

# Karl Marx

## Critique of the Gotha Programme

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### III

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*"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 on such a scale that the socialist organization of the total labor will arise from them."*

After the Lassallean "iron law of wages", the physic 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 arising from the revolutionary process of transformation of society, the "socialist organization of the total labor" "arises" from the "state aid" that the state gives to the producers' co-operative societies and which the *state*, not the workers, "calls into being". It is worthy of Lassalle's imagination that with state loans one can build a new society 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, not proletarians.

Second, "democratic" means 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 offense does not lie in having inscribed this specific nostrum in the program, but in taking, in general, a retrograde step from the standpoint of a class movement to that of a sectarian

movement.

That the workers desire to establish the conditions for co-operative production on a social scale, and first of all on a national scale, in their own country, only means that they are working to revolutionize the present conditions of production, and it 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* insofar as they are the independent creations of the workers and not protégés either of the governments or of the bourgeois.

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**Next: Section IV**

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