that only means in fact defraying the cost of the education of the upper classes from the general tax receipts. Incidentally, the same holds good for “free administration of justice” demanded under A. 5. Criminal justice is to be had free everywhere; civil justice is concerned almost exclusively with conflicts over property and hence affects almost exclusively the possessing classes. Should they carry on their litigation at the expense of the national treasury?

The paragraph on the schools should at least have demanded technical schools (theoretical and practical) in combination with the elementary school.

“Elementary education through the state” is altogether objectionable. Defining by a general law the financial means of the elementary schools, the qualifications of the teachers, the branches of instruction, etc., and, as happens in the United States, supervising the fulfilment of these legal prescriptions by means of state inspectors, is a very different thing from appointing the state as the educator of the people! Government and church should rather be equally excluded from any influence on the school. Particularly, indeed, in the Prusso-German empire (and one cannot take refuge in the rotten subterfuge that one is speaking of a “state of the future,” we have seen what that is) the state has need, on the contrary, of a very stern education by the people.

But the whole programme, for all its democratic clang is tainted through and through, by the servile belief in the state of Lassalle’s sect, or, what is no better, by democratic miracle-faith, or rather it is a compromise between these two kinds of miracle-faith, both equally remote from socialism.

“Freedom of science” says a paragraph of the Prussian constitution. Why then here?

“Freedom of conscience”! If one desires at this time of the Kulturkampf² to remind liberalism of its old catchwords, then

¹ The reference is to Robertson Gladstone (1805-75), a big merchant in Liverpool, a Liberal who propagated the idea of a progressive income tax which should fall primarily on the big landowners. He was the brother of William Gladstone (1809-98), the prominent Liberal Prime Minister of the last half of the nineteenth century.—Ed.

² Lenin wrote: “Der Kulturkampf, the ‘Struggle for Culture,’ i.e., Bismarck’s struggle in the seventies against the German Catholic Party, the party of the ‘Centre,’ by means of police persecution of Catholicism. By this struggle Bismarck only strengthened the militant clericalism of the
it surely could have been done in the following form: Everyone should be able to attend to his religious as well as his bodily needs without the police sticking their noses in. But the Workers' Party ought at any rate in this connection to have expressed its consciousness of the fact that bourgeois “freedom of conscience” is nothing but the toleration of all possible kinds of religious freedom of conscience, and that for its part it endeavours rather to liberate the conscience from the spectre of religion. But there is a desire not to transgress the “bourgeois” level.

I have now come to the end, for the appendix that now follows in the programme does not constitute a characteristic component part of it. Hence I can be very brief here.

2. “Normal working day.”

In no other country has the Workers' Party restricted itself to such an indefinite demand, but has always fixed the length of the working day that it considers normal under the given circumstances.

3. “Restriction of women’s labour and prohibition of child labour.”

The standardisation of the working day must already include the restriction of women’s labour, in so far as it relates to the duration, intervals, etc., of the working day; otherwise it could only mean the exclusion of women’s labour from branches of industry that are specifically unhealthy for the female body or are objectionable morally for the female sex. If that is what was meant, then it ought to have been stated.

Catholics, and only injured the cause of real culture, because he brought religious divisions instead of political ones to the forefront and thus diverted the attention of some sections of the working classes of democracy from the urgent tasks of class and revolutionary struggle to the most superficial and mendacious bourgeois anti-clericalism.” (Lenin on Religion, p. 17, Little Lenin Library No. 7.)—Ed.

“Compare Lenin, “The Attitude of the Workers’ Party to Religion” (1907): the workers’ party regards religion as a private matter in relation to the government, but by no means in relation to themselves, to Marxism, or to the workers party.” (Lenin on Religion, p. 18.)—Ed.

2 This appendix contains “demands for the protection of the working class against the power of capital within present-day society.” The first point, with which Marx does not deal, demands full “freedom of association.”—Ed.

“Prohibition of child labour”! Here it was absolutely essential to state the age limits.

A general prohibition of child labour is incompatible with the existence of large-scale industry and hence an empty pious aspiration.

Its realisation—if it were possible—would be reactionary, since, with a strict regulation of the working time according to the different age groups and other safety measures for the protection of children, an early combination of productive labour with education is one of the most potent means, for the transformation of present-day society.

