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THE HISTORICAL ACHIEVEMENT OF KARL MARX

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Foreword

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

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

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

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

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

Friedemann, Pöhlmann, 1908. K. KAUTSKY.

Introduction

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

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

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

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

1. The Unification of Natural and Mental Science

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

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

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

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

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

The other group of mental sciences comprises studies which have so far had mainly the individual for their starting point, and treated of the position and activity of the individual in society; History, Law, Ethics or Morality. This second group of mental sciences is extremely old and has from time immemorial exerted the greatest influence upon the human mind. The former group, however, was new at the time when Marx was in process of formation, and had just acquainted itself with scientific methods. It remained confined to specialists and had as yet no influence upon public thought, which was controlled by the natural and mental sciences of the second group. But there was a deep chasm between the two last named kinds of sciences, and it remained itself in antagonistic world conceptions.

Natural science had discovered so many necessary and well-controlled interrelations in nature, that is, it had found by frequent tests that the same causes always produced the same effects, that it was thoroughly imbued with the assumption of a general lawfulness of nature and completely rejected the idea of mysterious powers, which were supposed to interfere with the natural events in an arbitrary manner. Modern man no longer endeavors to incline such powers in his favor by prayers and sacrifices. His aim is rather to understand the laws of natural phenomena, which are not dependent upon his good will, than what would become sin and atonement of good and bad, of legal and moral condemnation?

True, this objection was urged only by a certain motif, the assumption of "metaphysical" forces. But the proof was supplied principally by historical sciences, which rested essentially upon a mere collection of written documents of former days, in which the deeds of single individuals, particularly of rulers, were registered either by themselves or by others. It seemed impossible to discover any controlling law in these individual deeds. In such data thinkers in natural science try to discover any such natural necessity. Of course, they were unwilling to believe that the universal laws of nature should not apply to the actions of men. Experience supplied them with enough material to show, that the human mind was not an exception in nature, that it rather replied to definite causes in a definite manner. It was only to be undoubtedly be proved in the case of simplest mind activities, which man shares with animals, the natural scientists were unable to find any causal connection for the social phenomena. It was, therefore, unable to fill this gap.

They might indeed assume, that the human mind was a part of nature and subject to its natural laws, but they could not prove it convincingly upon all fields. Their materialist monism remained incomplete and could not make an end of idealism and dualism.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But also the teaching that human beings are products of social conditions to the extent that the members of a certain form of society differ from those of another form of society is not acceptable to a conservative class, because in that case a change of society itself appears as the only means of changing human beings. So long as the bourgeois were revolutionary, they likewise would have sought to harness to themselves the products of the sciences, by which the motive forces of social development could have been understood, were not self-sufficiency developed in those days. The French materialism of the 18th century did not know the class struggle and did not consider technical development. They knew, indeed, that in order to change men it would be necessary to change society, but they did not know, neither the forces were to come that changed society. They saw these forces in the omnipotence of a few extraordinary men, especially in that of school masters. Beyond this point bourgeois materialism did not progress.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

They regarded the labor movement so much the more as a disturbing element, the less confidence they had in the proletariat. The bourgeoisie is not averse to a very low mass, and the more clearly they recognize the inadequacy of the unorganized labor movement. So they often turned against the labor movement, to demonstrate, for instance, how useless labor unions are, which wish merely to raise wages instead of combatting the root of all evil, the wage system.

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

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

The memory of this had a tremendous effect on the French laborers. The conquest of the political power very early became a means for the proletarian socialists by which they wanted to acquire the strength for inaugurating socialism. But in view of the weakness and timidity of the proletariat they knew no better way for the conquest of the political power than the uprising of a number of conspirators which was supposed to start the

revolution. Among the representatives of this line of thought, Blanc had become best known. Similar ideas were held by Weyling in Germany.

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

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

The monarchic state socialism was always but a hobby, sometimes also a demagogic phrase. It had never assumed any serious practical importance. On the other hand, the tendencies represented by Blanc and Louis Blanc, were of great significance. They acquired the power to rule Paris in the days of the February revolution of 1848.

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

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

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

Like the socialists of their time, Marx and Engels also recognized that the labor movement appears inadequate when confronted with socialism in the question: Why has it so many up to account for the proletariat an assured livelihood and an abolition of all exploitation of the labor movement (labor unions, fighting for universal suffrage, etc.) or socialism? But they also recognized that the labor movement was wrongly framed. Socialism, an abolition of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, assured livelihood of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, assured livelihood of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The question is only: How does the proletariat come to socialism? And the theory of the class struggle answered: By the labor movement.

