

CRITIQUE OF THE

GOTHA
PROGRAMME

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*With Appendices by
Marx, Engels and Lenin*

A REVISED TRANSLATION



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MARGINAL NOTES TO THE PROGRAMME OF THE GERMAN WORKERS' PARTY

I.

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

First Part of the Paragraph: "Labour is the source of all wealth and all culture."

Labour is *not the source* of all wealth. *Nature* is just as much the source of use values (and it is surely of such that material wealth consists!) as is labour, which itself is only the manifestation of a natural force, human labour power.¹ That phrase is to be found in all children's primers and is correct in so far as it is *implied* that labour proceeds with the appropriate subjects and instruments. But a socialist programme cannot allow such bourgeois phrases to cause the *conditions* to be ignored that alone give them meaning. And in so far as man from the beginning behaves towards nature, the primary source of all instruments and subjects of labour, as her owner, treats her as belonging to him, his labour becomes the source of use values, therefore also of wealth. The bourgeois have very good grounds for fancifully ascribing *supernatural creative power* to labour, since it follows precisely from the fact that labour depends on nature, that the man who possesses no other property than his labour power must, in all conditions of society and culture, be the slave of other men who have made themselves the owners of the material conditions of labour. He can only work with their permission, and hence only live with their permission.²

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

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

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

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

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

One could just as well have said that only in society can useless and even generally harmful labour become a branch of gainful occupation, that only in society can one live by being idle, etc., etc.;—in short one could just as well have copied the whole of Rousseau.^a

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

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

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

In fact, also, this proposition has at all times been made use of by the champions of the *prevailing state of society*. First come the claims of the government and everything connected with it, since it is the social organ for the maintenance of the social order; then come the claims of the various kinds of private property, for the various

kinds of private property are the foundations of society, etc. One sees that such hollow phrases can be twisted and turned as desired.

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

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

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

But equally incontestable is this other proposition:

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

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

In fact, however, the whole paragraph, incorrect in style and content, is only there in order to inscribe the Lassalleian⁴ catchword of the "undiminished proceeds of labour" as a slogan at the top of the party banner. I shall return to the "proceeds of labour," "equal right," etc., later on, since the same thing recurs in a somewhat different form.

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

This sentence, borrowed from the Statutes of the International,⁵ is incorrect in this "improved" edition.

In present-day society the instruments of labour are the monopoly of the landowners (the monopoly of property in land is even the basis of the monopoly of capital) *and* the capitalists. In the passage in question, the Statutes of the International do not mention by name either the one or the other class of monopolists. They speak of the "*monopoly of the means of labour, that is the sources of life.*" The

addition, "*sources of life*" makes it sufficiently clear that land is included in the instruments of labour.

The correction was introduced because Lassalle, for reasons now generally known, attacked *only* the capitalist class and not the land-owners.⁶ In England, the capitalist is usually not even the owner of the land on which his factory stands.

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

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

What are the "proceeds of labour"? The product of labour or its value? And in the latter case, is it the total value of the product or only that part of the value which labour has newly added to the value of the means of production consumed?⁷

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

What is "equitable distribution"?

Do not the bourgeois assert that the present-day distribution is "equitable"? And is it not, in fact, the only "equitable" distribution on the basis of the present-day mode of production? Are economic relations regulated by legal conceptions or do not, on the contrary, legal relations arise from economic ones? Have not also the socialist sectarians⁸ the most varied notions about "equitable" distribution?

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

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

to those members of society who work? What remains then of the "equal right" of all members of society?

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

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

From this is then to be deducted:

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

Secondly, additional portion for expansion of production.

Thirdly, reserve or insurance fund to provide against mis-adventures, disturbances through natural events, etc.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Only now do we come to the "distribution" which the programme, under Lassallean influence, alone has in view in its narrow fashion,

namely that part of the means of consumption which is divided among the individual producers of the co-operative society.⁹

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

Just as the phrase "undiminished proceeds of labour" has disappeared, so now does the phrase "proceeds of labour" disappear altogether.¹⁰

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

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

Here obviously the same principle prevails as that which regulates

the exchange of commodities, as far as this is exchange of equal values. Content and form are changed, because under the altered circumstances no one can give anything except his labour, and because, on the other hand, nothing can pass into the ownership of individuals except individual means of consumption. But, as far as the distribution of the latter among the individual producers is concerned, the same principle prevails as in the exchange of commodity-equivalents, so much labour in one form is exchanged for an equal amount of labour in another form.

