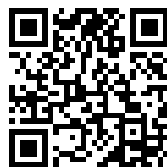
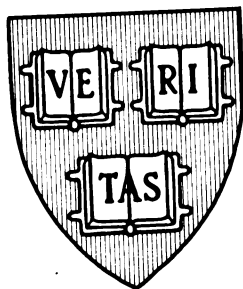

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MANIFESTO
OF THE
COMMUNIST PARTY

BY
KARL MARX and FREDERICK ENGELS

AUTHORIZED ENGLISH TRANSLATION: EDITED AND
ANNOTATED BY FREDERICK ENGELS

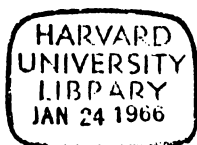


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PREFACE.

The "Manifesto" was published as the platform of the "Communist League," a workingmen's association, first exclusively German, later on international, and, under the political conditions of the Continent before 1848, unavoidably a secret society. At a Congress of the League, held in London in November, 1847, Marx and Engels were commissioned to prepare for publication a complete theoretical and practical party-programme. Drawn up in German, in January, 1848, the manuscript was sent to the printer in London a few weeks before the French revolution of February 24th. A French translation was brought out in Paris, shortly before the insurrection of June, 1848. The first English translation, by Miss Helen Macfarlane, appeared in George Julian Harney's "Red Republican," London, 1850. A Danish and a Polish edition had also been published.

The defeat of the Parisian insurrection of June, 1848,—the first great battle between Proletariat and Bourgeoisie—drove again into the background, for a time, the social and political aspirations of the European working class. Thenceforth the struggle for supremacy was again, as it had been before the revolution of February, solely between dif-

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ferent sections of the propertied class; the working class was reduced to a fight for political elbow-room, and to the position of extreme wing of the Middle-class Radicals. Wherever independent proletarian movements continued to show signs of life, they were ruthlessly hunted down. Thus the Prussian police hunted out the Central Board of the Communist League, then located in Cologne. The members were arrested, and, after eighteen months' imprisonment, they were tried in October, 1852. This celebrated "Cologne Communist trial" lasted from October 4th till November 12th; seven of the prisoners were sentenced to terms of imprisonment in a fortress, varying from three to six years. Immediately after the sentence the League was formally dissolved by the remaining members. As to the "Manifesto," it seemed thenceforth to be doomed to oblivion.

When the European working class had recovered sufficient strength for another attack on the ruling classes, the International Working Men's Association sprang up. But this association, formed with the express aim of welding into one body the whole militant proletariat of Europe and America, could not at once proclaim the principles laid down in the "Manifesto." The International was bound to have a programme broad enough to be acceptable to the English Trades' Unions, to the followers of Proudhon in France, Belgium, Italy, and Spain, and to

the Lassalleans* in Germany. Marx, who drew up this programme to the satisfaction of all parties, entirely trusted to the intellectual development of the working-class, which was sure to result from combined action and mutual discussion. The very events and vicissitudes of the struggle against Capital, the defeats even more than the victories, could not help bringing home to men's minds the insufficiency of their various favourite nostrums, and preparing the way for a mere complete insight into the true conditions of working-class emancipation. And Marx was right. The International, on its breaking up in 1874, left the workers quite different men from what it had found them in 1864. Proudhonism in France, Lasalleanism in Germany were dying out, and even the Conservative English Trades' Unions, though most of them had long since severed their connexion with the International, were gradually advancing towards that point at which, last year at Swansea, their President could say in their name "Continental Socialism has lost its terrors for us." In fact: the principles of the "Manifesto" had made considerable headway among the working men of all countries.

The Manifesto itself thus came to the front again. The German text had been,

*Lassalle personally, to us, always acknowledged himself to be a disciple of Marx, and, as such, stood on the ground of the "Manifesto." But in his public agitation, 1860-64, he did not go beyond demanding co-operative workshops supported by State credit.

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since 1850, reprinted several times in Switzerland, England and America. In 1872, it was translated into English in New York, where the translation was published in "Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly." From this English version, a French one was made in "Le Socialiste" of New York. Since then at least two more English translations, more or less mutilated, have been brought out in America, and one of them has been reprinted in England. The first Russian translation, made by Bakounine, was published at Herzen's "Kolokol" office in Geneva, about 1863; a second one, by the heroic Vera Zasulich, also in Geneva, 1882. A new Danish edition is to be found in "Socialdemokratisk Bibliothek," Copenhagen, 1885; a fresh French translation in "Le Socialiste," Paris, 1886. From this latter a Spanish version was prepared and published in Madrid, 1886. The German reprints are not to be counted, there have been twelve altogether at the least. An Armenian translation, which was to be published in Constantinople some months ago, did not see the light, I am told, because the publisher was afraid of bringing out a book with the name of Marx on it, while the translator declined to call it his own production. Of further translations into other languages I have heard, but have not seen them. Thus the history of the Manifesto reflects, to a great extent, the history of the modern working-class movement; at present it is undoubtedly the most wide-

spread, the most international production of all Socialist Literature, the common platform acknowledged by millions of working men from Siberia to California.

Yet, when it was written, we could not have called it a Socialist Manifesto. By Socialists, in 1847, were understood, on the one hand, the adherents of the various Utopian systems: Owenites in England, Fourierists in France, both of them already reduced to the position of mere sects, and gradually dying out; on the other hand, the most multifarious social quacks, who, by all manners of tinkering, professed to redress, without any danger to capital and profit, all sorts of social grievances, in both cases men outside the working class movement, and looking rather to the "educated" classes for support. Whatever portion of the working class had become convinced of the insufficiency of mere political revolutions, and had proclaimed the necessity of a total social change, that portion, then, called itself Communist. It was a crude, rough-hewn, purely instinctive sort of Communism; still, it touched the cardinal point and was powerful enough amongst the working class to produce the Utopian Communism, in France, of Cabet, and in Germany, of Weitling. Thus, Socialism was, in 1847, a middle-class movement, Communism a working class movement. Socialism was, on the Continent at least, "respectable"; Communism was the very opposite. And as our notion, from the

very beginning, was that "the emancipation of the working class must be the act of the working class itself," there could be no doubt as to which of the two names we must take. Moreover, we have, ever since, been far from repudiating it.

The "Manifesto" being our joint production, I consider myself bound to state that the fundamental proposition which forms its nucleus, belongs to Marx. That proposition is: that in every historical epoch, the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange, and the social organisation necessarily following from it, form the basis upon which is built up, and from which alone can be explained, the political and intellectual history of that epoch; that consequently the whole history of mankind (since the dissolution of primitive tribal society, holding land in common ownership) has been a history of class struggles, contests between exploiting and exploited, ruling and oppressed classes; that the history of these class struggles forms a series of evolution in which, now-a-days, a stage has been reached where the exploited and oppressed class—the proletariat—cannot attain its emancipation from the sway of the exploiting and ruling class—the bourgeoisie—without, at the same time, and once and for all, emancipating society at large from all exploitation, oppression, class-distinctions and class-struggles.

This proposition which, in my opinion, is destined to do for history what Darwin's

theory has done for biology, we, both of us, had been gradually approaching for some years before 1845. How far I had independently progressed towards it, is best shown by my "Condition of the Working Class in England."* But when I again met Marx at Brussels, in spring, 1845, he had it ready worked out, and put it before me, in terms almost as clear as those in which I have stated it here.

From our joint preface to the German edition of 1872, I quote the following:

"However much the state of things may have altered during the last 25 years, the general principles laid down in this Manifesto are, on the whole, as correct to-day as ever. Here and there some detail might be improved. The practical application of the principles will depend, as the manifesto itself states, everywhere and at all times, on the historical conditions for the time being existing, and, for that reason, no special stress is laid on the revolutionary measures proposed at the end of Section II. That passage would, in many respects, be very differently worded to-day. In view of the gigantic strides of Modern Industry since 1848, and of the accompanying improved and extended organisation of the working-class, in view of the practical experience gained, first in the February revolution, and then, still more, in the Paris Commune,

*The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844. By Frederick Engels. Translated by Florence K. Wischniewetzky—London, Swan, Sonnenschein & Co.

where the proletariat for the first time ~~new~~ political power for two whole months, this programme has in some details become antiquated. One thing especially was proved by the Commune, viz., that "the working-class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery, and wield it for its own purposes." (See "The Civil War in France; Address of the General Council of the International Working-men's Association," London, Truelove, 1871, p. 15, where this point is further developed). Further, it is self-evident, that the criticism of socialist literature is deficient in relation to the present time, because it comes down only to 1847; also, that the remarks on the relation of the Communists to the various opposition-parties (Section IV.), although in principle still correct, yet in practice are antiquated, because the political situation has been entirely changed, and the progress of history has swept from off the earth the greater portion of the political parties there enumerated.

But then, the Manifesto has become a historical document which we have no longer any right to alter."

The present translation is by Mr. Samuel Moore, the translator of the greater portion of Marx's "Capital." We have revised it in common, and I have added a few notes explanatory of historical allusions.

Frederick Engels.

London, 30th January, 1888.

Manifesto of the Communist Party.

BY

KARL MARX and FREDERICK ENGELS.

A SPECTRE is haunting Europe—the spectre of Communism. All the Powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre; Pope and Czar, Metternich and Guizot, French Radicals and German police-spies.

Where is the party in opposition that has not been decried as communistic by its opponents in power? Where the Opposition that has not hurled back the branding reproach of Communism, against the more advanced opposition parties, as well as against its re-actionary adversaries?

Two things result from this fact.

I. Communism is already acknowledged by all European Powers to be itself a Power.

II. It is high time that Communists should openly, in the face of the whole world, publish their views, their aims, their tendencies, and meet this nursery tale of the Spectre of Communism with a Manifesto of the party itself.

To this end, Communists of various nationalities have assembled in London, and

sketched the following manifesto, to be published in the English, French, German, Italian, Flemish and Danish languages.

I.

BOURGEOIS AND PROLETARIANS.*

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

Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master‡ and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended,

*By bourgeoisie is meant the class of modern Capitalists, owners of the means of social production and employers of wage-labour. By proletariat, the class of modern wage-labourers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labour-power in order to live.

†That is, all written history. In 1847, the pre-history of society, the social organization existing previous to recorded history, was all but unknown. Since then, Haxthausen discovered common ownership of land in Russia, Maurer proved it to be the social foundation from which all Teutonic races started in history, and by and bye village communities were found to be, or to have been, the primitive form of society everywhere from India to Ireland. The inner organization of this primitive Communistic society was laid bare, in its typical form, by Morgan's crowning discovery of the true nature of the gens and its relation to the tribe. With the dissolution of these primæval communities society begins to be differentiated into separate and finally antagonistic classes. I have attempted to retrace this process of dissolution in: "Der Ursprung der Familie des Privateigenthums und des Staats," 2nd edit., Stuttgart 1886.

‡Guild-master, that is a full member of a guild, a master within, not a head of, a guild.

either in a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.

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

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

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

From the serfs of the middle ages sprang the chartered burghers of the earliest towns. From these burgesses the first elements of the bourgeoisie were developed.

The discovery of America, the rounding of the Cape, opened up fresh ground for the rising bourgeoisie. The East-Indian and Chinese markets, the colonisation of America, trade with the colonies, the increase in the

means of exchange and in commodities generally, gave to commerce, to navigation, to industry, an impulse never before known, and thereby, to the revolutionary element in the tottering feudal society, a rapid development.

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

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

Modern industry has established the world-market, for which the discovery of America paved the way. This market has given an immense development to commerce, to navigation, to communication by land. This development has, in its turn, reacted on the extension of industry; and in proportion as industry, commerce, navigation, railways extended, in the same proportion the bour-

geoisie developed, increased its capital, and pushed into the background every class handed down from the Middle Ages.

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

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

*"Commune" was the name taken, in France, by the nascent towns even before they had conquered from their feudal lords and masters, local self-government and political rights as "the Third Estate." Generally speaking, for the economical development of the bourgeoisie, England is here taken as the typical country, for its political development, France.

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

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

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

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

The bourgeoisie has disclosed how it came to pass that the brutal display of vigour in the Middle Ages, which Reactionists so much admire, found its fitting complement

in the most slothful indolence. It has been the first to shew what man's activity can bring about. It has accomplished wonders far surpassing Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts, and Gothic cathedrals; it has conducted expeditions that put in the shade all former Exoduses of nations and crusades.

The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. Conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered form, was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes. Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses, his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.

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

The bourgeoisie has through its exploita-

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

The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations

into civilisation. The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls, with which it forces the barbarians' intensely obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitulate. It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilisation into their midst, i. e., to become bourgeois themselves. In a word, it creates a world after its own image.

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

The bourgeoisie keeps more and more doing away with the scattered state of the population, of the means of production, and of property. It has agglomerated population, centralised means of production, and has concentrated property in a few hands. The necessary consequence of this was political centralisation. Independent, or but loosely connected provinces, with separate interests, laws, governments and systems of taxation, became lumped together in one na-

tion, with one government, one code of laws, one national class-interest, one frontier and one customs-tariff.

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

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

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

A similar movement is going on before our own eyes. Modern bourgeois society with its relations of production, of exchange and of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer, who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells. For many a decade past the history of industry and commerce is but the history of the revolt of modern productive forces against modern conditions of production, against the property relations that are the conditions for the existence of the bourgeoisie and of its rule. It is enough to mention the commercial crises that by their periodical return put on its trial, each time more threateningly, the existence of the entire bourgeois society. In these crises a great part not only of the existing products, but also of the previously created productive forces, are periodically destroyed. In these crises there breaks out an epidemic that, in all earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity—the epidemic of over-production. Society suddenly finds itself put back into a state of momentary barbarism; it appears as if a famine, a universal war of devastation had cut off the supply of every means of subsistence; industry and commerce seem to be destroyed; and why? Because there is too much civilisation, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce. The productive forces at the dis-

posal of society no longer tend to further the development of the conditions of bourgeois property; on the contrary, they have become too powerful for these conditions, by which they are fettered, and so soon as they overcome these fetters, they bring disorder into the whole of bourgeois society, endanger the existence of bourgeois property. The conditions of bourgeois society are too narrow to comprise the wealth created by them. And how does the bourgeoisie get over these crises? On the one hand by enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces; on the other, by the conquest of new markets, and by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones. That is to say, by paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises, and by diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented.

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

But not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons—the modern working-class—the proletarians.

In proportion as the bourgeoisie, i. e., capital, is developed, in the same proportion is the proletariat, the modern working-class, developed, a class of labourers, who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labour increases capital. These labourers, who must sell them-

selves piecemeal, are a commodity, like every other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition, to all the fluctuations of the market.

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

Modern industry has converted the little workshop of the patriarchal master into the great factory of the industrial capitalist. Masses of labourers, crowded into the factory, are organised like soldiers. As privates of the industrial army they are placed under the command of a perfect hierarchy of

officers and sergeants. Not only are they the slaves of the bourgeois class, and of the bourgeois State, they are daily and hourly enslaved by the machine, by the over-looker, and, above all, by the individual bourgeois manufacturer himself. The more openly this despotism proclaims gain to be its end and aim, the more petty, the more hateful and the more embittering it is.

The less the skill and exertion or strength implied in manual labour, in other words, the more modern industry becomes developed, the more is the labour of men superseded by that of women. Differences of age and sex have no longer any distinctive social validity for the working class. All are instruments of labour, more or less expensive to use, according to their age and sex.

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

The lower strata of the Middle class—the small tradespeople, shopkeepers, and retired tradesmen generally, the handicraftsmen and peasants—all these sink gradually into the proletariat, partly because their diminutive capital does not suffice for the scale on which Modern Industry is carried on, and is swamped in the competition with the large capitalists, partly because their specialised skill is rendered worthless by new methods

of production. Thus the proletariat is recruited from all classes of the population.

The proletariat goes through various stages of development. With its birth begins its struggle with the bourgeoisie. At first the contest is carried on by individual labourers, then by the workpeople of a factory, then by the operatives of one trade, in one locality, against the individual bourgeois who directly exploits them. They direct their attacks not against the bourgeois conditions of production, but against the instruments of production themselves; they destroy imported wares that compete with their labour, they smash to pieces machinery, they set factories ablaze, they seek to restore by force the vanished status of the workman of the Middle Ages.

At this stage the labourers still form an incoherent mass scattered over the whole country, and broken up by their mutual competition. If anywhere they unite to form more compact bodies, this is not yet the consequence of their own active union, but of the union of the bourgeoisie, which class, in order to attain its own political ends, is compelled to set the whole proletariat in motion, and is moreover yet, for a time, able to do so. / At this stage, therefore, the proletarians do not fight their enemies, but the enemies of their enemies, the remnants of absolute monarchy, the landowners, the non-industrial bourgeois, the petty bourgeoisie. Thus the whole historical movement is con-

centrated in the hands of the bourgeoisie; every victory so obtained is a victory for the bourgeoisie.