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

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

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

This achievement was hardly possible, so long as socialism did not have its own science, independent of bourgeois science. The socialists before Marx and Engels were not acquainted with this science, the science of political economy, but they adopted it uncritically in the form created by bourgeois thinkers, and differed from them, only in such a way that they drew other conclusions from it, which were friendly to the proletariat. Marx was the first to undertake the history of the capitalist mode of production quite independently and to show, how much more deeply and clearly it may be grasped, if viewed from the proletarian instead of the bourgeois point of view. For the proletarian who stands outside and above it. Only, if this view of capitalism as a passing form, makes it possible to grasp fully its peculiar historical individuality.

This great achievement was accomplished by Marx in 1847 in "Capital" (1867) and in 1848 in "The Communist Manifesto".

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

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

5. The Combination of Theory and Practice

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

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

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

The right taking this view of the matter will not draw a great crying for unjustified truth out of the mouth of the struggle. But he will also feel the need of not keeping any acquired truth for himself, out of communication with the rest of the world.

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

The revolution called Marx and Engels from Brussels, where they lived, first to Paris, then to Germany, where the practical exigencies of the revolution completely absorbed them, so that it is still impossible to secure a guaranteed existence and the abolition of all exploitation for the proletariat, but it is the indispensable means of not only safeguarding the individual proletariat against drowning misery, but also of bestowing visibly more and more power to his whole class, intellectual, economic, political power, a power which increases continually, even though the exploitation of the proletariat increases at the same time. The labor movement should be judged, not by its significance for the immediate abolition, but by its significance for the increase of power in the proletariat. Not out of the conspiracy of Blanc, nor out of the peaceful organization of Proudhon, but only out of the class struggle, which has to last through decades, or even through generations, arises the power which finally can and must bring socialism to the proletariat. For the economic and political class struggle, to secure its detail work, it is necessary to combine with the ideas of a far-seeing socialism, to combine harmoniously the organizations and activities of the proletariat into one, tremendous whole which assumes ever more irresistible dimensions, this is, according to Marx and Engels, the task of every one, whether a proletarian or not, who places himself upon a proletarian standpoint and wishes to free the proletariat.

The decline of the revolution compelled them, since 1850, much against their will, to devote themselves entirely to the theory. But when the labor movement took on a new activity for the struggle for the abolition of all exploitation and the abolition of all exploitation for the proletariat, it was soon to become a specter for all bourgeois Europe.

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

After the foremost concern for the development of proletarian power, Marx mentions organization.

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

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

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

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

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

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

He had to overcome much opposition in this work, precisely among the most advanced laborers, who were still full of the spirit of the old socialists, and who looked with disdain upon the new and better socialist teaching, which touched the wage system. These socialists regarded labor unions as a deviation from the straight road, which to them led to the goal by the formation of organizations which should overcome the wage system directly, such as productive associations. That labor organizations everywhere made rapid progress on the European continent since the second half of the sixties is due above all to the international aim, to the influence exerted in it and through it by Marx.

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

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

Of course, it was not immaterial to him whether he had to deal with clear thinking or confused laborers. He considered it his most important task to enlighten them, he would have considered it his duty to repulse laborers or keep them away from his organization merely because they were confused thinkers. He had implicit confidence in the power of the class antagonism and in the logic of the class struggle, which should necessarily push every proletarian in the right path, as soon as he would join an organization which was actually devoted to the real proletarian class struggle. But he acted differently toward men who came to the proletariat as teachers of it, who wanted to instruct, to destroy the strength and unity of this class struggle. He was not in the least tolerant toward such elements. He met them as an inexorable critic, though their intentions might be the best; that influence, however, was conscious to him under any conditions, provided it produced any results at all and did not prove wholly a waste of energy.

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

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

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

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

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

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

There they said:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"They merely express in general terms actual relations spring from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes." (Karr, editions, pages 23 and 33.)

During the sixty years since this was written a good many things have changed, so that these sentences cannot be applied to the letters applied to the letters of the labor parties existed, with comprehensive socialist pro-

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

Today only one socialist theory, the Marxian, is alive in the fighting proletariat, which is united in mass parties. Not as members of the labor parties are Marxians, still less are all of them thoroughly Marxian.

Marxism is no longer compelled to struggle with other socialist theories for its supremacy. Its critics no longer meet it with other theories, merely with doubts as to the necessity of either all these or any consistent theory.

This is the reason for the proletarian movements of the different countries had become so numerous and so powerful. It is the more so, the more did the international need of an organization, which should have sufficient playroom for all the movements of the various countries.

Marx died on the threshold of his time, in which the fruit was at last to mature which he had sown in the wildest storms and the darkest days.

people to resist the government by force of arms, and in which he demonstrated the necessity of a new revolution.

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