4. “State supervision of factory, workshop and domestic industry.”

In regard to the Prussio-German state it should definitely have been demanded that the inspectors are only to be removable by a court of law; that any worker can denounce them to the courts for neglect of duty; that they must belong to the medical profession.

5. “Regulation of prison labour.”

A petty demand in a general workers' programme. In any case, it should have been clearly stated that there is no intention from fear of competition to allow ordinary criminals to be treated like beasts, and especially that there is no desire to deprive them of their sole means of betterment, productive labour. This was surely the least one might have expected from socialists.

6. “An effective liability law.” 1

It should have been stated what is understood by an “effective” liability law.

Incidentally remarked, in connection with the normal working day the part of factory legislation that deals with health regulations and safety measures has been overlooked. The liability law only comes into operation when these regulations are infringed.

1 i.e., responsibility for the life and health of the workers in case of accidents and in occupations injurious to health.—Ed.
KARL MARX

In short, this appendix also is distinguished by slovenly editing.

Dixi et salvavi animam meam. 3

FREDERICK ENGELS TO AUGUST BEBEL 2

London, March 18-28, 1875

Dear Bebel:

I have received your letter of February 23, and am glad you are in such good health.

You ask me what we think of the unification business, Un-

2 I have spoken and saved my soul, that is to say, I have done my duty.—Ed.

3 Lenin attached extraordinarily great importance to this letter of Engels to Bebel. In his work The State and Revolution, Lenin wrote:

"One of the most remarkable, if not the most remarkable observation on the state in the works of Marx and Engels is contained in the following passage in Engels' letter to Bebel, dated March 18-28, 1875." And further Lenin quoted from the letter beginning with the words "The free people's state" to the words "... represent the French word commune." See pp. 591-92 of the present volume.

In his Notebook, Marxism on the State, Lenin sums up these statements of Engels on the state: he exposes the distortions of Marx's teachings on the state by the opportunists—the vulgarisation of this teaching by Kautsky on the one hand and the radical differences on the question of the state between Marxism and anarchism on the other:

1) "The whole talk about the state 'should be dropped.'"
2) "The Commune ... was no longer a state in the proper sense of the word." (But what, then? A transitional form from the state to no state, clearly!) 3) The anarchists have long enough "thrown up our face" the "people's state." (Marx and Engels, it is clear, were ashamed of this obvious mistake on the part of their German friends; however, they thought, and of course under the circumstances then existing rightly thought, that it was an incomparably less serious mistake than the mistake of the anarchists. N.B. this!) 4) The state "will decompose itself ('dissolve') Nota bene and disappear ... (compare further on "will wither away") with the introduction of the socialist order of society. ..."
5) The state is "a transitional institution," which is needed "in the struggle in the revolution ..." (needed by the proletariat, of course) ... 6) The state is needed not for freedom, but for crushing (?Niederhaltung is not holding down, properly speaking, but holding back from restoration, holding in submission) the adversaries of the proletariat.

7) When there is freedom, then there will be no state.

The concepts "freedom" and "democracy" are usually treated as identical and are often used instead of each other. Very often the vulgar Marxists (with Kautsky, Plekhanov and Co. at their head) argue precisely in this way. In fact, democracy excludes freedom. The dialectics (process) of development is: from absolutism to bourgeois democracy: from bourgeois democracy to proletarian; from proletarian to no state at all.

8) "We" (i.e., Engels and Marx) would propose "everywhere" (in the programme) to speak, instead of the "state," of the "community," the "Commune"!!!

From this it is clear how not only the opportunists, but also Kautsky, have vulgarised, defiled, Marx and Engels.

The opportunists have not understood a single one of these eight most rich ideas!!

They have taken only the practical needs of the present: to make use of the political struggle, to make use of the contemporary state for the training, the education of the proletarian, for the "extraction of concessions." This is correct (as against the anarchists), but as yet it is only one-hundredth of Marxism, if it can be so expressed arithmetically.

Kautsky completely covered over (or forgot? or did not understand?) in his propagandist and throughout his publicist work, points 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, and Marx's "socialism" (in his polemic with Panskeek in 1912 or 1913 ... Kautsky has already tumbled completely into opportunism on this question).