But with the development of industry the proletariat not only increases in number; it becomes concentrated in greater masses, its strength grows, and it feels that strength more. The various interests and conditions of life within the ranks of the proletariat are more and more equalised, in proportion as machinery obliterates all distinctions of labour, and nearly everywhere reduces wages to the same low level. The growing competition among the bourgeois, and the resulting commercial crises, make the wages of the workers ever more fluctuating. The unceasing improvement of machinery, ever more rapidly developing, makes their livelihood more and more precarious; the collisions between individual workmen and individual bourgeois take more and more the character of collisions between two classes. Thereupon the workers begin to form combinations (Trades' Unions) against the bourgeois; they club together in order to keep up the rate of wages; they found permanent associations in order to make provision beforehand for these occasional revolts. Here and there the contest breaks out into riots.

Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever expanding union of the workers. This union is helped on by the improved

means of communication that are created by modern industry, and that place the workers of different localities in contact with one another. It was just this contact that was needed to centralise the numerous local struggles, all of the same character, into one national struggle between classes. But every class struggle is a political struggle. And that union, to attain which the burghers of the Middle Ages, with their miserable highways, required centuries, the modern proletarians, thanks to railways, achieve in a few years.

This organisation of the proletarians into a class, and consequently into a political party, is continually being upset again by the competition between the workers themselves. But it ever rises up again, stronger, firmer, mightier. It compels legislative recognition of particular interests of the workers, by taking advantage of the divisions among the bourgeoisie itself. Thus the ten-hours'-bill in England was carried.

Altogether collisions between the classes of the old society further, in many ways, the course of development of the proletariat. The bourgeoisie finds itself involved in a constant battle. At first with the aristocracy; later on, with those portions of the bourgeoisie itself, whose interests have become antagonistic to the progress of industry; at all times, with the bourgeoisie of foreign countries. In all these battles it sees itself compelled to appeal to the proletariat,

to ask for its help, and thus, to drag it into the political arena. The bourgeoisie itself, therefore, supplies the proletariat with its own elements of political and general education, in other words, it furnishes the proletariat with weapons for fighting the bourgeoisie.

Further, as we have already seen, entire sections of the ruling classes are, by the advance of industry, precipitated into the proletariat, or are at least threatened in their conditions of existence. These also supply the proletariat with fresh elements of enlightenment and progress.

Finally, in times when the class-struggle nears the decisive hour, the process of dissolution going on within the ruling class, in fact within the whole range of old society, assumes such a violent, glaring character, that a small section of the ruling class cuts itself adrift, and joins the revolutionary class, the class that holds the future in its hands. Just as, therefore, at an earlier period, a section of the nobility went over to the bourgeoisie, so now a portion of the bourgeoisie goes over to the proletariat, and in particular, a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movements as a whole.

Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie to-day, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in

the face of modern industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product.

The lower middle-class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class. They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history. If by chance they are revolutionary, they are so, only in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat, they thus defend not their present, but their future interests, they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat.

The "dangerous class," the social scum, that passively rotting mass thrown off by the lowest layers of old society, may, here and there, be swept into the movement by a proletarian revolution; its conditions of life, however, prepare it far more for the part of a bribed tool of reactionary intrigue.

In the conditions of the proletariat, those of old society at large are already virtually swamped. The proletarian is without property; his relation to his wife and children has no longer anything in common with the bourgeois family-relations; modern industrial labour, modern subjection to capital, the same in England as in France, in America as in Germany, has stripped him of every trace of national character. Law, morality, religion, are to him so many bourgeois preju-

dices, behind which lurk in ambush just as many bourgeois interests.

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

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

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

In depicting the most general phases of the development of the proletariat, we traced the more or less veiled civil war, raging within existing society, up to the point where

that war breaks out into open revolution, and where the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie, lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat.

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

The essential condition for the existence, and for the sway of the bourgeois class, is

the formation and augmentation of capital; the condition for capital is wage-labour. Wage-labour rests exclusively on competition between the labourers. The advance of industry, whose involuntary promoter is the bourgeoisie, replaces the isolation of the labourers, due to competition, by their involuntary combination, due to association. The development of Modern Industry, therefore, cuts from under its feet the very foundation on which the bourgeoisie produces and appropriates products. What the bourgeoisie therefore produces, above all, are its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable.

II.

PROLETARIANS AND COMMUNISTS.

In what relation do the Communists stand to the proletarians as a whole?

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

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

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

The Communists are distinguished from the other working class parties by this only: 1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common inter-

ests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality. 2. In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole.

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

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

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

They merely express, in general terms, actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes. The abolition of existing property-relations is not at all a distinctive feature of Communism.

All property relations in the past have con-

tinually been subject to historical change consequent upon the change in historical conditions.

The French Revolution, for example, abolished feudal property in favour of bourgeois property.

The distinguishing feature of Communism is not the abolition of property generally, but the abolition of bourgeois property. But modern bourgeois private property is the final and most complete expression of the system of producing and appropriating products, that is based on class antagonism, on the exploitation of the many by the few.

In this sense, the theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property.

We Communists have been reproached with the desire of abolishing the right of personally acquiring property as the fruit of a man's own labour, which property is alleged to be the ground work of all personal freedom, activity and independence.

Hard-won, self-acquired, self-earned property! Do you mean the property of the petty artizan and of the small peasant, a form of property that preceded the bourgeois form? There is no need to abolish that; the development of industry has to a great extent already destroyed it, and is still destroying it daily.

Or do you mean modern bourgeois private property?

But does wage-labour create any property

for the labourer? Not a bit. It creates capital, i. e., that kind of property which exploits wage-labour, and which cannot increase except upon condition of getting a new supply of wage-labour for fresh exploitation. Property, in its present form, is based on the antagonism of capital and wage-labour. Let us examine both sides of this antagonism.

To be a capitalist, is to have not only a purely personal, but a social status in production. Capital is a collective product, and only by the united action of many members, nay, in the last resort, only by the united action of all members of society, can it be set in motion.

Capital is therefore not a personal, it is a social power.

When, therefore, capital is converted into common property, into the property of all members of society, personal property is not thereby transformed into social property. It is only the social character of the property that is changed. It loses its class-character.

Let us now take wage-labour.

The average price of wage-labour is the minimum wage, i. e., that quantum of the means of subsistence, which is absolutely requisite to keep the labourer in bare existence as a labourer. What, therefore, the wage-labourer appropriates by means of his labour, merely suffices to prolong and reproduce a bare existence. We by no means in-

tend to abolish this personal appropriation of the products of labour, an appropriation that is made for the maintenance and reproduction of human life, and that leaves no surplus wherewith to command the labour of others. All that we want to do away with is the miserable character of this appropriation, under which the labourer lives merely to increase capital, and is allowed to live only in so far as the interest of the ruling class requires it.

In bourgeois society, living labour is but a means to increase accumulated labour. In Communist society, accumulated labour is but a means to widen, to enrich, to promote the existence of the labourer.

In bourgeois society, therefore, the past dominates the present; in communist society, the present dominates the past. In bourgeois society capital is independent and has individuality, while the living person is dependent and has no individuality.

And the abolition of this state of things is called by the bourgeois, abolition of individuality and freedom! And rightly so. The abolition of bourgeois, individuality, bourgeois independence, and bourgeois freedom is undoubtedly aimed at.

By freedom is meant, under the present bourgeois conditions of production, free trade, free selling and buying.

But if selling and buying disappears, free selling and buying disappears also. This talk about free selling and buying, and all

the other "brave words" of our bourgeoisie about freedom in general, have a meaning, if any, only in contrast with restricted selling and buying, with the fettered traders of the Middle Ages, but have no meaning when opposed to the Communistic abolition of buying and selling, of the bourgeois conditions of production, and of the bourgeoisie itself.

You are horrified at our intending to do away with private property. But in your existing society, private property is already done away with for nine-tenths of the population; its existence for the few is solely due to its non-existence in the hands of those nine-tenths. You reproach us, therefore, with intending to do away with a form of property, the necessary condition for whose existence is, the non-existence of any property for the immense majority of society.

In one word, you reproach us with intending to do away with your property. Precisely so: that is just what we intend.

From the moment when labour can no longer be converted into capital, money, or rent, into a social power capable of being monopolised, i. e., from the moment when individual property can no longer be transformed into bourgeois property, into capital, from that moment, you say, individuality vanishes.

You must, therefore, confess that by "individual" you mean no other person than the bourgeois, than the middle-class owner of

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property. This person must, indeed, be swept out of the way, and made impossible.

Communism deprives no man of the power to appropriate the products of society: all that it does is to deprive him of the power to subjugate the labour of others by means of such appropriation.

It has been objected, that upon the abolition of private property all work will cease, and universal laziness will overtake us.

According to this, bourgeois society ought long ago to have gone to the dogs through sheer idleness; for those of its members who work, acquire nothing, and those who acquire anything, do not work. The whole of this objection is but another expression of the tautology: that there can no longer be any wage-labour when there is no longer any capital.

All objections urged against the Communistic mode of producing and appropriating material products, have, in the same way, been urged against the Communistic modes of producing and appropriating intellectual products. Just as, to the bourgeois, the disappearance of class property is the disappearance of production itself, so the disappearance of class culture is to him identical with the disappearance of all culture.

That culture, the loss of which he laments, is, for the enormous majority, a mere training to act as a machine.

But don't wrangle with us so long as you apply, to our intended abolition of bourgeois

property, the standard of your bourgeois notions of freedom, culture, law, etc. Your very ideas are but the outgrowth of the conditions of your bourgeois production and bourgeois property, just as your jurisprudence is but the will of your class made into a law for all, a will, whose essential character and direction are determined by the economical conditions of existence of your class.

The selfish misconception that induces you to transform into eternal laws of nature and of reason, the social forms springing from your present mode of production and form of property—historical relations that rise and disappear in the progress of production—this misconception you share with every ruling class that has preceded you. What you see clearly in the case of ancient property, what you admit in the case of feudal property, you are of course forbidden to admit in the case of your own bourgeois form of property.

Abolition of the family! Even the most radical flare up at this infamous proposal of the Communists.

On what foundation is the present family, the bourgeois family, based? On capital, on private gain. In its completely developed form this family exists only among the bourgeoisie. But this state of things finds its complement in the practical absence of the family among the proletarians, and in public prostitution.

The bourgeois family will vanish as a matter of course when its complement vanishes,

and both will vanish with the vanishing of capital.

Do you charge us with wanting to stop the exploitation of children by their parents? To this crime we plead guilty.

But, you will say, we destroy the most hallowed of relations, when we replace home education by social.

And your education! Is not that also social, and determined by the social conditions under which you educate, by the intervention, direct or indirect, of society by means of schools, &c.? The Communists have not invented the intervention of society in education; they do but seek to alter the character of that intervention, and to rescue education from the influence of the ruling class.

The bourgeois clap-trap about the family and education, about the hallowed co-relation of parent and child, become all the more disgusting, the more, by the action of Modern Industry, all family ties among the proletarians are torn asunder, and their children transformed into simple articles of commerce and instruments of labour.

But you Communists would introduce community of women, screams the whole bourgeoisie in chorus.

The bourgeois sees in his wife a mere instrument of production. He hears that the instruments of production are to be exploited in common, and, naturally, can come to no other conclusion, than that the lot of being

common to all will likewise fall to the women.

He has not even a suspicion that the real point aimed at is to do away with the status of women as mere instruments of production.

For the rest, nothing is more ridiculous than the virtuous indignation of our bourgeois at the community of women which, they pretend, is to be openly and officially established by the Communists. The Communists have no need to introduce community of women; it has existed almost from time immemorial.

Our bourgeois, not content with having the wives and daughters of their proletarians at their disposal, not to speak of common prostitutes, take the greatest pleasure in seducing each others' wives.

Bourgeois marriage is in reality a system of wives in common and thus, at the most, what the Communists might possibly be reproached with, is that they desire to introduce, in substitution for a hypocritically concealed, an openly legalised community of women. For the rest, it is self-evident, that the abolition of the present system of production must bring with it the abolition of the community of women springing from that system, i. e., of prostitution both public and private.

The Communists are further reproached with desiring to abolish countries and nationalities.

The working men have no country. We

cannot take from them what they have not got. Since the proletariat must first of all acquire political supremacy, must rise to be the leading class of the nation, must constitute itself the nation, it is, so far, itself national, though not in the bourgeois sense of the word.

National differences, and antagonisms between peoples, are daily more and more vanishing, owing to the development of the bourgeoisie, to freedom of commerce, to the world-market, to uniformity in the mode of production and in the conditions of life corresponding thereto.

The supremacy of the proletariat will cause them to vanish still faster. United action, of the leading civilised countries at least, is one of the first conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat.

In proportion as the exploitation of one individual by another is put an end to, the exploitation of one nation by another will also be put an end to. In proportion as the antagonism between classes within the nation vanishes, the hostility of one nation to another will come to an end.

The charges against Communism made from a religious, a philosophical, and generally, from an ideological standpoint, are not deserving of serious examination.

Does it require deep intuition to comprehend that man's ideas, views, and conceptions, in one word, man's consciousness, changes with every change in the conditions

of his material existence, in his social relations and in his social life?

What else does the history of ideas prove, than that intellectual production changes in character in proportion as material production is changed? The ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class.

When people speak of ideas that revolutionize society, they do but express the fact, that within the old society, the elements of a new one have been created, and that the dissolution of the old ideas keeps even pace with the dissolution of the old conditions of existence.

When the ancient world was in its last throes, the ancient religions were overcome by Christianity. When Christian ideas succumbed in the 18th century to rationalist ideas, feudal society fought its death-battle with the then revolutionary bourgeoisie. The ideas of religious liberty and freedom of conscience, merely gave expression to the sway of free competition within the domain of knowledge.

"Undoubtedly," it will be said, "religious, moral, philosophical and juridical ideas have been modified in the course of historical development. But religion, morality, philosophy, political science, and law, constantly survived this change."

"There are, besides, eternal truths, such as Freedom, Justice, etc., that are common to all states of society. But Communism abolishes

eternal truths, it abolishes all religion, and all morality, instead of constituting them on a new basis; it therefore acts in contradiction to all past historical experience."

What does this accusation reduce itself to? The history of all past society has consisted in the development of class antagonisms, antagonisms that assumed different forms at different epochs.

But whatever form they may have taken, one fact is common to all past ages, viz., the exploitation of one part of society by the other. No wonder, then, that the social consciousness of past ages, despite all the multiplicity and variety it displays, moves within certain common forms, or general ideas, which cannot completely vanish except with the total disappearance of class antagonisms.

The Communist revolution is the most radical rupture with traditional property-relations; no wonder that its development involves the most radical rupture with traditional ideas.

But let us have done with the bourgeois objections to Communism.

We have seen above, that the first step in the revolution by the working class, is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy.

The proletariat will use its political supremacy, to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the State, i. e., of the proletariat organised as

the ruling class; and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible.

Of course, in the beginning, this cannot be effected except by means of despotic inroads on the rights of property, and on the conditions of bourgeois production; by means of measures, therefore, which appear economically insufficient and untenable, but which, in the course of the movement, outstrip themselves, necessitate further inroads upon the old social order, and are unavoidable as a means of entirely revolutionising the mode of production.

These measures will of course be different in different countries.

Nevertheless in the most advanced countries the following will be pretty generally applicable:

1. Abolition of property in land and application of all rents of land to public purposes.

2. A heavy progressive or graduated income tax.

3. Abolition of all right of inheritance.

4. Confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels.

5. Centralisation of credit in the hands of the State, by means of a national bank with State capital and an exclusive monopoly.

6. Centralisation of the means of communication and transport in the hands of the State.

7. Extension of factories and instruments of production owned by the State; the bring-

ing into cultivation of waste lands, and the improvement of the soil generally in accordance with a common plan.

8. Equal liability of all to labour. Establishment of industrial armies, especially for agriculture.

9. Combination of agriculture with manufacturing industries; gradual abolition of the distinction between town and country, by a more equable distribution of the population over the country.

10. Free education for all children in public schools. Abolition of children's factory labour in its present form. Combination of education with industrial production, etc., etc.

When, in the course of development, class distinctions have disappeared, and all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation, the public power will lose its political character. Political power, properly so called, is merely the organised power of one class for oppressing another. If the proletariat during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled, by the force of circumstances, to organise itself as a class, if, by means of a revolution, it makes itself the ruling class, and, as such, sweeps away by force the old conditions of production, then it will, along with these conditions, have swept away the conditions for the existence of class antagonisms, and of classes generally, and will

thereby have abolished its own supremacy as a class.

In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.

III.

SOCIALIST AND COMMUNIST LITERATURE.

1. Reactionary Socialism.

a. Feudal Socialism.

Owing to their historical position, it became the vocation of the aristocracies of France and England to write pamphlets against modern bourgeois society. In the French revolution of July, 1830, and in the English reform agitation, these aristocracies again succumbed to the hateful upstart. Thenceforth, a serious political contest was altogether out of the question. A literary battle alone remained possible. But even in the domain of literature the old cries of the restoration period * had become impossible.

In order to arouse sympathy, the aristocracy were obliged to lose sight, apparently, of their own interests, and to formulate their indictment against the bourgeoisie in the interest of the exploited working class alone. Thus the aristocracy took their revenge by

*Not the English Restoration 1660 to 1689, but the French Restoration 1814 to 1830.

singing lampoons on their new master, and whispering in his ears sinister prophecies of coming catastrophe.