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

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

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

another, one will be richer than another, and so on. To avoid all these defects, right, instead of being equal, would have to be unequal.¹¹

But these defects are inevitable in the first phase of communist society as it is when it has just emerged after prolonged birth pangs from capitalist society. Right can never be higher than the economic structure of society and the cultural development thereby determined.¹²

In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of individuals under division of labour, and therewith also the antithesis between mental and physical labour, has vanished; after labour, from a mere means of life, has itself become the prime necessity of life; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-round development of the individual, and all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly—only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be fully left behind and society inscribe on its banners: from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!¹³

I have dealt more at length with the “undiminished proceeds of labour” on the one hand, and with “equal right” and “equitable distribution” on the other, in order to show what a crime it is to attempt, on the one hand, to force on our party again, as dogmas, ideas which in a certain period had some meaning but have now become obsolete rubbishy phrases, while on the other, perverting the realistic outlook, which has cost so much effort to instill into the party, but which has now taken root in it, by means of ideological nonsense about “right” and other trash common among the democrats and French Socialists.

Quite apart from the analysis so far given, it was in general incorrect to make a fuss about so-called “distribution” and put the principal stress on it.

The distribution of the means of consumption at any time is only a consequence of the distribution of the conditions of production themselves. The latter distribution, however, is a feature of the mode of production itself. The capitalist mode of production, for example, rests on the fact that the material conditions of production are in

the hands of non-workers in the form of property in capital and land, while the masses are only owners of the personal condition of production, *viz.*, labour power. Once the elements of production are so distributed, then the present-day distribution of the means of consumption results automatically. If the material conditions of production are the co-operative property of the workers themselves, then this likewise results in a different distribution of the means of consumption from the present one. Vulgar socialism (and from it in turn a section of democracy) has taken over from the bourgeois economists the consideration and treatment of distribution as independent of the mode of production and hence the presentation of socialism as turning principally on distribution.¹⁴ After the real position has long been made clear, why go back again?

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

The first strophe is taken from the introductory words of the Statutes of the International, but “improved.” There it is said: “The emancipation of the working class must be the act of the workers themselves.”¹⁵ Here, on the contrary, the “working class” has to emancipate—what? “Labour.” Let him who can understand.

In compensation, the antistrophe¹⁶ on the other hand is a Lassallean quotation of the first water: “in contrast to which (the working class) all other classes *form only one reactionary mass.*”¹⁷

In *The Communist Manifesto* it is said: “Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, 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.”¹⁸

The bourgeoisie is here conceived as a revolutionary class—as the bearer of large-scale industry—in contrast to the feudal lords and middle estates, who desire to maintain all social positions that are the creation of obsolete modes of production. Thus they do not form *together* with the bourgeoisie only one reactionary mass.

On the other hand, the proletariat is revolutionary in contrast to

the bourgeoisie because, having itself grown up on the basis of large-scale industry, it strives to strip off from production the capitalist character that the bourgeoisie seeks to perpetuate. But the *Manifesto* adds that the "middle class... if by chance they are revolutionary, they are so only in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat."¹⁹

From this point of view, therefore, it is again nonsense to say that they, together with the bourgeoisie, and with the feudal lords into the bargain, "form only one reactionary mass" in relation to the working class.

Did we proclaim to the artisans, small industrialists, etc., and peasants during the last elections:²⁰ In contrast to us you, with the bourgeois and feudal lords, form only one reactionary mass?

Lassalle knew *The Communist Manifesto* by heart, as his faithful followers know the gospels written by him. If, therefore, he has falsified it so grossly, this has occurred only to put a good colour on his alliance with absolutist and feudal opponents against the bourgeoisie.²¹

In the above paragraph, moreover, his oracular saying is dragged in by force without any connection with the botched quotation from the Statutes of the International. Thus it is here simply an impertinence and indeed not at all displeasing to Herr Bismarck, one of those cheap pieces of insolence in which the Marat²² of Berlin deals.

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

Lassalle, in opposition to *The Communist Manifesto* and to all earlier socialism, conceived the workers' movement from the narrowest national standpoint. He is being followed in this—and that after the work of the International!²³

It is altogether self-evident that, to be able to fight at all, the working class must organise itself at home *as a class* and that its own country is the immediate arena of its struggle. So far its class

struggle is national, not in content, but, as *The Communist Manifesto* says, "in form."²⁴ But the "framework of the present-day national state," e.g., the German empire, is itself in its turn economically "within the framework" of the world market, politically "within the framework" of the system of states. Every businessman knows that German trade is at the same time foreign trade, and the greatness of Herr Bismarck consists, to be sure, precisely in a kind of *international policy*.²⁵

And to what does the German Workers' Party reduce its internationalism? To the consciousness that the result of its efforts will be "*the international brotherhood of peoples*"—a phrase borrowed from the bourgeois League of Peace and Freedom,²⁶ which is intended to pass as equivalent to the international brotherhood of the working classes in the joint struggle against the ruling classes and their governments. Not a word, therefore, *about the international functions* of the German working class! And it is in this way it is to challenge its own bourgeoisie, which is already linked up in brotherhood against it with the bourgeois of all other countries, and Herr Bismarck's international policy of conspiracy!²⁷

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

The international activity of the working classes does not in any way depend on the existence of the International Workingmen's Association. This was only the first attempt to create a central organ for that activity; an attempt which was of lasting success on account of the impulse which it gave but which was no longer realisable in its *first historical form* after the fall of the Paris Commune.