We are distinguished from the anarchists by (a) the use of the state now and (? at the time of the proletarian revolution ("the dictatorship of the proletariat")—points of the greatest practical importance, just now! (And Bukharin has forgotten just these!)

From the opportunists by the deeper, "more eternal," truth concerning the "temporary" character of the state, (59) the harm of "chatter" about it now, (77) the dictatorship of the proletariat not having altogether the character of a state, (36) the contradiction between the state and freedom, (ce) the greater correctness of the idea (conception, programmatic) of the "community" in place of state, (ce) the "smashing" of the bureaucratic-military machine. Not to forget also that the dictatorship of the proletariat is directly repudiated by the avowed opportunists of Germany (Bernstein, Kolb and so forth), and indirectly by the official programme and Kautsky, being silent about it in everyday agitation and tolerating the renegacy of the Kolbs and Co.

Bukharin was writ to in VIII 1916: "Let your ideas on the state 'ripen fully.'" But without letting them ripen, he rushed into print as "Nota bene," and he did it in such a way that instead of exposing the Kautskyan's he helped them by his own mistakes!! But in the essence of the matter Bukharin is nearer to the truth than Kautsky.—Ed.
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frequently and contemptuously repulsed by the Hasencleveres, Hasselmanns and Töckes that any child must have drawn the conclusion: if these gentlemen are now coming and offering reconciliation themselves they must be in a damned tight fix. But considering the well-known character of these people it is our duty to utilise their fix in order to stipulate for every possible guarantee, so that they shall not re-establish their impaired position in the public opinion of the workers at the expense of our party. They should have been received with extreme coolness and mistrust, and union should have been made dependent on the extent to which they were willing to drop their sectarian slogans and their state aid and to accept in essentials the Eisenach programme of 1869 or a revised edition of it adapted to the position at the present day.

Our Party had absolutely nothing to learn from the Lassalleans in the theoretical sphere and therefore in what is decisive for the programme, but the Lassalleans certainly had something to learn from our Party; the first condition of union was that they should cease to be sectarian Lassalleans, above all that the universal panacea of state aid should be, if not entirely relinquished, at any rate recognised by them as a subordinate and transitional measure of less or equal importance to many other possible ones. The draft programme shows that our people are a hundred times superior theoretically to the Lassalleans—but in the same measure removed from being equal to them where political cunning is concerned: the “honest” have been once more cruelly fleeced by the dishonest.

1 Wilhelm Hasenclever, Wilhelm Hasselmann and Wilhelm Töcke were leaders of the General Association of German Workers. The first named was chairman of the party during 1871 to 1875, after the fusion with the Eisenachers he occupied various important party posts but did not play any leading role; he died in 1889. The second became an anarchist during the period of the Anti-Socialist Law and in 1880 was expelled from the party. Töcke (1817-1891) remained in the ranks of the German Social-Democratic Party until his death but he played no important part in the leadership of the united party.—Ed.

2 The programme of the Social-Democratic Workers’ Party of Germany, led by W. Liebknecht and A. Bebel, which was founded at the Eisenach Congress in August 1869 (the party of the “Eisenachers”).—Ed.

3 The reference is to the Eisenachers.—Ed.

ON THE CRITIQUE OF THE GOTA PROGRAMME

In the first place Lassalle’s high-sounding but historically false phrase is accepted: in contrast to the working class all other classes are only one reactionary mass. This statement is only true in a few exceptional cases: for instance, in a proletarian revolution like the Commune, or in a country where not only have state and society been moulded by the bourgeoisie in its own image but where in its wake the democratic petty bourgeoisie too has already carried out this re-casting down to its final consequences. If in Germany, for instance, the democratic petty bourgeoisie belonged to this reactionary mass, how could the Social-Democratic Workers’ Party have gone hand in hand with it—with the People’s Party—for years? How can the Volksstaat [People’s State] take almost the whole of its political contents from the petty-bourgeois democratic Frankfurter Zeitung? And how comes it that no less than seven demands are accepted in this programme which directly and literally coincide with the programme of the People’s Party and petty-bourgeois democracy? I mean the seven political demands, 1 to 5 and 1 to II, of which there is not a single one that is not bourgeois democratic.