In this way arose feudal socialism: half lamentation, half lampoon; half echo of the past, half menace of the future; at times, by its bitter, witty and incisive criticism, striking the bourgeoisie to the very hearts' core, but always ludicrous in its effect, through total incapacity to comprehend the march of modern history.

The aristocracy, in order to rally the people to them, waved the proletarian alms-bag in front for a banner. But the people, so often as it joined them, saw on their hindquarters the old feudal coats of arms, and deserted with loud and irreverent laughter.

One section of the French Legitimists, and "Young England," exhibited this spectacle.

In pointing out that their mode of exploitation was different to that of the bourgeoisie, the feudalists forget that they exploited under circumstances and conditions that were quite different, and that are now antiquated. In showing that, under their rule, the modern proletariat never existed, they forget that the modern bourgeoisie is the necessary offspring of their own form of society.

For the rest, so little do they conceal the reactionary character of their criticism, that their chief accusation against the bourgeoisie amounts to this, that under the bourgeois regime a class is being developed, which is

destined to cut up root and branch the old order of society.

What they upbraid the bourgeoisie with is not so much that it creates a proletariat, as that it creates a revolutionary proletariat.

In political practice, therefore, they join in all coercive measures against the working-class; and in ordinary life, despite their high falutin phrases, they stoop to pick up the golden apples dropped from the tree of industry, and to barter truth, love, and honour for traffic in wool, beetroot-sugar, and potato spirit.*

As the parson has ever gone hand in hand with the landlord, so has Clerical Socialism with Feudal Socialism.

Nothing is easier than to give Christian asceticism a Socialist tinge. Has not Christianity declaimed against private property, against marriage, against the State? Has it not preached in the place of these, charity and poverty, celibacy and mortification of the flesh, monastic life and Mother Church? Christian Socialism is but the Holy Water with which the priest consecrates the heart-burnings of the aristocrat.

*This applies chiefly to Germany where the landed aristocracy and squirearchy have large portions of their estates cultivated for their own account by stewards, and are, moreover, extensive beetroot-sugar manufacturers and distillers of potato spirits. The wealthier British aristocracy are, as yet, rather above that; but they, too, know how to make up for declining rents by lending their names to floaters of more or less shady joint-stock companies.

b. Petty Bourgeois Socialism.

The feudal aristocracy was not the only class that was ruined by the bourgeoisie, not the only class whose conditions of existence pined and perished in the atmosphere of modern bourgeois society. The medieval burghesses and the small peasant bourgeoisie were the precursors of the modern bourgeoisie. In those countries which are but little developed, industrially and commercially, these two classes still vegetate side by side with the rising bourgeoisie.

In countries where modern civilisation has become fully developed, a new class of petty bourgeois has been formed, fluctuating between proletariat and bourgeoisie, and ever renewing itself as a supplementary part of bourgeois society. The individual members of this class, however, are being constantly hurled down into the proletariat by the action of competition, and, as modern industry develops, they even see the moment approaching when they will completely disappear as an independent section of modern society, to be replaced, in manufactures, agriculture and commerce, by overlookers, bailiffs and shopmen.

In countries, like France, where the peasants constitute far more than half of the population, it was natural that writers who sided with the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, should use, in their criticism of the bourgeois regime, the standard of the peasant and petty bourgeois, and from the stand-

point of these intermediate classes should take up the cudgels for the working-class. Thus arose petty bourgeois Socialism. Sismondi was the head of this school, not only in France, but also in England.

This school of Socialism dissected with great acuteness the contradictions in the conditions of modern production. It laid bare the hypocritical apologies of economists. It proved, incontrovertibly, the disastrous effects of machinery and division of labour; the concentration of capital and land in a few hands; overproduction and crises; it pointed out the inevitable ruin of the petty bourgeois and peasant, the misery of the proletariat, the anarchy in production, the crying inequalities in the distribution of wealth, the industrial war of extermination between nations, the dissolution of old moral bonds, of the old family relations, of the old nationalities.

In its positive aims, however, this form of Socialism aspires either to restoring the old means of production and of exchange, and with them the old property relations, and the old society, or to cramping the modern means of production and of exchange, within the frame work of the old property relations that have been, and were bound to be, exploded by those means. In either case, it is both reactionary and Utopian.

Its last words are: corporate guilds for manufacture; patriarchal relations in agriculture.

Ultimately, when stubborn historical facts had dispersed all intoxicating effects of self-deception, this form of Socialism ended in a miserable fit of the blues.

German or "True" Socialism.

The Socialist and Communist literature of France, a literature that originated under the pressure of a bourgeoisie in power, and that was the expression of the struggle against this power, was introduced into Germany at a time when the bourgeoisie, in that country, had just begun its contest with feudal absolutism.

German philosophers, would-be philosophers, and beaux esprits, eagerly seized on this literature, only forgetting, that when these writings immigrated from France into Germany, French social conditions had not immigrated along with them. In contact with German social conditions, this French literature lost all its immediate practical significance, and assumed a purely literary aspect. Thus, to the German philosophers of the Eighteenth Century, the demands of the first French Revolution were nothing more than the demands of "Practical Reason" in general, and the utterance of the will of the revolutionary French bourgeoisie signified in their eyes the laws of pure Will, of Will as it was bound to be, of true human Will generally.

The work of the German literati consisted solely in bringing the new French ideas into

harmony with their ancient philosophical conscience, or rather, in annexing the French ideas without deserting their own philosophic point of view.

This annexation took place in the same way in which a foreign language is appropriated, namely by translation.

It is well known how the monks wrote silly lives of Catholic Saints over the manuscripts on which the classical works of ancient heathendom had been written. The German literati reversed this process with the profane French literature. They wrote their philosophical nonsense beneath the French original. For instance, beneath the French criticism of the economic functions of money, they wrote "Alienation of Humanity," and beneath the French criticism of the bourgeois State they wrote, "Dethronement of the Category of the General," and so forth.

The introduction of these philosophical phrases at the back of the French historical criticisms they dubbed "Philosophy of Action," "True Socialism," "German Science of Socialism," "Philosophical Foundation of Socialism," and so on.

The French Socialist and Communist literature was thus completely emasculated. And, since it ceased in the hands of the German to express the struggle of one class with the other, he felt conscious of having overcome "French one-sidedness" and of representing, not true requirements, but the requirements of Truth, not the interests of the proletariat,

but the interests of Human Nature, of Man in general, who belongs to no class, has no reality, who exists only in the misty realm of philosophical phantasy.

This German Socialism, which took its school-boy task so seriously and solemnly, and extolled its poor stock-in-trade in such mountebank fashion, meanwhile gradually lost its pedantic innocence.

The fight of the German, and, especially, of the Prussian bourgeoisie, against feudal aristocracy and absolute monarchy, in other words, the liberal movement, became more earnest.

By this, the long-wished-for opportunity was offered to "True Socialism" of confronting the political movement with the socialist demands, of hurling the traditional anathemas against liberalism, against representative government, against bourgeois competition, bourgeois freedom of the press, bourgeois legislation, bourgeois liberty and equality, and of preaching to the masses that they had nothing to gain, and everything to lose, by this bourgeois movement. German Socialism forgot, in the nick of time, that the French criticism, whose silly echo it was, presupposed the existence of modern bourgeois society, with its corresponding economic conditions of existence, and the political constitution adapted thereto, the very things whose attainment was the object of the pending struggle in Germany.

To the absolute governments, with their

following of parsons, professors, country squires and officials, it served as a welcome scarecrow against the threatening bourgeoisie.

It was a sweet finish after the bitter pills of floggings and bullets, with which these same governments, just at that time, dosed the German working-class risings.

While this "True" Socialism thus served the governments as a weapon for fighting the German bourgeoisie, it, at the same time, directly represented a reactionary interest, the interest of the German Philistines. In Germany the petty bourgeois class, a relique of the 18th century, and since then constantly cropping up again under various forms, is the real social basis of the existing state of things.

To preserve this class, is to preserve the existing state of things in Germany. The industrial and political supremacy of the bourgeoisie threatens it with certain destruction; on the one hand, from the concentration of capital; on the other, from the rise of a revolutionary proletariat. "True" Socialism appeared to kill these two birds with one stone. It spread like an epidemic.

The robe of speculative cobwebs, embroidered with flowers of rhetoric, steeped in the dew of sickly sentiment, this transcendental robe in which the German Socialists wrapped their sorry "eternal truths" all skin and bone, served to wonderfully increase the sale of their goods amongst such a public.

And on its part, German Socialism recognised, more and more, its own calling as the bombastic representative of the petty bourgeois Philistine.

It proclaimed the German nation to be the model nation, and the German petty Philistine to be the typical man. To every villainous meanness of this model man it gave a hidden, higher, socialistic interpretation, the exact contrary of its true character. It went to the extreme length of directly opposing the "brutally destructive" tendency of Communism, and of proclaiming its supreme and impartial contempt of all class struggles. With very few exceptions, all the so-called Socialist and Communist publications that now (1847) circulate in Germany belong to the domain of this foul and enervating literature.

2. Conservative or Bourgeois Socialism.

A part of the bourgeoisie is desirous of redressing social grievances, in order to secure the continued existence of bourgeois society.

To this section belong economists, philanthropists, humanitarians, improvers of the condition of the working class, organisers of charity, members of societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals, temperance fanatics, hole and corner reformers of every imaginable kind. This form of Socialism has, moreover, been worked out into complete systems,

We may cite Proudhon's "Philosophie de la Misere" as an example of this form.

The socialistic bourgeois want all the advantages of modern social conditions without the struggles and dangers necessarily resulting therefrom. They desire the existing state of society minus its revolutionary and disintegrating elements. They wish for a bourgeoisie without a proletariat. The bourgeoisie naturally conceives the world in which it is supreme to be the best; and bourgeois socialism develops this comfortable conception into various more or less complete systems. In requiring the proletariat to carry out such a system, and thereby to march straightway into the social New Jerusalem, it but requires in reality, that the proletariat should remain within the bounds of existing society, but should cast away all its hateful ideas concerning the bourgeoisie.

A second and more practical, but less systematic form of this socialism sought to depreciate every revolutionary movement in the eyes of the working class, by showing that no mere political reform, but only a change in the material conditions of existence, in economical relations, could be of any advantage to them. By changes in the material conditions of existence, this form of Socialism, however, by no means understands abolition of the bourgeois relations of production, an abolition that can be effected only by a revolution, but administrative reforms, based on the continued existence of

these relations; reforms, therefore, that in no respect affect the relations between capital and labour, but, at the best, lessen the cost, and simplify the administrative work, of bourgeois government.

Bourgeois Socialism attains adequate expression, when, and only when, it becomes a mere figure of speech.

Free trade: for the benefit of the working class. Protective duties: for the benefit of the working class. Prison Reform: for the benefit of the working class. This is the last word and the only seriously meant word of bourgeois Socialism.

It is summed up in the phrase: the bourgeois is a bourgeois—for the benefit of the working class.

3. Critical-Utopian Socialism and Communism.

We do not here refer to that literature which, in every great modern revolution, has always given voice to the demands of the proletariat: such as the writings of Babeuf and others.

The first direct attempts of the proletariat to attain its own ends, made in times of universal excitement, when feudal society was being overthrown, these attempts necessarily failed, owing to the then undeveloped state of the proletariat, as well as to the absence of the economic conditions for its emancipation, conditions that had yet to be produced, and could be produced by the

impending bourgeois epoch alone. The revolutionary literature that accompanied these first movements of the proletariat had necessarily a reactionary character. It inculcated universal asceticism and social leveling in its crudest form.

The Socialist and Communist systems properly so called, those of St. Simon, Fourier, Owen and others, spring into existence in the early undeveloped period, described above, of the struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie, (see section I. Bourgeoisie and Proletariat).

The founders of these systems see, indeed, the class antagonisms, as well as the action of the decomposing elements in the prevailing form of society. But the proletariat, as yet in its infancy, offers to them the spectacle of a class without any historical initiative or any independent political movement.

Since the development of class antagonism keeps even pace with the development of industry, the economic situation, as they find it, does not as yet offer to them the material conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat. They therefore search after a new social science, after new social laws, that are to create these conditions.

Historical action is to yield to their personal inventive action, historically created conditions of emancipation to phantastic ones, and the gradual, spontaneous class-organisation of the proletariat to an organisation of society specially contrived by these

inventors. Future history resolves itself, in their eyes, into the propaganda and the practical carrying out of their social plans.

In the formation of their plans they are conscious of caring chiefly for the interests of the working-class, as being the most suffering class. Only from the point of view of being the most suffering class does the proletariat exist for them.

The undeveloped state of the class struggle, as well as their own surroundings, cause Socialists of this kind to consider themselves far superior to all class antagonisms. They want to improve the condition of every member of society, even that of the most favoured. Hence, they habitually appeal to society at large, without distinction of class; nay, by preference, to the ruling class. For how can people, when once they understand their system, fail to see in it the best possible plan of the best possible state of society?

Hence, they reject all political, and especially all revolutionary action; they wish to attain their ends by peaceful means, and endeavour, by small experiments, necessarily doomed to failure, and by the force of example, to pave the way for the new social Gospel.

Such phantastic pictures of future society, painted at a time when the proletariat is still in a very undeveloped state, and has but a phantastic conception of its own position, correspond with the first instinctive yearn-

ings of that class for a general reconstruction of society.

But these Socialist and Communist publications contain also a critical element. They attack every principle of existing society. Hence they are full of the most valuable materials for the enlightenment of the working class. The practical measures proposed in them, such as the abolition of the distinction between town and country, of the family, of the carrying on of industries for the account of private individuals, and of the wage system, the proclamation of social harmony, the conversion of the functions of the State into a mere superintendence of production, all these proposals point solely to the disappearance of class-antagonisms which were, at that time, only just cropping up, and which, in these publications, are recognised under their earliest, indistinct and undefined forms only. These proposals, therefore, are of a purely Utopian character.

The significance of Critical-Utopian Socialism and Communism bears an inverse relation to historical development. In proportion as the modern class struggle develops and takes definite shape, this phantastic standing apart from the contest, these phantastic attacks on it lose all practical value and all theoretical justification. Therefore, although the originators of these systems were, in many respects, revolutionary, their disciples have, in every case, formed mere reactionary sects. They hold fast by the orig-

inal views of their masters, in opposition to the progressive historical development of the proletariat. They, therefore, endeavour, and that consistently, to deaden the class struggle and to reconcile the class antagonisms. They still dream of experimental realisation of their social Utopias, of founding isolated "phalansteres," of establishing "Home Colonies," of setting up a "Little Icaria"—duodecimo editions of the New Jerusalem, and to realise all these castles in the air, they are compelled to appeal to the feelings and purses of the bourgeois. By degrees they sink into the category of the reactionary conservative Socialists depicted above, differing from these only by more systematic pedantry, and by their fanatical and superstitious belief in the miraculous effects of their social science.

They, therefore, violently oppose all political action on the part of the working class; such action, according to them, can only result from blind unbelief in the new Gospel.

The Owenites in England, and the Fourierists in France, respectively oppose the Chartists and the "Reformistes."

IV.

POSITION OF THE COMMUNISTS IN RELATION TO THE VARIOUS EXISTING OPPOSITION PARTIES.

Section II. has made clear the relations of the Communists to the existing working class parties, such as the Chartists in England and the Agrarian Reformers in America.

*Phalanstères were socialist colonies on the plan of Charles Fourier. Icaria was the name given by Cabot to his Utopia and, later on, to his American Communist colony.

The Communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that movement. In France the Communists ally themselves with the Social-Democrats,* against the conservative and radical bourgeoisie, reserving, however, the right to take up a critical position in regard to phrases and illusions traditionally handed down from the great Revolution.

In Switzerland they support the Radicals, without losing sight of the fact that this party consists of antagonistic elements, partly of Democratic Socialists, in the French sense, partly of radical bourgeois.

In Poland they support the party that insists on an agrarian revolution, as the prime condition for national emancipation, that party which fomented the insurrection of Cracow in 1846.

In Germany they fight with the bourgeoisie whenever it acts in a revolutionary way, against the absolute monarchy, the feudal squirearchy, and the petty bourgeoisie.

But they never cease, for a single instant, to instill into the working class the clearest possible recognition of the hostile antagonism between bourgeoisie and proletariat, in order that the German workers may straightway use, as so many weapons against the bourgeoisie, the social and political conditions that the bourgeoisie must necessarily introduce along with its supremacy, and in order that, after the fall of the reactionary

*The party then represented in parliament by Ledru-Rollin, in literature by Louis Blanc, in the daily press by the *Réforme*. The name of Social Democracy signified, with these its inventors, a section of the Democratic or Republican party more or less tinged with Socialism.

classes in Germany, the fight against the bourgeoisie itself may immediately begin.

The Communists turn their attention chiefly to Germany, because that country is on the eve of a bourgeois revolution, that is bound to be carried out under more advanced conditions of European civilisation, and with a more developed proletariat, than that of England was in the seventeenth, and of France in the eighteenth century, and because the bourgeois revolution in Germany will be but the prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution.

In short, the Communists everywhere support every revolutionary movement against the existing social and political order of things.

In all these movements they bring to the front, as the leading question in each, the property question, no matter what its degree of development at the time.

Finally, they labour everywhere for the union and agreement of the democratic parties of all countries.

The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.

Working men of all countries unite!

No Compromise

No Political Trading

BY
WILHELM LIEBKNECHT

TRANSLATED BY
A. M. SIMONS AND MARCUS HITCH

REVISED EDITION



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PREFACE.

The following pamphlet is not an address, as was my first one on Tactics;* but it is occasioned by an address which I delivered this summer, at the request of my Berlin constituents, on the last Bavarian legislative elections in particular and on compromises in general. For some time past and from different directions persistent efforts have been made to bring our party nearer to the other political parties; this, together with the incessant demand for taking part in the Prussian legislative elections, has aroused in a part of the Berlin voters, as well as among the comrades all over Germany, an apprehension that there may exist in the party certain tendencies which, though not having that aim, nevertheless must have the result, of leading the Social Democratic party over into the field of spoils politics, pure and simple. This apprehension was nourished by Bernstein's book of repentance, a solemn renunciation of social democratic principles by a comrade who up to that time had been considered a guardian of our principles, and by his recantation of the social democratic heresy and his reconfession of faith in the bourgeois philosophy as the only means of salvation. Bernstein's pamphlet in itself is insignificant and contains not a single new, original idea, but merely acknowledges as correct what the enemies of the Social Democracy for decades past have said against it a hundred times; yet, taken in connection with the confusing agitation for taking part in the Prussian legislative elections and with the unfortunate Isegrim articles against the militia system and

*On the Political Stand of the Social Democracy, especially with Reference to the Reichstag. Berlin, 1893. *Vorwaerts* Publishing House.

in favor of militarism, the pamphlet, considered as a symptom, acquired an importance which could not be ignored.

The party was engaged in a fight against the penitentiary bill, and other attempts at coercion on the part of the dominant reactionists, and was just beginning to forget Schippelism and Bernsteinism, expecting from the next party convention a thorough shaking up and cleaning out, when suddenly the report came of the political "cow-trade" or log-rolling in Bavaria. We have been accustomed to Bavarian peculiarities for years; we know that Bavarian affairs, and in general South German affairs, are not to be measured according to the North German standard; and no one can be more tolerant than the Berlin comrades who, in front of the gates of the Imperial Capital, have to deal with peculiarities which, though of a different kind, are quite as striking as the Bavarian possibly can be. We know particularly that where the religious element cuts a figure in politics and the clerical Center party prevents a normal political development, class-consciousness is easily crowded out by other considerations. And also outside of Bavaria we have heard of some very strange campaign alliances. Nevertheless, what happened this time in Bavaria was in its way an innovation. A formal alliance was entered into, not underhanded, not over the heads of the mass by particular comrades, but by one party with another party, by the leaders of the Social Democracy in Bavaria, with the leaders of the Center party in Bavaria.

This event stirred up a great commotion and caused the most intense anxiety everywhere in party circles. At first the astonishment, the disapproval, found no expression. As the legislative elections in Bavaria are indirect, one could not immediately raise a protest, for in so doing one would only have embarrassed the Bavarian com-

rades, who were then in the midst of the fight, and would perhaps have incurred a grave responsibility. Therefore, the Bavarian supporters of the political cow trade had the field to themselves for the time being. Under such circumstances, it is easy to understand that the apprehensions of comrades, who thought they saw indications of a designed and methodical stagnation of the party, were aroused to the utmost. Berlin comrades turned to me. I explained why the *Vorwärts* had not yet taken a stand towards the Bavarian cow trade, but made no secret of the fact that my views on compromises were not the same as those of the editorial staff; I wrote an article, which in spite of its unusually calm tone, was looked upon by the Bavarian comrades as a grievous attack; I also explained my views in a meeting of the voters' club of the Sixth Berlin election district. Although, for the sake of sweet peace, I prevented a vote of censure for the Bavarian comrades, nevertheless both myself and the Berlin comrades were, on account of this meeting, violently attacked by the Bavarian party members, and not always in elegant terms. One who feels that he is in the wrong generally makes up for the weakness of his case by the violence of his speech. I have always taken the insolence of my opponents as an involuntary compliment, and never bothered myself about it.

About the time of the Bavarian cow trade the entrance of a socialist—Millerand—into a reactionary bourgeois cabinet took place in France and was the cause of a split in the French Social Democracy. The ablest of our French comrades, —Guesde, Lafargue and Vaillant, the founders of the modern socialist movement in France,—protested against the entrance of Millerand into the cabinet of the reactionary capitalist, Waldeck-Rousseau, and of Gallifet, the butcher of the Communists; they withdrew from the socialist

group, which they were convinced had abandoned the platform of the class struggle.

Here we could see the dangers of a compromise policy in their life-size and entire outlines. In the meantime an article appeared in *Vorwaerts*, in the issue of July 28, entitled "Momentary Alliances," which sought to justify the compromise policy. I therefore determined, at the request of comrades in Berlin and vicinity, to write a pamphlet and express myself, as I know, in harmony with an overwhelming majority of the Berlin comrades, on the question of tactics, especially on compromises and alliances; and thus, so far as in my power lies, afford the party an opportunity, before the party convention is held, to realize in their proper connection and in their entire extent the consequences which an abandonment of the time-tried policy of our party would bring about.

When I speak here of our policy, I use the word without regard to anything immaterial and superficial, but in the sense which since the beginning of the party it has had for us in contrast to all other parties,—in the sense of the policy of the class struggle, which has very often changed in form, but in substance has remained the same,—our unique proletarian class policy, which separates us from all other political parties in the world of bourgeois society and excludes us from intercourse with them.

The pamphlet is a vacation task. It was written on the move in the true sense of the word, in house and field, on mountains, in the cars, here and there. This, of course, necessarily marred its unity, but shows also how seriously I took the matter, to sacrifice for it the quiet of my vacation.

W. LIEBKNECHT.

August, 1899.

NO COMPROMISE. NO POLITICAL TRADING.

By Wilhelm Liebknecht.

(Published at the Request of the Members of
the Social Democratic Party in Berlin and
Vicinity.)

THE PARTY LAW.

The question of compromises has, in one form or another, engaged the attention of our party ever since its entrance into the political arena. But I have not now the time nor is this the place for a complete historical presentation of the subject. The present state of party law in reference to the compromise question is expressed in the resolutions of the party conventions held at Cologne, Hamburg and Stuttgart. The resolution of the Cologne convention, passed October 28, 1893, is as follows:

“Whereas, The three-class electoral system of Prussia, which, according to Bismarck’s own expression, is the most wretched of all systems of election, makes it impossible for the Social Democracy to take an independent part in the elections for the Prussian legislature with any prospect of success; and whereas, it contradicts the principles heretofore followed by the party in elections to enter into compromises with hostile parties, because this would necessarily lead to demoralization and to strife and dissension in the ranks of the party; therefore, resolved, that it is the duty of the party members in Prussia to abstain from participation in the election for the legislature.

And whereas, the electoral systems in the sep-

arate states constitute an excellent specimen of reactionary election laws and particularly the plutocratic character of the three-class electoral system in Prussia makes it impossible for the laboring class to send its own representatives to the legislature; therefore, the convention calls upon the party members to begin a systematic and energetic agitation in all the separate states for the introduction of universal, equal, secret and direct suffrage in elections for the legislature as demanded by our party platform."

Four years later, on October 9, 1897, the Hamburg convention passed the following resolution:

"The resolution of the Cologne convention forbidding the Prussian members of the party to participate in the legislative elections under the three-class system of voting, is repealed. Participation in the next Prussian legislative elections is recommended everywhere where the conditions render it possible for the party members to do so. Just how far it is possible to take part in the elections in the separate election districts much be decided by the party members of each election district according to local circumstances.

Compromises and alliances with other parties must not be entered into."

The repeal of the Cologne resolution was passed by 160 votes against 50. The entire resolution was passed by 145 votes against 64, one delegate not voting.

After the vote on the separate parts of the resolution and after the vote on the whole, in order to prevent any question from arising as to the practical meaning of the Hamburg resolution, the chairman, Singer, with the express consent of Bebel, who had offered the resolution, and without objection by anyone, and with unanimous consent, entered on the minutes, made the following announcement:

"I wish to state that the convention is unanimous in the view that under the resolution

adopted here no participation in the elections can take place except by putting up social democratic candidates."

That comrades should, in the first instance, vote for candidates of the liberal party was, as Bebel remarked, absolutely excluded, and would belong under the head of compromises and alliances with other parties.

In spite of the clear language of the resolution and of the clear and authoritative interpretation thereof on a point susceptible of different constructions, the convention had hardly adjourned when differences of opinion began to be expressed. In sharp contradiction to the facts and to the record of the proceedings, it was denied that voting in the first instance by our party for candidates of the liberal party would be a compromise; and the claim was even made that the convention had been bulldozed by Singer.

Last year's convention was held at Stuttgart immediately before the elections for the Prussian legislature. There was such a difference of opinion that it was not possible to think of disposing of the matter, especially as the order of business before the convention was overloaded without that. So nothing could be done but leave the final disposition of the matter for a future convention, and for the present pass an emergency resolution.

On October 5, 1898, the Stuttgart convention adopted unanimously the following resolution, agreed upon by a committee, to-wit:

"Participation in the Prussian legislative elections under the three-class electoral system cannot be regarded, as is the case in elections for the Reichstag, as a marshaling of forces; it is not a means of attaining a moral effect by the number of our votes, but is only a means of attaining certain practical results, especially warding off the danger of allowing the most hide-bound reactionists to get a majority in the

legislature. Proceeding from this view, the convention declares that participation in the Prussian legislative elections is not required in all election districts, the less so as the shortness of the time which remains before the Prussian legislative elections makes it impossible to bring together the widely divergent views now existing within the party on this question, so to make harmonious action by the party possible. Under these circumstances the convention leaves it to the comrades of the separate election districts to decide on the question of participation. If it is decided in an election district to take part, and if a proposition is made to support candidates of our political opponents, then the candidates must pledge themselves, in case of their election to the legislature, to work for the introduction of the universal, equal, direct and secret ballot, for the elections to the legislature, the same as it now exists for the elections to the Reichstag, and to resist energetically all measures in the legislature which tend to diminish or abolish the existing rights of the people in the separate states. All propositions introduced under the head of 'Prussian Legislative Elections' shall be considered disposed of by the adoption of this resolution."

This was the Stuttgart resolution. As can be seen, it is only temporary and leaves the question of tactics exactly on the basis of the Hamburg resolution. In spite of that, the comrades of some election districts considered themselves justified in making, contrary to this resolution, arrangements with other parties which were clearly compromises within the meaning of the Hamburg resolution. And the latest events in Bavaria, the alliance with the Center party, which was characterized as a cow trade by the comrades themselves, who took part in it, has shown that when once the thin end of the opportunist wedge has forced itself into the policy of the party the thick end soon follows.

PROLETARIAN SOCIALISM.

For our party and for our party tactics there is but one valid basis: the basis of the class struggle, out of which the Social Democratic party has sprung up, and out of which alone it can draw the necessary strength to bid defiance to every storm and to all its enemies. The founders of our party,—Marx, Engels and Lassalle,—impressed upon the workingmen the necessity of the class character of our movement so deeply that down to a very recent time there were no considerable deviations or getting off the track. The Cologne resolution was called forth by a proposal made by Edward Bernstein, then living in London, and as editor of the *Social Democrat* honored by the members of the party.

Till the year 1893 there never was any talk in public about the possibility or advisability of taking part in the Prussian legislative elections. In the beginning of the '80s, the coöperation of the Social Democracy with the political democrats was advocated on the quiet by the democrats of Frankfort for the purpose of gaining a socialist and a democratic representative for Frankfort in the legislature; but the proposition was declined, also on the quiet, without getting noised abroad. What turned the scale was this consideration, viz.: *That the class character of the party would be weakened by an alliance of this kind; and that the advantage of gaining a representative would be far more than offset by the disadvantage of an alliance in a legislative election with a party which we are compelled to fight in the Reichstag election.* The importance of a seat in the Prussian legislature was not overlooked by anyone. But it was looked upon as more important that the representatives of the party should depend exclusively upon the strength of the party, and not upon an alliance with parties which might have momentarily a common interest with

us, but which in their political make-up are hostile to us and will remain permanently hostile.

Bernstein's proposal, which contemplated a participation of the Social Democracy in the Prussian legislative elections, found little response and no advocates; so that the resolution introduced and supported by Bebel against such participation was adopted unanimously.

That the question of taking part in the Prussian legislative elections should come up again after many years and even lead to quite animated debates, appears at first sight unintelligible. But it is explained by two circumstances which I will here set forth.

First. In reference to the Prussian three-class electoral system the views of many of the comrades had in the course of time undergone a change. It had escaped the memory of some of them, here and there, that the logically and cunningly realized purpose of the three-class electoral system was to exclude with hermetic sealing all democratic thought and sentiment, and that the capitalistic era, which began about the same time with the introduction of the "most wretched of all electoral systems," had by creating a class conscious proletariat rendered the vote of the socialist masses more insignificant than the vote of the democratic masses had been originally. How badly many of the speakers (both men and women) at the Hamburg convention deceived themselves as to the working of the three-class electoral system is clear from the fact that some of them entertained the delusion that the reform of the Prussian legislative elections could be used as the means of a grand arousing of the masses. In the jubilation over the success which had been achieved under other non-democratic laws regulating legislative elections, especially in Saxony, many had forgotten that the Prussian three-class system made the publicity of the ballot obligatory, and thereby in advance practically

disfranchised all who were dependent, either economically, socially or politically, that is, the great majority of the population, and by this means alone rendered it impossible for the masses to take part in the election or get up any general enthusiasm.

The optimistic self-deception in regard to the three-class electoral law went so far that not a few of the comrades imagined in all seriousness that we social democrats would be in a position by our own strength without fusion or even an alliance with other parties, to win a number, if only a small number, of seats. To-day no one is laboring under this delusion any longer. To-day everybody knows that we cannot win a single seat in the Prussian legislature without a compromise or an alliance. It was different two years ago when the party convention, its majority being under the curse of optimistic self-deception, pronounced in favor of taking part in the Prussian legislative elections. Fortunately, however, the heads and supreme council of the party bethought themselves of the origin and nature of the party and by an unqualified prohibition of all compromises and alliances with other parties sought to prevent the self-deception from causing steps which might injure the party and lead it astray into wrong paths.

The Hamburg resolution has been called contradictory and illogical. True, if the party the same as before rejected all compromises and alliances with other parties, then there was no sense in repealing the Cologne resolution. The contradiction is explained, as already indicated, by the fact that a portion of the party deceived itself or was deceived as to the nature of the Prussian three-class election law. But from this contradiction to conclude, as has actually been done, that the party had more at heart its desire to participate in the Prussian legislative elections than its aversion to compromises, and that therefore,

as a contradiction existed, it must be solved by unqualifiedly advocating participation in the elections and by repealing the prohibition against compromises and election alliances; such a conclusion gives evidence of just as little logic as of regard for the principles and history of the party.

Second. This brings me to the second reason why the question of participation in the legislative elections could become a matter of serious party strife. In certain circles there exists an inclination, or let us say an effort, to desert the platform of the class struggle and enter into the common arena of the other parties. As all the other parties stand upon the basis of a political state, therefore their field of activity is necessarily confined to the spoils of politics. I do not say that the advocates of the new tactics all wish this: as to some of them I am convinced that they do not wish it. But others wish it; and it is no mere accident that it was just Bernstein who first proposed the participation of the social democracy in the Prussian legislative elections. This tactics corresponds perfectly with Bernstein's program which aims at the politicalization of the Social Democracy; whereas, it is decidedly illogical from the standpoint of those who do not wish to deny or destroy the militant character of our party as carrying on a class struggle.

STATE CAPITALISM.

I do not hesitate to repeat my former declaration that a practical surrender of our party principles appears to me far more dangerous than all of Bernstein's theoretical will-o'-the-wisps put together. It has been claimed that in the spoils parties political nerve has died out; that they have lost the spirit of freedom and justice. The claim certainly does not lack foundation, and yet that condition is no recent matter. Disregarding

short periods, the German bourgeoisie never did have what is understood by "political nerve." But however that may be, it cannot be denied that we are now living under the influence of politico-economic conditions which tend to sharpen in the highest degree the economic and political antagonisms on the one hand, and yet on the other hand tend towards an opportunist relaxation of principles. In addition to that we must take into consideration the political backwardness of the bourgeoisie in Germany, which is the cause of the fact that there does not exist here a really liberal party, to say nothing of a democratic party. This fact has this as its natural result: that the honestly liberal and democratic elements of the bourgeoisie gravitate more and more towards the side of the Social Democracy as the only party which is fighting for democratic principles in Germany. But these democratic elements do not thereby become Socialists, though many believe they are socialists. In short, we have now in Germany a phenomenon which has been observable in France for half a century and longer, and which has contributed much to the confusion of party relations in France, viz.: that a part of the radical bourgeoisie rallies around the Socialist flag without understanding the nature of socialism. This political socialism, which in fact is only philanthropic humanitarian radicalism, has retarded the development of socialism in France exceedingly. It has diluted and blurred the principles and weakened the socialist party because it brought into it troops upon which no reliance could be placed in the decisive moment.