1 See Marx’s criticism of this Lassallean phrase, p. 568 et seq., in the present volume.—Ed.
2 For the People’s Party see note 3 on p. 578. The Eisenachers remained even after 1871 in political contact with the Left wing of the People’s Party. This Left wing was headed by J. Jacoby, an old democrat and republican hostile to the Bismarckian empire. In this connection Liebknecht, the leader of the Eisenachers, was not able to distinguish sufficiently sharply and expose the difference in principle between the oppositional policy of petty-bourgeois democracy on the one hand and the revolutionary policy of the proletarian socialist party on the other. Marx and Engels frequently took Liebknecht to task for this Right opportunist mistake that was of advantage to the Lassalleans.—Ed.
3 The Volksstaat was the central organ of the Eisenachers from 1870 to 1876. It appeared twice weekly in Leipzig; its editor was Liebknecht.—Ed.
4 The Frankfurter Zeitung was at that time an oppositional daily paper, the organ of the South German petty-bourgeois democrats, and it adopted a social reform standpoint in regard to the “labour question.”—Ed.

5 These political demands of the Gotha Programme were formulated as follows:

A. The German Workers’ Party demands as the basic basis of the state:
 Secondly, the principle that the workers' movement is an international movement is completely disavowed in practice for the present day, and that by people who have upheld this principle in the most glorious way for five years and under the most difficult conditions. The German workers' position at the head of the European movement is essentially based on their genuinely international attitude during the war; no other proletariat would have behaved so well. And now this principle is to be denied by them at the very moment when the workers everywhere abroad are emphasizing it, in the same degree as the governments are striving to suppress every attempt at its manifestation in an organization!

And what is left of the internationalism of the workers' movement then? The faint prospect—not even of the future co-operation of the European workers for their emancipation—no, of a future "international brotherhood of nations"—of the bourgeois Peace League's "United States of Europe"!

It was of course quite unnecessary to speak of the International as such. But surely the very least would have been to make no retreat from the programme of 1869 and to say something to this effect: although the German Workers' Party is operating for the time being within the state boundaries laid down for it (it has no right to speak in the name of the European proletariat and especially no right to say something false), it is conscious of its solidarity with the workers of all countries and will always be ready in the future, as it has been hitherto, to fulfill the obligations imposed upon it by this solidarity. Obligations of that kind exist even if one does not exactly proclaim or regard oneself as a part of the "International"; for instance, help and abstention from blacklegging in strikes; care taken that the party organs keep the German workers informed about the movement abroad; agitation against the threat or the outbreak of Cabinet-made wars, behaviour during such wars similar to that carried out in a model fashion in 1870 and 1871, etc.

Thirdly, our people have allowed the Lassallean "iron law of wages" to be foisted upon them, a law based on a quite antiquated economic view, namely, that the worker receives on the average only the minimum of the labour wage, because, according to Malthus' theory of population, there are always too many workers (this was Lassalle's argument). Now Marx has proved in detail in *Capital* that the laws regulating wages are very complicated, that sometimes one predominates and sometimes another, according to circumstances, that therefore they are in no sense iron but on the contrary very elastic, and that the thing can by no means be dismissed in a few words, as Lassalle imagined. The Malthusian basis for the law which Lassalle copied from Malthus and Ricardo (with a falsification of the latter), as it is to be found for instance in the *Arbeiterlesebuch*, page 5, quoted from another pamphlet of Lassalle's, has been refuted in detail by Marx in the section on the "Accumulation of Capital." Thus by adopting Lassalle's "iron law" we commit ourselves to a false statement with a false basis.

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2 Two speeches delivered by Lassalle in Frankfurt on May 17 and May 19, 1863, were published by the General Association of German Workers, under the title of *Arbeiterlesebuch* (Workers' Reader). Engels refers to the passage in the first speech which was taken by Lassalle from his pamphlet, *An Open Answer to the Central Committee for Convening a General Congress of German Workers at Leipzig* (Zurich 1863). The passage is quoted by us on p. 572 of the present volume.—Ed.