Marx in his articles on the class struggles in France,* characterized for us this political socialism. And it would be an unparalleled ease of

*The Class Struggles in France, 1848-50, with an introduction by Frederick Engels, Berlin, 1895. Vorwärts Publishing House.

flying the track and going astray if the German Social Democracy, which has had such wonderful success and such a wonderful growth for the very reason that it has marched ahead unterrified on the basis of the class struggle, should suddenly face about and plunge into mistakes, the avoidance of which has been the power and pride of our party, and has put the German Social Democracy at the head of the international social democracy of all countries.

The disappearance of fear and aversion to us in political circles of course brings political elements into our ranks. As long as this takes place on a small scale it causes no apprehension because the political elements are outnumbered by the proletarian elements and are gradually assimilated. But it is a different thing if the political elements in the party become so numerous and influential that their assimilation becomes difficult and even the danger arises that the proletarian socialist element will be crowded to the rear. This danger of politicalization threatens the German Social Democracy from two sources on account of the backwardness of our bourgeoisie. First, the democratic elements of the bourgeoisie, which find no political satisfaction in their own class, flow to us in greater numbers than in countries with a normally developed bourgeoisie; second, the bureaucratic, though capitalistic, spirit of our governments tends towards a state socialism which, in fact, is only state capitalism, but which is dazzling and misleading for those who are easily deceived by external similarities and catch words. The German, or more accurately the Prussian, state socialism whose ideal is a military, landlord and police state, hates democracy above everything else. The Kanitzes and their followers claim to be out and out radical socialists, but will have nothing to do with democracy. Democracy is their

enemy. It is to them something inherently political. But all politics is diametrically opposed to what is socialist. So by this trick logic we arrive at the conclusion which has gained footing here and there, even in social democratic circles, that democracy as savoring of politics has nothing in common with socialism, but on the contrary is opposed to it. Certain errors, for example the opposition to the militia system, can be traced to this piece of sophistry, as also at one time the false teachings of von Schweitzer. But the truth is that democracy is not a thing that is specifically political, and we must never forget that we are not merely a socialist party, but a social democratic party because we have perceived that socialism and democracy are inseparable.

BISMARCK.

As Prince Bismarck, in the '60s, wanted to move the "Acheron" of socialism, and through the intervention of Brass offered to me the editorship of the *North German Gazette*, and then later through Bucher offered to Marx even the editorship of the *Staats Anzeiger*, in both cases with full freedom to advocate socialism unreservedly, clear down to its ultimate consequences, it was of course not love for socialism or knowledge of socialism that led Prince Bismarck to do this. He understood nothing about socialism at that time, and never did understand anything about it down to his death; in fact, he never had any conception of the moving forces of political and social life at all. There probably never lived at any time in any country a "statesman" who was less scientific, who had less knowledge, and who relied so purely on experience and a sort of half-gambler, half-peddler cunning, as Bismarck. Those offers to socialists place in the clearest light the untruthfulness of Prince Bismarck's claim that he always regarded the social democ-

racy as incompatible with the existence of the state. Bismarck wanted to use socialism for the purpose of breaking up and dissolving the bourgeois liberal opposition, especially the Progressive party. This, in itself, is the most conclusive proof that he had no conception of the real nature of socialism. Of course the fate of the boy magician was repeated. The elemental force which was conjured up grew over the head of the dabbler, and he did not get the best of socialism; socialism got the best of him.

The question of tactics came up then in our party for the first time. Should we, in consideration of certain concessions to the laborers, aid Bismarck against the Progressive party and other opponents of his policy in the expectation of being then after that strong enough for a successful struggle against him and against the landlord, police and military state embodied in his person? Or did prudence and party interest demand that we, taking advantage of Bismarck's quarrel with the Progressive bourgeoisie and the other opponents of his policy, contest the Bismarckian policy and organize the proletariat into an independent political party for the purpose of preparing it for the conquest of political power?

For a while the proletariat wavered, but after a few years the tactics, advocated principally by Herr von Schweitzer, of drawing closer to the Bismarckian policy, was given up and the tactics was everywhere accepted which has ever since been in force for the party down to the present day. *This tactics consists in keeping clear the class character of the socialist party as a proletarian party; to train it by agitation, education and organization for the victorious completion of the emancipation struggle; to wage a systematic war against the class state, in whose hands the political and economic power of capitalism is concentrated, and in this war to draw advantages*

as far as possible out of the quarrels and conflicts of the different political parties with each other.

BOURGEOIS AND BOURGEOISIE.

In Germany the bourgeoisie has never attained political power as in France and England. Though the English bourgeoisie two and a half centuries ago, and the French bourgeoisie more than a century ago, cleared away all the medieval rubbish, the German bourgeoisie has never yet been in the position to bring about a political revolution and to realize in the state what is called political liberty. The loss of the world's commerce in consequence of the discovery of America, and in connection with that the stunting of industrial activity; the political splitting up and ruin of Germany; the paralysis of the national spirit bordering almost on death; the rise of dynastic interests hostile to the people and to enlightenment; all these prevented the growth of a strong citizenry. As in 1848 a belated opportunity was offered, the German people even then did not have the strength for a political revolution. After a brief revel of freedom it bowed its head again under the old yoke. From fear of the laborers, in whom it scented a new and dangerous power, it became reactionary, without ever having been revolutionary; it did penance for its dreams of freedom, which appeared to it as youthful indiscretions, and threw itself into the arms of political reactionism, filled with but one remaining ideal, viz.: to get rich. The citizen disappeared from the political arena and became either politically indifferent or else capitalistic. And to be capitalistic means to recognize and support the government unconditionally, provided it is a class government and represents and promotes exclusively the interests of capitalism.

To prevent misunderstandings and wrong impressions, we must become fully conscious of

the difference between "political" and "capitalistic." These two ideas, which because of the ambiguity of the German word "*Buerger*" are very easily confused by us, must be clearly separated from each other. In France the word "*bourgeois*," which in the middle ages had the same meaning as our "*Buerger*," in the course of time and of economic development gradually assumed the meaning of "great-capitalist;" whereas we Germans for this latter idea borrow the French word "*bourgeois*," but also use concurrently the German words "*Buerger*," and "*buergerlich*" without noticing the difference. So there arises a confusion of language which is anything but conducive to clearness of conception. We speak of "*buergerlich*" society, and mean modern capitalistic bourgeois society. We speak of "*buergerlich*" spirit, "*buergerlich*" freedom, and mean a democratic spirit of freedom such as the citizenry had in former times when it was fighting the priests and feudal landlords, which spirit, however, is diametrically opposed to the spirit of the capitalistic, and hence reactionary, landlord and priest coddling citizenry, or bourgeoisie of to-day.

The correctness of the so-called materialistic conception of history, which considers the political development as dependent on the economic, cannot be brought more strikingly and convincingly to the mind than by the change which in the course of the Nineteenth century has been wrought in the bourgeoisie. It can be demonstrated with the greatest precision how with the change in the productive relations a change of political view and attitude has taken place in the bourgeoisie. Every step forward in economic development has been a step forward in the development of class antagonisms and a step in the approach of the bourgeoisie towards its old enemies, the landlords and priests, and a step in drawing away from the rising proletariat,

which in order to effect its emancipation, must advocate equal rights for all men and the democratic principles formerly supported by the bourgeoisie. *The moment the proletariat steps forth as a class separate from the bourgeoisie and having interests opposed to it, from that moment the bourgeoisie ceases to be democratic.* In the states of the European continent this reaction falls in a characteristic manner just in a period which is usually called the revolutionary period par excellence—in the period of the February and March revolutions. The contradiction is only an apparent one. The February revolution was a tardy victory of bourgeois idealism which stirred up the material interests of bourgeois realism to contradiction, to opposition and to reaction. The premature outbreak of the proletarian revolution (in the battle of June, 1848, at Paris), which followed upon the heels of the belated outbreak of the bourgeois revolution, drove the bourgeoisie over to the side of its hereditary enemy, because it foresaw in the victory of the proletariat the downfall of capitalism. In France Napoleon was elected President, and in Germany the bourgeoisie even in the honeymoon of the March revolution longed for a deliverer which would down the red specter. Thus the "black reaction," which in 1849 followed our revolution, was in fact simply the true character of this revolution, stripped of its fantastic deceptive dress of gilded phrases. *Under the rule of capitalism the bourgeoisie was forced to become politically reactionary* so far as it was capitalistic or stood under capitalistic influence. The "black reaction" which half a century ago spread over the European continent, was just as much a historical necessity as the still blacker reaction of the present zigzag policy of penitentiary bills which capitalism in a fit of desperation has forced upon us.

THE GERMAN BOURGEOISIE NEVER
PASSED THROUGH THE LIBERAL
STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT.

In Germany where capitalism was developed later than in England and France, and where it was not preceded, as in those two countries, by an era of economic prosperity for the bourgeoisie as well as of political supremacy by it, the whole political development was obliged to take on a different character. There a soil cleared of medieval mould and undergrowth; here, the most modern of modern conditions, as modern as in France and England, in between medieval mould and undergrowth; the healthy growth entwined with ivy which sucks the life out of everything that it clasps with its tendrils; which only lives from death and rottenness and which must be torn off and grubbed up to prevent the healthy and growing from being sacrificed to the dead. The German bourgeoisie, which was sleeping the sleep of impotence at the time when in other lands the bourgeoisie impressed upon the state its bourgeois character, does not even now possess the strength to tear away and extirpate the romantic and death-bringing parasitic ivy of landlordism and medieval semi-barbarism.

The political impotence of the German citizenry in past and present is what distinguishes the political life of Germany from that of the other advanced countries, and has assigned to the German proletariat the mission not only of solving its own strictly proletarian problem, but also of accomplishing the work left undone by our bourgeoisie. Tactics is determined by the nature of the conditions. So far as the bourgeoisie is capitalistic, we have to fight it; so far as the bourgeoisie opposes capitalism and the reactionism which it shields and assists, we have

either to support it positively or at least not assume a hostile attitude towards it, unless it gets in our line of fire, as for example, in the elections for the Reichstag where a bourgeois and a social democratic candidate are running against each other

Disregarding the von Schweitzer episode, the German Social Democracy has consistently and consciously followed the tactics prescribed in the Communist Manifesto, to direct its main attack against political reactionism and to lend aid to the bourgeoisie, so far as it is liberal or democratic, in its struggle against political reactionism and in no case to throw itself on the side of political reaction in its struggle against the bourgeoisie. It is necessary to emphasize this, because Bernstein in his polemic written against the Social Democratic party of Germany, and which has been so suspiciously praised and recommended, has accused us of something which is a favorite old legend of Eugene Richter's, viz.: that we blindly opposed the German bourgeoisie to the advantage of political reactionism and repelled and terrorized it so much that in its alarm it took refuge under the wings of a reactionary landlord, police and military state. It is not possible to slap the truth squarer in the face than is done by saying this.

THE FAILURE OF THE PROGRESSIVE PARTY.

At the time of the great constitutional struggle in the '60s there was no socialist party worth speaking of. In 1864, at the time Lassalle was killed in a duel with the Wallachian noble Rakowitz, the Universal German Working Men's Union numbered in all Germany 5,000 or 6,000 members on paper; in reality still fewer. This little band could not have scared the German Progressive party out of its wits, even though

we measure the latter's valor by the microscopic scale of rabbit courage, befitting the German bourgeoisie. Yet it surrendered to Bismarck; and after the success of the civil war of 1866 it granted him indemnity and bowed itself under the Caudine yoke which he set up. To claim that the Social Democracy is to blame for that is simply ridiculous. It is true that Lassalle had attacked the bourgeoisie very bitterly, but in so doing had found very little sympathy among German workingmen. And although Lassalle in his opposition to the Progressive party occasionally got perhaps somewhat too close to the Bismarckian reactionary policy, still it must not be forgotten that at the beginning of the constitutional struggle he had stood on the side of the Progressive party and only separated from it after it had obstinately refused to carry on the struggle in earnest in spite of his repeated demands that it do so.

The German bourgeoisie—and this is the key to its otherwise unaccountable conduct—did not have in 1862 any more than it had in 1848 and earlier, the stuff for a political revolution. It feared—as I told one of the leaders of the Progressive party to his face in the beginning of the year 1863—it *feared a revolution more than a reaction*. And Bismarck with his cynical contempt of men and his horse-trader cuteness, soon brought out that fact. The Progressists did not strike him as “imposing;” and the more impudent he was in his intercourse with them the easier he curled them around his finger. To hold the German Social Democracy responsible for the treason to liberty committed by the Prussian Progressive party is not only an insult to historical truth; it indicates also a complete misunderstanding of the role which the German bourgeoisie has played since the middle ages.

I simply put the two facts side by side: In the period of the constitutional struggle when

the Progressive party stood at the height of its power and had the people behind it, Bismarck, then in the beginning of his career, turned it down with the greatest ease. In the period of the anti-Socialist law, when Bismarck stood at the height of his power and with all the resources of capitalism was exercising a bourgeois dictatorship, he was turned down by the Social Democracy with the greatest ease, though it had all the political parties against it. That shows who can fight reactionism in Germany and who can not.

The wretchedness of the German bourgeoisie does not, however, release us from the duty of assisting it, wherever it does earnestly oppose reactionism, provided our own interests do not thereby suffer. And this has been done without exception ever since the German Social Democracy entered the arena as an independent party. For myself, I need only to mention the fact that in 1865 I was expelled from Prussia because I foiled Bismarck's attempt to crush the Progressive party with the aid of the Socialists as between two millstones. I can say with a good conscience that in all my struggles against the Bismarckian reaction I have fought for political liberty. And in my oft-quoted pamphlet on the political attitude of the Social Democracy I emphasized the democratic character of our movement not less than has been done recently by Bernstein, who recommends to us as brand new wisdom what we have already been practicing for thirty-odd years.

THE PAMPHLET ON TACTICS.

I must here say a word about my above mentioned pamphlet on tactics. The speech out of which it arose was delivered in the year 1869 at the time of the North German Confederation; this was a temporary arrangement which could not possibly last and which would have to end

either with the breaking down of Bismarck's Great-Prussian policy or with its victory by a union with the South German States, excepting Austria. In this temporary state or interim the tactics forced upon us by the logic of the facts was that of opposition at any price. Bismarck had introduced a universal suffrage of the Napoleonic pattern, not to establish the sovereignty of the people, but to cover up his despotic dictatorship. As Napoleon through his prefects directed the universal suffrage as he pleased, so Bismarck thought he could do the same through his local counsellors. It seemed to him an instrument easier to handle than the three class electoral system, which the bourgeoisie had got control of, and in the first two classes of which it had created for itself an impregnable stronghold.

The history of the Prussian three class electoral system is interesting because it shows so plainly how the most craftily planned political schemes of reactionists can be overthrown by economic development and temporarily turned so as to have an opposite effect from that intended. Designed with cunning shrewdness to bar out all democratic or opposition elements, it answered this purpose perfectly for a decade, until one fine day the bourgeoisie, having grown economically strong and being provoked by the disgusting orgies of landlord and police stewardship began to feel its political strength; it came upon the idea that it only needed to will the thing in order to obtain a majority in the first two electoral classes, and thereby win a victory in the election of the deputies. The idea was made a reality, and Prince Bismarck damned the machinery which so outrageously refused to work as it was expected to; the three class electoral system then became the "most wretched of all electoral systems;" but on the other hand, universal, equal and direct suffrage, this God-bewith-us of the "frantic year" 1848, and which

in Napoleonic France had shown such splendid results, now beamed as a brilliant salvation of the state and of society through Caesarism.

So we got the universal franchise; and for another reason as well. The dynastic-feudal revolution from above which topped off Bismarck's "national" policy, would have hung in mid-air unless there had been given to it at least the appearance of a revolution from below. He needed the people even though only for a dummy; and there was no better bait than the universal franchise of 1848. It united the Bismarckian revolution from above with the '48er revolution from below and put the unthinking masses in the delusion that Prussia, enlarged at the expense of Germany and turned into a landlord, police and soldier state, was the realization of German democracy. To-day we know how deep this delusion had taken root; it required decades of brutal misgovernment to root it out again.

But in one thing Bismarck miscalculated, viz.: in the strength of the revolutionary idea. What was possible in France after the battle of June, which drove the whole bourgeoisie into the wildest reactionism, was not possible in Germany where the power of the state was not so closely centralized and where, fed by the development of capitalism, a healthy workingmen's movement grew up which was determined to exploit the national and dynastic crises and struggles in the interest of the proletariat; to make socialism the decisive power in Germany and to help it on to victory and supremacy. The German proletariat had the advantage of being able to draw practical lessons from the labor movement in other countries which were (and are) ahead of Germany in political and economic development. It also had the extraordinary good fortune to be led into the field of political action by its great teachers, Marx, Engels and Lassalle, right at

the beginning of its career. It was thereby spared from the errors of pure and simple unionism on the one hand, and of aimless, planless, through and through bourgeois-anarchistic plotting and bawling for revolutions on the other hand. Though the German working-class in 1867, when the universal franchise went into effect, was only to a very small extent filled with class consciousness, it was nevertheless the only class, and the socialist party was the only party, which clearly saw the meaning of voting and the value of the franchise. There was even a slight overestimation of it, but this was useful because it increased the enthusiasm.

If Prince Bismarck entertained the hope that the universal franchise could be exploited in Napoleonic style and that the Reichstag would remain what I called it in 1867, the figleaf to partly cover the naked figure of absolutism, the political basis of this hope was overthrown by the expansion of the North German Confederation into the German Empire. The highest triumph of Bismarckian politics carried its downfall and bankruptcy within it. What the stiff Prussian military and police spirit could perhaps have prevented for an indefinite time within the limits of the North German Confederation, viz.: the rise and growth of an independent popular movement, this could not be prevented on the larger field of the German Empire. The power of the people could not be suppressed, and the jealousy of the "Federal Princes" at Prussian supremacy helped along, so that the trees of Bismarck's feudal Cæsarism could not shoot up as high as the trees of Napoleon's prefect-Cæsarism. It was not possible by any allurements to take from the workingmen the recognition of the inseparability of socialism from democracy and of democracy from socialism.

"The question" (thus I began my speech in 1869), "what attitude should the Social

Democracy take in the political struggle, is answered with ease and certainty if we have attained a clear conception of the inseparability of socialism and democracy. Socialism and democracy are not the same, but they are only different expressions of the same fundamental idea. They belong to each other, round out each other, and can never stand in contradiction to each other. Socialism without democracy is pseudo-socialism, just as democracy without socialism is pseudo-democracy. The democratic state is the only possible form of a socialistically organized society."

This truth, the inseparableness of democracy and socialism, served for the German working class as a sure guide amidst the greatest confusion of political issues, so that the dangerous shoals of state socialism were avoided towards which the Prussian reaction was headed even in the '40s; for the ideal of the garrison and police state was of course a garrison and police socialism, which is euphemistically called state socialism. The sophisms of Wagener and von Schweitzer that democracy has something bourgeois about it, and that socialism, being directed against bourgeois society, must consequently be anti-democratic, did, it is true, confuse many a man in von Schweitzer's time; but it never found acceptance among the mass of laborers. This pseudo-logic bobbed up again recently in the well known militia debate, but has no longer any significance.

WHAT IS A COMPROMISE?

Before we go farther we must get a clear idea of the meaning of the word "compromise," otherwise every debate on it will be completely without aim and without result, because every one will have in mind something different and consequently no one will meet the arguments of another. If compromise is understood as a concession of theory to practice, then our entire life

and activity is a compromise and all human history and the history of the race from the life of the individual up to that of nations and of mankind is an endless, unbroken chain of compromises. That conception of history according to which *tabula rasa*, i. e., a clean sweep, is temporarily made and must be made in order to start a new administration and system free from the old, is in the highest degree unscientific and stands in the most direct contradiction to experience. The clean sweep theory is a spook which exists to-day only in the heads of police politicians who accuse us of wanting to "ruinate" everything that does not fit into our scheme. These gentlemen thereby give judgment against themselves, for they think they are the ones who possess this magical power of being able to "ruinate" anything and everything which Time's eternal loom has woven and is weaving, if perchance it has been done without first getting a permit from the chief of police. The framers of the anti-socialist law and penitentiary law display by their foolish activity only their bottomless ignorance. The organic laws according to which political and social development goes on, cannot be arbitrarily changed or nullified, just as little as this can be done with the laws under which an animal or a plant grows and develops. Whoever interferes there with violence can only disturb and destroy; this has always been the effect wrought by the police politicians. What these fuddlers, who call themselves "statesmen," say against us social democrats, viz.: that we cannot create anything, but only destroy is simply the reflection of their own actings and doings; there is not among the innumerable sins and vices, of which they accuse us, a single one which they have not taken from themselves.

To add one new example to the old ones, I will simply refer to the charge, which has been stereotyped for twenty years, viz.: that the

Social Democracy has for its object a proletarian dictatorship. The truth is that since the battle of June at Paris, that is for fifty-one years, we have actually had on the continent of Europe the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. A dictatorship which has been exercised with fire and sword against the working class; which, after the battle of June, brought us the horrible butcheries of the Commune, and hundreds of smaller butcheries of laborers; a dictatorship which extends to the disfranchisement of the working class and deprives the proletariat of the enjoyment not only of political rights, but also of simple legal rights; a dictatorship which has expressed itself in dozens of exceptional laws and force laws and which we Germans have to thank for the Anti-Socialist law, the penitentiary bill and class law decrees such as the Loebtau judgment and the perjury trial at Essen. And if "King Stumm," who is now king in the realm of "social reform," should accomplish his purpose of annihilating every organization of workingmen, what in comparison with such a dictatorship would be the dictatorship of a Marius or a Sulla or of the French convention of 1792-1794? The political power which the social democracy aims at and which it will win, no matter what its enemies may do, *has not for its object the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat, but the suppression of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.* Just as the class struggle which the proletariat carries on is only a counter struggle in self defense to resist the class struggle of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat; and the end of this struggle by the victory of the proletariat will be the abolition of the class struggle in every form.

We Social Democrats know that the laws according to which political and social evolution goes on can no more be changed or stopped by us than by the authorities of capitalistic society.

We know that we can no more introduce at will socialistic production and a socialist form of society than the German Kaiser nine years ago could carry out his February proclamations against the representatives of the capitalistic class struggle. Therefore we were able to watch with smiling indifference the attempt of our opponents to crush the labor movement by force. We were and still are sure of our success, as sure as of the solution of a mathematical problem. But we know also that the shifting of relations, though it goes on unceasingly, yet goes on gradually because it is an organic movement; and it goes on, too, without destruction of the existing relations (the removal of the dead is not destruction). The destruction of the existing, of the living, is in general impossible. We saw that plainly in the French revolution, which was probably the best planned and most energetically carried out of all political upheavals; but nevertheless after the "golden period" of ideological groping around and of phantastic and utopian illusions was past, it was compelled to take things as they were and fit the new on to the old. In the first rush it may be possible occasionally to crowd out the living; but history teaches us that the most revolutionary and despotic governments were finally compelled by the logic of facts to yield and to recognize perhaps in another form, that which was unnaturally and mechanically abolished. In short, viewed historically, the present is, as a rule, a compromise between the past and the future.

Therefore to reject a compromise in this sense would be unscientific folly. And practical folly it would be for a political party to fail to draw advantages out of the opportunities of political life and utilize for itself the quarrels of the different opposing parties. Prudence demands this; principles do not come into the question; no obligations are assumed and not to do what

prudence demands would be stupidity. That we Social Democrats in the Reichstag sometimes on a socio-political question vote with the Conservatives for the government, and on political and commercial questions sometimes vote with the Radicals against the government, that is a common requirement of political warfare. Though it is undoubtedly a compromise between theory and practice, it has nothing at all in common with the compromises against which the party has repeatedly declared itself distinctly and expressly. What the party had in mind and what it by formal resolutions made the duty of the members, was the avoidance of alliances, agreements, arrangements, contracts or whatever they might be called, which would involve a surrender of principles or in general a change in the relation of our party towards the bourgeois parties in a manner injurious to us. This last point must be especially emphasized, because the question hinges principally on this. In the debate on taking part in the Prussian legislative elections the question at issue was exclusively this last point; for none of those who advocated participation had the slightest idea of sacrificing party principles in an alliance with the Progressive party, though it must not be overlooked that questions of tactics very easily shift into questions of principle.

If the circumstances and necessities of the situation demand coöperation with other parties, this can always be accomplished without a compromise. I take for example Belgium. The Liberal party had there a common interest with the Socialist party in fighting the Clericals. The two parties united and worked together up to a certain point. That would have been done even without any fusion. But it was done by fusion, and what was the result? Quarrel and strife. Fusions have shown themselves to be entirely superfluous. When that point is passed up to

which community of interests existed and up to which the community of interests, without any fusion, would have induced united action, then united action ceases. If class consciousness is not strong enough among laborers, it certainly is among the gentlemen of the bourgeoisie, in whom the class instinct is much more active than in laborers. And this is true even in countries with democratic laws and institutions. I refer to the separation between bourgeois democrats and socialists in Switzerland, Bernstein's Eldorado, where, according to Bernstein's doctrine, class antagonism should properly have entirely disappeared; but we know it exists there just as strong as in less democratic countries. But it is not denied that the acuteness of class struggles is lessened by democratic institutions.

In Belgium with its free institutions on one hand and its priest-ridden government on the other hand, election alliances between the Social Democracy and the bourgeois parties have heretofore found a fertile soil. At any rate, in all alliances which it formed there our party had the advantage of being in the lead. It could not be exploited nor deceived. And yet the Belgium comrades have found a drawback in compromises. Comrade Vandervelde, writing in the *Wiener Arbeiterzeitung*, welcomes the introduction of the proportional system in Belgium as the end of election alliances. "In future," he writes, "secondary factors will no longer enter into the class struggle; the confusing side issues will disappear which render it so difficult for the masses to grasp the truth of the class struggle." Friend Vandervelde has therefore found out that compromises, even there where they take place under conditions and circumstances the most favorable for the laborers, have an injurious effect because "*they render it difficult for the masses to grasp the truth of the class struggle*;" in other words, alliances by removing

the laborers from the ground of the class struggle take away from them the possibility of developing their full power and making it count. This they are only able to do on the platform of the class struggle.

The harm of a compromise does not consist in the danger of a formal selling out or side-tracking of party principles. That has probably never been intended by any one in our party. Even when our comrades in Essen in the election before the last voted for the "cannon king" out of spite, they had no idea of surrendering even one iota of our program. The danger and root of the evil does not lie here. It lies in giving up, keeping in the background or forgetting the *class struggle basis, for this is the source of the whole modern labor movement*. It is necessary here to distinguish sharply, and not be misled by catchwords; in short, we must have an emancipation from phrases, as I said decades ago, with reference to the phraseology of anarchism, which poses as revolutionary, but in fact is only small bore reactionism, merely a late-arrival caricature of the bourgeois ideal of freedom and a theatrical masquerade of commercial free competition.

SOCIALISM AND ETHICS.

Pity for poverty, enthusiasm for equality and freedom, recognition of social injustice and a desire to remove it, is not socialism. Condemnation of wealth and respect for poverty, such as we find in Christianity and other religions, is not socialism. The communism of early times, as it was before the existence of private property, and as it has at all times and among all peoples been the elusive dream of some enthusiasts, is not socialism. The forcible equalization advocated by the followers of Baboeuf, the so-called equalitarians, is not socialism.

In all these appearances there is lacking the

real foundation of capitalist society with its class antagonisms. Modern socialism is the *child of capitalist society and its class antagonisms*. Without these it could not be. Socialism and ethics are two separate things. This fact must be kept in mind.

Whoever conceives of socialism in the sense of a sentimental philanthropic striving after human equality, with no idea of the existence of capitalist society, is no socialist in the sense of the class struggle, without which modern socialism is unthinkable. To be sure Bernstein is nominally for the class struggle—in the same manner as the Hessian peasant is for “the Republic and the Grand Duke.” Whoever has come to a full consciousness of the nature of capitalist society and the foundation of modern socialism, knows also that a socialist movement, that leaves the basis of the class struggle may be anything else, but it is not socialism.

This foundation of the class struggle, which Marx—and this is his immortal service—has given to the modern labor movement, *is the main point of attack in the battle which the bourgeois political economy is waging with socialism*. The political economists deny the class struggle and would make of the labor movement only a part of the bourgeois party movements, and the Social Democracy only a division of the bourgeois democracy. The bourgeois political economy and politics direct all their exertions against the class character of the modern labor movement. If it were possible to create a breach in this bulwark, in this citadel of the Social Democracy, then the Social Democracy is conquered, and the proletariat thrown back under the dominion of capitalistic society. However small such a breach may be in the beginning, the enemy has the power to widen it and the certainty of final victory. And the enemy is most dangerous when he comes as a friend to the fortress, when he slinks

in under the cover of friendship, and is recognized as a friend and comrade.

The enemy who comes to us with open visor we face with a smile; to set our foot upon his neck is mere play for us. The stupidly brutal acts of violence of police politicians, the outrages of anti-socialist laws, the anti-revolution laws, penitentiary bills—these only arouse feelings of pitying contempt; the enemy, however, that reaches out the hand to us for a political alliance, and intrudes himself upon us as a friend and brother,—*him and him alone have we to fear.*

Our fortress can withstand every assault—it can not be stormed nor taken from us by siege—it can only fall *when we ourselves open the doors to the enemy and take him into our ranks as a fellow comrade.* Growing out of the class struggle, our party rests upon the class struggle as a condition of its existence. Through and with that struggle the party is unconquerable; without it the party is lost, for it will have lost the source of its strength. Whoever fails to understand this or thinks that the class struggle is a dead issue, or that class antagonisms are gradually being effaced, stands upon the basis of bourgeois philosophy.

The present discussion over tactics in relation to participation in the elections to the Prussian legislature, has been compared to the discussion which took place among the Social Democratic members of the Reichstag in the middle of the '80s concerning the steamship subsidy. If one examines the matter only superficially the comparison appears strikingly close, but ceases to be so as soon as the kernel of the question is reached. At that time we were concerned with the application of universally recognized principles to a concrete case. That the Social Democratic faction in the Reichstag was interested in the furtherance of German shipping and com-

mercial interests was as universally admitted as that they were opposed to the colonial policy and all other imperialistic reactionary tendencies. The only question was whether the subsidy was primarily in the interest of the German commercial interests, which were national in their character, or whether it was a part of colonial politics that served only the private interests of reactionary individuals at the expense of the public. No one suggested at that time to change the old tactics or alter the course of the party. The present discussion, however, is concerned with the question of a complete change of the old tactics and aims; a change of tactics that would mean a change in the character of the party. It turns upon the question of the retention or abandonment of the class struggle standpoint which distinguishes us from all bourgeois parties; in short, it involves a decisive step, upon which depends whether we shall remain a socialist party, or whether we shall bridge over the Rubicon of the class struggle and become the left wing of the bourgeois democracy.

**THEORETICAL DIFFERENCES OF OPINION, NOT MATERIAL: TACTICS
IS MATERIAL.**

Diversity of opinions on theoretical points is never dangerous to the party. There are for us no bounds to criticism, and however great our respect may be for the founders and pioneers of our party, we recognize no infallibility and no other authority than science, whose sphere is ever widening and continually proves what it previously held as truths to be errors; destroys the old decayed foundations and creates new ones; does not stand still for an instant; but in perpetual advance moves remorselessly over every dogmatic belief. At the Union Convention held at Gotha twenty-four years ago I said,

"We recognize no infallible Pope, not even a literary one." And when in 1891, in Erfurt, I explained and advocated the newly drafted platform, which was unanimously adopted, I declared that just because our program was a scientific one it must be constantly changed at minor points to meet the continuous advance of science. And I maintain that no man—Marx, in spite of his comprehensive and deep intellect, as little as any other—can bring science to final perfection; and this position is for everyone who understands the nature of science a foregone conclusion. No socialist, therefore, has the right to condemn attacks on the theoretical ideas of the Marxian teachings or to excommunicate any one from the party because of such attacks. But it is wholly different when such attacks imply a complete overturning of our whole conception of society, as, for example, is the case with Bernstein. Then vigorous defense is in order.

Far more dangerous than theoretical assaults are practical disavowals of our principles. Theoretical discussions interest only a comparatively small portion of our membership; whereas practical disavowal of principles and tactical offenses against the party program touch every party comrade and arouse the attention of every party comrade; and when they are not quickly checked and corrected they bring confusion into the whole party. I do not believe I shall be disputed by any one who is familiar with the circumstances and with the party, when I say that the masses within the party care little for Bernstein's writings. They only find sympathy among those who have formerly held similar views, and they arouse a sensation only among our opponents who wish to see fulfilled their old hopes of a split in the party, or to see the whole Social Democracy go over with drums beating, into the bourgeois camp. I will wager that not ten thousand of our comrades have

ever read Bernstein's book, and I am far from considering it as a reproach to the party that they show no inclination to busy themselves once more with the underbrush that the founders of socialism, more than a generation ago, yes, in some cases more than two generations ago, hewed down in clearing the way for socialism. One might just as well accuse our comrades of being unscientific because they no longer read the antedeluvian writings of Schultze-Delitzsch that may be lying around somewhere in country villages as dust-covered and shopworn goods.

Look at the list of those who have commented on Bernstein's book. There is not a single laborer among them. It is only those comrades whose professional duty it is to read and discuss such writings. With what interest, on the contrary, the whole party followed the question of participation in the Prussian legislative elections, or the election alliance in Bavaria—how lively was the discussion! This lively interest showed the maturity of the party. We are past the stage of theoretical debates about platforms. The establishment, elaboration and clarifying of our program we leave to science, which in our present society is the business of only a few. But the practical application of our program, and the tactics of the party are the business of all; here all work together.

The supreme importance of tactics and the necessity of maintaining its class struggle character, is something the party has been well conscious of from the beginning. If we read the proceedings of the early conventions held in the '70s we find that in all questions of tactics the thought was continually kept in the foreground that the party must be kept clean from all mixture with all other parties, every one of which, no matter how much they differed from each other or how furiously they fought among themselves, stood upon the ground of bourgeois so-

ciety as a common basis. This separation of the Social Democracy from all other parties, this essential difference, which silly opponents take as a reason or pretext for declaring us political outlaws, is our pride and our strength.

In the Hamburg convention, where under the influence of a series of confusing circumstances, the mass of the delegates appeared decided to break with the old tactics and traditions, the party still recovered itself at the last moment before the leap into the dark and declared itself by an overwhelming majority as opposed to every compromise. And this resolution has remained in force to the present day. If two or three election districts have been induced to enter into an alliance with a bourgeois party, this was done upon their own responsibility and in undoubted violation of the Hamburg resolution, which, let me repeat, was not repealed by the Stuttgart resolution. On the other hand, the Berlin comrades, who have been complained of by the friends of compromise as violators of the Hamburg resolution, have conscientiously followed the spirit and letter of it, and by their decisive stand maintained the authority of the supreme party council and performed a service to the party.

The advocates of compromise tactics overestimate the value of parliamentary activity and parliamentary representation. Not that I do not recognize the enormous value of parliamentary activity, but this is not an end, but only a means to an end. Our power is not measured by the number of representatives, but by the total number of votes that are behind us.

It is a bourgeois feeling to overvalue the possession of representatives. In representation as in money there is power—power over others. Whoever places the purity and the greatness of our party above all else, for him representatives have value only in so far as they serve to give ex-

pression to the power and extent of Social Democracy. What do ten, what do a hundred representatives signify, when our escutcheon has lost its gloss through their acquisition? The value of a representative is small. But the value of the integrity of our party is immeasurable. *In it rests our strength.* As with the shorn hair, that signified his manhood's honor, the strength of Samson disappeared, so the strength of our party would cease if we allowed the bourgeois Delilahs to flatter away our most precious jewel and the roots of our triumphal strength—the party purity, the party honor.

WE ARE A PECULIAR PEOPLE.

We may not do as other parties, because we are not like the others. We are—and this cannot be too often repeated—separated from all other parties by an insurmountable barrier, a barrier that any individual can easily surmount; but once on the other side of it, and *he is no Social Democrat.*

We are different from the others; “we are other than the others.” What for the others are necessities and conditions of life are death to us. What is it that has made of us in Germany the pivotal party, which according to the significant testimony of Caprivi and the teaching of daily experience makes us the axle around which governmental politics turns? Most assuredly not our representatives in the Reichstag. We might have three times as many representatives, and the allied bourgeois parties would have nothing to fear from us. No, it is the avalanche-like increase of our supporters that gradually, with the certainty of a natural law, or more correctly of a natural force, grows from tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands, and from hundreds of thousands to millions, and is daily increasing, bidding defiance to our opponents and driving

them into impotent rage. And this avalanche-like increase has come, and is coming, as a consequence of our opposition to and struggle with all other parties.

All who are weary and heavy laden; all who suffer under injustice; all who suffer from the outrages of the existing bourgeois society; all who have in them the feeling of the worth of humanity, look to us, turn hopefully to us, as the only party that can bring rescue and deliverance. And if we, the opponents of this unjust world of violence, suddenly reach out the hand of brotherhood to it, conclude alliances with its representatives, invite our comrades to go hand in hand with the enemy whose misdeeds have driven the masses into our camp, what confusion must result in their minds! How can the masses longer believe on us? If the men of the clerical party, of the progressive party, and the other boodle parties are our comrades, wherefore then the struggle against capitalist society, whose representatives and champions all of these are? What reason have we, then, for existence? It must be that for the hundreds and thousands, for the millions that have sought salvation under our banner, it was all a colossal mistake for them to come to us. If we are not different from the others, then we are not the right ones—the Savior is yet to come; and the Social Democracy was a false Messiah, no better than the other false ones!

Just in this fact lies our strength, that we are not like the others, and that we are not only not like the others, and that we are not simply different from the others, but that we are their deadly enemy, who have sworn to storm and demolish the Bastille of Capitalism, whose defenders all those others are. Therefore we are only strong when we are alone.

This is not to say that we are to individualize or to isolate ourselves. We have never lacked

for company, and we never shall so long as the fight lasts. On the essentially true but literally false phrase about a "single reactionary mass," the Social Democracy has never believed since it passed from the realm of theory to that of practice. We know that the individual members and divisions of the "single reactionary mass" are in conflict with each other, and we have always used these conflicts for our purposes. We have used opponents against opponents, but have never allowed them to use us. We have in the person of Bismarck, the agrarian, fought personified capitalism and militarism and utilized all his capitalistic opponents to weaken him; thus we have used particularism; and thus the bourgeois democracy. That was, however, no compromise, not even a momentary truce. Just as little as it is a compromise or momentary truce when we in the Reichstag vote against the Agrarians in favor of some measure of the Progressive party.

This exclusiveness of the German Social Democracy as opposed to other parties is especially required of us, because of the historical development and political conditions of Germany. We have no revolutionary bourgeois with whom we might temporarily unite as in France and Belgium.

We have no Democratic institutions that make it possible for a Social Democrat to take part in the government side by side with members of other parties. In Switzerland the government is little more than an administration, and one chosen by the people at that. A Social Democrat, as a member of the government of a canton signifies little more than a Social Democrat in a common council. Accordingly our comrades in Switzerland could vote unreservedly for the government monopoly of grain and brandy without feeling that the money secured thereby would be squandered for purposes hostile to the people and injurious to the community.

Even in France things are somewhat different from here, although the government is emphatically a class government (occasionally so in a degree scarcely equaled by any other government); yet the relations are so little consolidated, and the influence of the democracy and of the social democracy is so great that any permanent misuse of the governmental powers for reactionary and oppressive purposes is not to be feared. Accordingly it was possible a few years ago for the socialist Jaures to introduce a bill in the legislative chamber regarding the grain traffic, which was externally but little different from the bill introduced in the German Reichstag by Count Kanitz of the Agrarian party. Yet the inner difference was all the greater. In France there is no agrarian class; the bourgeoisie rules directly, yet under conditions that would prevent it from making the means of government—police, army and class judiciary—the end and purpose of the state, as in Germany is not only possible, but is the actual case. We here come again and again upon the tragical fate that robbed Germany of the liberal stage of political development. We have, to be sure, a capitalist class state, and that in the worst sense of the word, but the bourgeois capitalism only rules indirectly; it has to be satisfied to let the purely Catholic clerical party, the Center, hold the balance of power in the German house of representatives, and to let the Prussian agrarian class, a backward anachronistic class, that has no essential function to fulfill either in political or economic life, and has a purely parasitical existence, control the administration. The result of this is that the social democracy of Germany must fulfill the role of champions of political freedom. The task of uniting the struggle for economic independence with that for political liberty has fallen upon the German laboring class; in other words, besides performing its own class mission, it must do

what in normally developed lands was long ago done by the bourgeoisie.

THE INCLINED PLANE OF COMPROMISE.

All parties without exception recognize us as a political power, and exactly in proportion to our power. Even the craziest reactionary that denies us the right of existence courts our favor and by his acts gives the lie to his words. From the fact that our assistance is sought by other parties, some of our comrades draw the strange conclusion that we should reverse the party tactics, and in place of the old policy of the class struggle against all other parties, substitute the commercial politics of log rolling, wire pulling and compromise. Such persons forget that the power which makes our alliance sought for, even by our bitterest enemies, would have had absolutely no existence were it not for the old class struggle tactics. If Marx, Engels and Lassalle had accepted from Bernstein and his modest or not modest fellow thinkers the tactics of compromise and dependence upon bourgeois parties, then there never would have been any Social Democracy; we would have been simply the tail of the Progressive party. That we accept as a part of our tactics the utilization of the quarrels among the bourgeois parties is self-explaining. And this course has been followed ever since we have had a German Social Democracy. To recognize this, we do not need the counsel of the newly baked party statesmen. That we have here and there worked with the Center or the Progressive party against a reactionary governmental party is understood by the comrades without the necessity of a special party manifesto. And in different election districts we have obtained greater advantages by co-operation with the Center party without fusion than through the recent alliance in Bavaria. One rule does not fit every case.

We Social Democrats dare not be like the

other parties, all of whom are equally guilty of the injustices of the present system and equally responsible for them. Every one who suffers under these injustices looks to us for deliverance. Every one of us has had these victims of society after failing to get justice from the courts, from the government, from the Emperor himself, and from all the other parties, come to us as the last and only ones that can help them. They do not know our scientific program; they do not know what capital and capitalism mean; but they have the belief, the feeling, that we are a party that can help when all other parties fail. This belief is for us an inexhaustible source of power. It was a similar faith of despair that spread more and more in the decaying Roman empire and slowly undermined the heathen world until it finally collapsed. We give up this inexhaustible source of power if we ally ourselves with other parties and drive suffering humanity from us by saying to it: "We are not essentially different from the others." Once the boundary line of the class struggle is wiped away and we have started upon the inclined plane of compromise, there is no stopping. Then we can only go down and down until there is nothing deeper. We have had many instructive experiences of this in the Reichstag. Practical politics compelled us to make concessions to the society in which we lived. But every step on the way of concessions to present society was hard for us, and was only done with reluctance. There are some who ridicule us for this. But he who fears to take a step on the inclined plane is at all events a more trustworthy comrade than he who pours out scorn upon the cautious one.

The catch word "revolution" is certainly ridiculous. Ridiculous it certainly is—and no one has expressed this more clearly than I myself—to drop the words "revolution" and "revolutionary"

out of the mouth at every opportunity. It can become as mechanical a song as saying one's heads. But ridiculous as it is to boast of belonging to the party and to express one's views at every opportunity when there is no necessity for it, still such exaggerations do not justify us in throwing away the good with the bad, and declaring that to emphasize the revolutionary character of our party is, under all circumstances, ridiculous. To emphasize it is a very serious and a very necessary thing. It is serious, because membership in the social democracy means a struggle, a political struggle with grievous persecutions, and a private struggle for existence, a struggle that for the majority is far more difficult and heavy than the political struggle. And it is *necessary*, because the courage for this twofold struggle is created only by the consciousness that the injustice of society by which the great majority of mankind are to-day oppressed, corrupted and crippled, can only be abolished through a revolutionary movement, that is, a movement that shall completely exterminate capitalism with every fiber of its roots.

I know that it has here and there become the fashion to laugh at the warning about sliding down inclined planes. They refer us to the fable of the sheep and the wolf. The comparison limps, however, and finally turns against the laughter. The wolf was actually there and at last broke into the fold. And in our case it is also no imaginary danger from which we are warned. And at all events the interests of the party are at least as carefully guarded by the warners as by the scorers. Heretofore distrust was counted as a democratic virtue, and overconfidence as a democratic vice. Here and there are found persons who would reverse this maxim.

BLUECHER'S MOTTO.

The proletariat stands politically as well as

socially in the most abrupt contradiction to the present class state. It must fight it on all fields and upon every question, both of domestic and of foreign policy. To be sure it is not always easy to decide rightly. Where the interests are not clearly visible the feelings may be easily deceived. Fortunately we have at the points where it is hardest to decide an infallible compass in the actions of our enemies. If there are questions on which we can temporarily unite with them it is still inconceivable that anything that is fought for by our enemies as a question of great importance, or especially as of vital importance to them, can be desirable for the proletariat. We shall never go wrong if we do what is opposed to the interests of our enemy. On the other hand, we shall almost never go right if we do what our enemies applaud. Historical development is a continuous conflict, a conflict of interests, a conflict of races, a conflict of classes. And if friendship does not count even in ordinary business, how much less so in such a conflict. Good-naturedness and sentimentality have no place in politics. They have never won a victory, but have brought unnumbered defeats. Bluecher's motto, "Always follow the cannon's roar and throw yourself upon the enemy," is the best rule also in political warfare.

Just a word in this connection. The class instinct of the bourgeoisie is far better developed than that of the proletariat. The governing class naturally knows its interests better than the governed, who have so much less opportunity to become informed and are also sometimes intentionally, and sometimes not, systematically deceived and misled from a recognition of their interests. Do not say that it is the rough form in which socialism is often set forth that frightens and embitters the bourgeoisie. That is absolutely false. It is not the form; it is the content which they detest; and the more harmless the form so

much the more dangerous do the contents appear to the gentlemen of the bourgeoisie. The fineness of the form makes no difference to them. That is clear from the manner in which they fight out their quarrels among themselves.

What a lot of abuse and fiction has been brought out about "Toelke's club!" "Toelke's club" really never touched any one ungently. But club tactics has existed in Germany for decades, and has even yet not wholly disappeared. But it is not laborers and also not socialists with whom the club counts, as the *ultima ratio*, the conclusive argument. It is the tactics of the noblest of the nation, the national liberals, who in the middle and southwestern portions of Germany organized battalions of brawling club heroes, and thereby sought to retain their political domains through a brutal terrorism. But the advancing social democracy has well nigh stamped them out.

COMPROMISES LIKE TREATIES ARE NOT KEPT.

At any rate we may be sure that the political instinct of our bourgeois opponents, as soon as their class interests come into play, will lead them to take a position hostile to us. A classical example is furnished by Belgium, where, as already remarked, a compromise was concluded under the most favorable circumstances conceivable, between the socialists and the liberals. Our party was in undisputed possession of the leadership and was therefore in no danger of being cheated out of the fruits of the common victory. The end sought was universal, equal and direct suffrage. But the clerical party knows its boys, knows its Pappenheimers. It knows that the bourgeoisie has no class interest in giving the laborers, who, in modern industrial states, constitute a majority of the population, the universal suffrage and thereby the prospect of win-

ning a majority and getting political supremacy. It made a counter demand for proportional representation with plural voting, that is, giving more votes to the rich, and thereby granting to the radical bourgeoisie a share in the government, if it would assist in defeating universal and direct suffrage. And behold, without a minute's hesitation the gentlemen of the radical bourgeoisie broke their agreement with the socialists and joined the clericals in their fight against universal suffrage and the social democracy. Whoever is not convinced by this example that the emancipation struggle of the proletariat is a class struggle is one on whom further arguments would be wasted.

There is no political party upon whose firm support the social democracy can reckon. And every assistance that we can possibly expect from bourgeois parties in the complications of political life must, if we act skillfully, come to us anyhow without compromise. It is the same with compromises and fusions between parties as with treaties between nations. They are observed so long, and only so long, as they are in the interest of the parties concerned. When common interests exist, however, no compromise, fusion or contract is necessary. Suppose, to cite an actual instance, suppose the securing of six more representatives in the legislature was of great importance to our party in Bavaria; with the strength and influence which our party had it could have found a way to get them without any "cattle trade." The strengthening of the Center party, aside from the question of principles, was a great tactical error. This error was all the greater in that it checked the process of dissolution which the Center party is now undergoing. This party holds together so long as the laborers who come within the sphere of its influence have not yet attained to class consciousness, have not yet learned to set their class interests above their

sectarian interests; this is a process which the economic development necessarily carries along with itself, and which we aim to hasten by our propaganda. In Offenbach and other election districts this has been so far attained that in the last election the majority of the Catholics voted for our candidates on the first ballot instead of for the candidates of their own party. The class struggle tactics is not only more correct in principle; it is also more practical and successful than compromise tactics.

The standpoint of utility, which was emphasized by the advocates of the Bavarian compromise, is certainly a very useful point, but there are other factors than utility which must be taken into consideration. The purity of our principles, the idealism of our struggle, these are factors of strengthening and drawing power that have given to us courage for all our battles, and have given to our doctrines an irresistible attraction for all who feel themselves oppressed and have a sense of honor. Certainly the alliance with the Center party was very useful; it has given us half a dozen legislative votes; but what is it Gretchen says!

“How scornfully I once reviled
When some poor maiden was beguiled!
More speech than any tongue suffices
I craved to censure others' vices.
Black as it seemed I blackened still,
And blacker yet was in my will;
And blessed myself and boasted high—
And now—a living sin am I!”

Yes, how bravely we could once scold at the political log rollers, especially at the black ones! We painted them blacker than black. And today! We dare not do all that our opponents do. We dare not sacrifice everything for advantages. For what is an advantage to our opponents is deadly poison to us. The nobility say of them—

selves, *noblesse oblige*; so we may say, *socialisme oblige*, socialism imposes its obligations.

If tactics prescribes or allows us to obligate ourselves to our opponents in order to attain a temporary success by a temporary alliance, then Schuhmacher in Solingen acted as a good tactician in the opportunist sense by fusing with the Progressive party last year at the Reichstag elections to rescue the party from us. He did not become a bourgeois, not at all; he only used the bourgeoisie to overthrow us, the false socialists, and to help true socialism on to victory, just as Millerand is going to crush out militarism by a compact with Gallifet and Waldeck-Rousseau. Schuhmacher can give exactly the same reasons for his action as Millerand can for his. Treason to the party is what we call it.

With the growth of Social Democracy and with its entrance into fields hitherto dominated by other parties, and with the extension of our practical activity, we come more and more frequently into momentary unions, or momentary relations with other parties. But these momentary relations must never become momentary alliances. We must never bind the party. We must always keep our hand free; exploit the conditions; let our opponents do the dirty work for us; and with the goal of the party firmly in mind, keep in the middle of the road, and go our own way, only going along with opposing parties when our way happens to be the same as theirs. That we are a party of the class struggle, who have nothing in common with any other party, and who have to fight and conquer all other parties, in order to attain our goal, is something which we must never for a moment lose sight of.

MILLERAND.

Concerning the case of Millerand, and the question of party union, I wrote at the invitation of the French comrades, on the occasion of the

last annual convention of the Labor Party (the Marxists) at Epernay, the following letter:

"Dear Friends: You know that I have made it a rule not to interfere with the affairs of the socialists in other countries. But as you wish to know my opinion on the burning question that is occupying the attention of the whole laboring and socialist portion of France, and as many of your countrymen, who have wholly different views upon this question from yours, have also turned to me, I have no longer any reason to withhold my opinion. The situation with which you are now occupied in France is at bottom not a foreign affair as to Germans.

"The internationality of socialism is a fact that is daily becoming more evident and more significant. We socialists are one nation to ourselves, —one and the same international nation in all the lands of the earth. And the capitalists with their agents, instruments and dupes are likewise an international nation, so that we can truthfully say, there are to-day only two great nations in all lands that battle with each other in the great class struggle, which is the new revolution—a class struggle on one side of which stands the proletariat, representing socialism, and on the other the bourgeoisie, representing capitalism.

"While the bourgeois world of capitalism continues and the bourgeoisie rules, so long are all states necessarily class states, and all governments class governments, serving the purposes and interests of the ruling class, and destined to lead the class struggle for the bourgeoisie against the proletariat—for capitalism against socialism, for our enemies and against us. From the standpoint of the class struggle which is the foundation of militant socialism, that is a truth which has been raised by the logic of thought and of facts beyond the possibility of a doubt. A socialist who goes into a bourgeois government, either goes over to the enemy or else puts himself in the

power of the enemy. In any case the socialist who becomes a member of a bourgeois government separates himself from us, the militant socialists. He may claim to be a socialist but he is no longer such. He may be convinced of his own sincerity, but in that case he has not comprehended the nature of the class struggle—does not understand that the class struggle is the basis of socialism.

“In these days, under the rule of capitalism, a government, even if it is full of philanthropy and animated by the best of intentions, can do nothing of real value to our cause. One must keep free from illusions. Decades ago, I said: ‘If the way to hell is paved with good intentions, the way to defeat is paved with illusions.’ In the present society, a non-capitalist government is an impossibility. The unfortunate socialist who casts in his lot with such a government if he will not betray his class only condemns himself to impotency. The English bourgeoisie offers the best example of weakening the opposition by permitting them to participate in the government. It has become the traditional policy of all parties in England that the most radical member of the opposition who is naive enough to be taken in should be given a place in the government. This man serves as a shield to the government and disarms his friends who cannot shoot at him—just as in battle one may not shoot at the hostages that the enemy has placed in front of itself.

“That is my answer concerning the question of the entrance of a socialist into a bourgeois government.

“Now, as to the second question: The question of unity and agreement. The answer is dictated to me by the interests and principles of the party. I am for the unity of the party—for the national and international unity of the party. But it must be a unity of *socialism and socialists*. The unity with *opponents*—with people who have other

aims and other interests, is no *socialist unity*. We must strive for unity at any price and with all sacrifices. But while we are uniting and organizing, we must rid ourselves of all foreign and antagonistic elements. What would one say of a general who in the enemy's country sought to fill the ranks of his army with recruits from the ranks of the enemy? Would that not be the height of foolishness? Very well, to take into our army—which is an army for the class struggle and the class war—opponents, soldiers with aims and interests entirely opposite to our own,—that would be madness, that would be suicide.

“On the ground of the class struggle we are invincible; if we leave it we are lost, because we are no longer socialists. The strength and power of socialism rests in the fact that we are leading a class struggle; that the laboring class is exploited and oppressed by the capitalist class, and that within capitalist society effectual reforms, which will put an end to class government and class exploitation, are impossible.

“We cannot traffic in our principles, we can make no compromise, no agreement with the ruling system. We must break with the ruling system and fight it to a finish. It must fall that socialism may arise, and we certainly cannot expect from the ruling class that it will give to itself and its domination the death blow. The International Workingmen's Association accordingly preached that ‘The emancipation of the laboring class must be the work of the laborers themselves.’

“Undoubtedly there are bourgeois who from a feeling of justice and humanity place themselves upon the side of the laborers and socialists, but these are only the exceptions; the mass of the bourgeoisie has class consciousness, a consciousness of being the ruling and exploiting class. Indeed, the mass of the bourgeoisie, just because they are a ruling class, have a much sharper and

stronger class consciousness than the proletariat.
"I conclude: You have asked my opinion, and I have given it to you. It is for you to do what the interests and principles of the party demand that you should do.

"Fraternal greeting to the convention at Epernay. Long live the France of the socialists and the laborers! Long live international socialism!

"Weimar, Aug. 10, 1899. W. LIEBKNECHT."

I have nothing to add to my letter. The events since then have justified it. The presence of a socialist in the government has accomplished nothing and prevented nothing that could not have been accomplished or prevented without this presence. On the other hand, in so far as the Social Democracy has caused or endorsed the entrance of a socialist into the government it has become in part responsible for all the sins of omission and of commission done by the government during the time in which a socialist was a member.

THE SITUATION IN FRANCE.

It may be said in excuse or justification that they have acted under extraordinary conditions, —to rescue the republic, which would otherwise have been lost. This excuse will not stand examination. The republic of France is not upheld by a few men in the government, including the socialist, but by the *French laborers* with whom the greater part of the peasants and small bourgeoisie stand side by side, and also by the great majority of the French people, who do not allow themselves to be led astray by the priests, nor coerced by the reactionary capitalists. Militarism is by far less strong and dangerous in France than in Germany, and the French army is to a much greater extent than in Germany a people's army. The army is as large as in Germany, although the population is fifteen million less; it contains therefore a larger per cent of the total

population. France is actually at the point where it must break with the Prussian-German military system which it adopted after the war of 1870-71; it must either do as the minister of war, General Gallifet, has recommended—replace it with a well-drilled Prætorian Guard—or enter at once upon the militia system, and arm every person capable of bearing arms. A *coup d'état* is impossible with such an army. No matter how reactionary a portion of the officers may be, the mass of soldiers are too close to the people to be used for such purposes.

If, as has been represented to us, the actual formation of the Waldeck-Rousseau Ministry was necessary to protect the republic against a *coup d'état*, then the republican sentiment of the French proletariat was security enough for the government—in every way a far better security than the participation of a socialist in the cabinet.

The circumstance that the chief of this ministry was a particularly clear-cut capitalist, and that the Minister of War was one of the most notorious “saberers” of the “Little Napoleon,” and one of the most bloodthirsty murderers of the Communists, made the impropriety of Millerand’s action all the more evident. But even if in place of Waldeck-Rousseau there had been a genuine Democrat, as for example, Brisson, and in place of Gallifet an honorable soldier not yet stained with laborers’ blood, the step would have been no less objectionable from our standpoint, though it would not have wounded the feelings so much.

Class antagonism accompanied by the class struggle is now an existing fact. The state is, so long as this class opposition and class struggle exists, necessarily a class state, and the government of this state, with like necessity, is a class government. The socialist who allows himself to become a member of such a government will soon lose his class-consciousness, if he has not already

laid it down at the door of the cabinet, like a Mohammedan does his shoes at the entrance of the mosque, unless he has the courage to seize the first opportunity offered for a conflict and a break.

I do not care to busy myself with the purely scholastic question as to whether a case might ever possibly arise in which a socialist should enter into a non-socialist government. Such an occasion could only arise after a catastrophic overthrow of the state, for example, during the course of a world war, when the government of a class state had broken down without the necessary elements being yet present for the formation of a socialist state.

Such an occasion has certainly not yet arisen in France, and perhaps the last persons whose mission it is to "rescue the Republic" are just these same Waldeck-Rousseau and Gallifet. It is the *Socialist party* which was and is and remains the only party whose mission it is to be the rescuer and safeguard of the Republic, and this with or without Millerand.

Guesde and Lafargue, the leading representatives of scientific socialism in France, have set forth in a scathing critique of "Ministerial" opportunist socialism, the distinction between the activity of a member of a popularly elected body and an officer of an executive body of the government itself of the established state. The officials and the government are the organs of class rule, who must from their very nature act in the interests of the ruling class. The participation in a popularly elected body (Reichstag, legislature, common council, etc.) is on the contrary an expression of popular sovereignty, which, though it is subject to the influences of the class rule, is really above it, and is the only power that can make an end of it. The representatives of the Social Democracy in such popular bodies are like the basalt blocks, which, pushed up from the

interior of the earth, have broken through the sandstone and slate strata:—they arise from the heart of the people, are a part of the people, and have in themselves the right and the power of popular sovereignty, which overtops and dominates all political and social matters. They are not there by the grace of the powers that be, but against their will, and in spite of their power—servants to be sure, but honorable servants, servants, not of the possessors of power, but of the people, who have chosen them to secure the realization of their sovereign will. Therefore, it is fundamentally incorrect to designate our activity in the Reichstag and other representative bodies as a compromise with the ruling powers. To be sure, we have to work there together with our enemies, but as an independent power, exercising the mandates we have received from the people. That is no co-operation upon the basis of common views and aims; it is a labor that is a battle—a mutual struggle, a measuring of forces, whose play, direction and intensity, according to the eternal law of the parallelogram of forces, results in legislation and government.

It is in the nature of things that out of this mutual wrestling and struggle, changing groups and momentary contacts should result; to call such momentary groupings compromises is a pure distortion of terms. A coming together as a result of conditions, and a working and striving in the same direction owing to circumstances, is just as little a contract, an alliance or a compromise, as the reciprocal touching of the pieces of glass in a kaleidoscope is a contract, an alliance or a compromise. Whether the shaking power is a mechanical one, or is the force of organized law is all the same. Such approaches are without any obligations, are productions of the moment, born of the moment and swept away with the moment.

It is no less incorrect to compare co-operation

at second ballottings to such alliances as were proposed for the Prussian legislative elections and as were actually made for the Bavarian elections. Such co-operation is only an episode of the battle at the polls which is fought by the party as a whole. After the first and chief election day an after battle follows, in which the undecided points are fought out. That we, in these subsequent elections in electoral districts where we cannot ourselves put up a candidate, should vote for that one of the opposition candidates whose election offers the most advantages to our party, is a requirement of elementary intelligence. I previously advocated this as an act of self-evident desirability at a time when some of those who are to-day enthusiastic for a participation in the Prussian legislative elections accused me of a half-betrayal of our principles. If, at a time when an exception law exists, or is in sight, we did not give our votes in these special elections to that one of two bourgeois candidates who was opposed to the exception law, we should be asses deserving the cudgel. But that is no compromise. We pledge ourselves to nothing, we sacrifice no principle, we sacrifice no interest; on the contrary, we act solely in our own interest, which we should have injured had we acted otherwise. The obligations rest upon our opponents. This tactics is so simple and natural that it was only brought into question for a time by an unclear hobby-riding of principles; as soon as the party leaders ceased to recommend this tactics, the rank and file of the party, following a sound instinct, carried it out anyhow over the heads of those leaders. And from time to time a special line of action was decided upon for each particular case. No trafficking, no underhand work; open and above board we attack the enemy; and where two enemies stand in opposition, one of whom must win the mandate, we strike the most dangerous of the two to earth. This is a

policy of fighting such as befits a fighting party.

In the original elections for the Reichstag, we are a fighting party that by its own strength wins its share in the popular representation. We offer battle front to all parties, not even excepting those for whose members we may vote at the supplemental elections as the interest of our party may require. But in the Prussian legislative elections it is impossible for us to win a single representative by our own strength; in order to gain one or more it is necessary to turn to a bourgeois party and make a political trade with them. In the Reichstag elections we are the strongest party in Germany, but in the Prussian legislative elections we are the weakest of all, indeed, completely helpless; because under the "worst of all election laws" we have, to be sure, a vote, but our vote is rendered nugatory, and a mandate can only be secured under the condition that we become dumb voting cattle of a bourgeois party.

In the Bavarian legislative election things are somewhat different. In Bavaria, the election laws do not make it impossible to secure a mandate. This does not argue in favor of a compromise, but, on the contrary, places the "cattle trade," which took place this summer, in a still worse light.

I will not here enter upon the grounds of opposition to participating in the Prussian legislative election. The demoralization through the change of front in the Reichstag elections and the legislative elections, the confusion in the minds, the loosening of discipline, and above all the obliteration of the class struggle character of our party has been already, and by myself among others, so often and so emphatically set forth that I will not tire the reader by a repetition.

Only one thing more.

If the bourgeois parties still had any vitality left they would not need our help to secure a

victory in the Prussian legislative elections. The first two classes belong to the bourgeois electors. No one can rob them of a majority if they do not themselves surrender it. How then can we help them? Can one make the lame or the drunk walk? One can help them up, but as soon as one lets go they fall to the ground like an empty sack. We cannot escape this dilemma; either the bourgeoisie still has political vitality—in which case they do not need our help; or they do not have it, and in that case our help would be useless. Can we be expected to make an alliance with a corpse?

**INDEPENDENT ACTION IS THE ONLY
THING THAT IS PRACTICAL.**

Fault has been found because I said in a newspaper article that a new anti-socialist law would be a less evil than the abolition of class antagonism and party lines through fusion with the Prussian Progressive party in the legislative elections. The more I consider it the more I am convinced of the correctness of this position. What is to become of our party if we allow ourselves to be pressed out of the path of our principles by threatened or threatening dangers and disadvantages? Fear is proverbially a poor adviser for human action; for a party it is destruction. Fear of the labor movement and socialism has caused the political downfall of the German bourgeoisie; and the days of the Social Democracy are numbered as soon as the cry of fear finds a response in us. We should not challenge, but we should not sound the alarm and be misled by fear into taking steps that do not accord with the principles, the nature and the honor of our party. One does not disarm an enemy through timidity and gentleness; one simply emboldens him. Not that we should seek to run our heads through a wall. We wish to be and must be "practical." But has this ever been denied or questioned? We

have always been "practical," Bernstein to the contrary notwithstanding. We have always based our efforts on existing conditions and worked methodically with our eye upon the goal. In cities, states and empire, all reasonable improvements have at least been supported, if not proposed by the Social Democracy. Think only of the greatest of all reforms, the reform of the social evil, in which the government, if it does not wish to build ruins or air castles, must take hold of the demands made by us over ten years ago.

We can say of ourselves, that not only are we practical, but that we are the only practical party, —practical in the sense of reasonable. Only those who recognize the organic laws of development and systematically strive in harmony with them towards a definite goal are practical. And this is the way we work. Our opponents either do not know these laws, or else if they recognize them they seek to bend or break them. Whoever seeks to compel water to run up hill is certainly not practical, and such is the foolish aim of our opponents. To be sure it has been said that the laborers cannot alone secure the emancipation of the laboring class; that the intelligent and cultured elements of the other classes must co-operate with them. We are pointed to the many measures useful to the laboring class which are enacted or supported by the bourgeois parties. But this is sophistical reasoning. For (and on this point the evidence of Bismarck is decisive) none of these social reform measures, and surely they are few enough, would ever have been enacted *without the initiative and the pressure of the proletariat and the Social Democracy.*

Bernstein claims that socialism is the ultimate outcome of liberalism. To claim this is to absolutely deny the existence of any class antagonism.

This sentence was reversed by Miquel, my former comrade in *communismo*, and present

Chancellor *in re*, so as to read, Liberalism is the ultimate outcome of communism. And that the liberalism of Miquel is very near to conservatism, in the German sense, that is, to the agrarian medieval ideal of personal bondage, every one knows who has ears to hear and eyes to see.

No, Social Democracy must remain for itself, must seek for and generate its power within itself. Every power outside of ourselves on which we seek to lean is for us only weakness. In the consciousness of our strength, in our faith in the world-conquering mission of socialism lies the secret of our extraordinary, almost miraculous success.


Islam was unconquerable so long as it trusted in itself alone and saw an enemy in every non-Mohammedan. From the moment when Islam entered upon the path of compromise and united with the non-Mohammedan, the so-called civilized powers, its conquering power was gone. With Islam it could not have been otherwise. It was not the true world redeeming faith. Socialism, however, is this, and socialism cannot conquer nor redeem the world if it ceases to believe upon itself *alone*.

Therefore, we will not turn from the old tactics, nor from the old program. Ever advancing with science and economic development, we are what we were and we will remain what we are.

Or—the Social Democracy will cease to exist.

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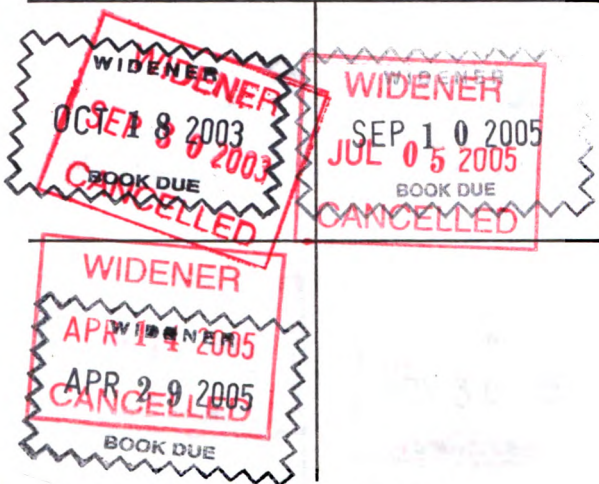


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