Bismarck's *Norddeutsche*²⁸ was absolutely correct when it announced for the satisfaction of its master that the German Workers' Party had repudiated internationalism in the new programme.²⁹

II.

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

I shall return to the "free" state later.

Thus, in future, the German Workers' Party has got to believe in Lassalle's "iron law of wages!"³⁰ That this shall not be lost, the nonsense is perpetrated of speaking of the "abolition of the wage system" (it should read: system of wage labour) *together with the "iron law of wages."* If I abolish wage labour, then naturally I abolish its laws also, whether they are of "iron" or sponge. But Lassalle's attack on wage labour turns almost solely on this so-called law. In order, therefore, to prove that Lassalle's sect has conquered, the "wage system" must be abolished *"together with the iron law of wages"* and not without it.

It is well known that nothing of the "iron law of wages" belongs to Lassalle except the word "iron" borrowed from Goethe's "great, eternal, iron laws." The word *iron* is a label by which the true believers recognise one another. But if I take the law with Lassalle's stamp on it and consequently in his sense then I must also take it with his basis for it. And what is that? As Lange³¹ already showed, shortly after Lassalle's death, it is the Malthusian³² theory of population (preached by Lange himself). But if this theory is correct, then again I can *not* abolish the law even if I abolish wage labour a hundred times over, because the law then governs not only the system of wage labour but *every* social system. Basing themselves directly on this, the economists have proved for fifty years and more that socialism cannot abolish poverty, *which has its basis in nature*, but can only *generalise* it, distribute it simultaneously over the whole surface of society!

But all this is not the main thing. Quite *apart* from this *false*

Lassallean formulation of the law, the truly infuriating retrograde step consists in the following:

Since Lassalle's death³³ the scientific understanding has made progress in our party that wages are not what they *appear* to be, namely, the *value, or price, of labour*, but only a masked form for the *value, or price, of labour power*. Thereby the whole bourgeois conception of wages hitherto, as well as all the criticism hitherto directed against this conception, was thrown overboard once for all and it was made clear that the wage worker has permission to work for his own life, *i.e., to live*, only in so far as he works for a certain time gratis for the capitalist (and hence also for the latter's fellow consumers of surplus value); that the whole capitalist system of production turns on the prolongation of this gratis labour by extending the working day or by developing the productivity, *i.e., the greater intensity of labour power, etc.*, that, consequently, the system of wage labour is a system of slavery, and indeed a slavery which becomes more severe in proportion as the social productive forces of labour develop, whether the worker receives better or worse payment.³⁴ And after this understanding has more and more made progress in our party, one returns to Lassalle's dogmas, although one must have known that Lassalle *did not know* what wages are, but following in the wake of the bourgeois economists took the appearance for the essence of the matter.

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

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

Instead of the indefinite concluding phrase of the paragraph—"the removal of all social and political equality"—it ought to have been

said that with the abolition of class differences all the social and political inequality arising from them would disappear of itself.

III.

"The German Workers' Party, in order to pave the way to the solution of the social question, demands the establishment of producers' co-operative societies with state aid under the democratic control of the toiling people. The producers' co-operative societies are to be called into being for industry and agriculture in such dimensions that the socialist organisation of the total labour will arise from them."

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

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

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

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

It would be superfluous to deal here with the criticism of the recipe prescribed by Buchez³⁵ in the reign of Louis Philippe³⁶ in opposition to the French Socialists and accepted by the reactionary

workers of the *Atelier*.³⁷ The chief offence does not lie in having inscribed these specific nostrums in the programme, but in that in general a retrograde step from the standpoint of a class movement to that of a sectarian movement is being taken.

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

IV.

I come now to the democratic section.

A. "The free basis of the state."

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

Free state—what is this?

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

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

And what of the riotous misuse which the programme makes of

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

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

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

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

Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. There corresponds to this also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*.⁴⁸

Now the programme does not deal with this nor with the future state in communist society.⁴⁹

Its political demands contain nothing beyond the old familiar democratic litany: universal suffrage, direct legislation, people's justice, a people's militia, etc. They are a mere echo of the bourgeois People's Party,⁴⁰ of the League of Peace and Freedom. They are all demands which, in so far as they are not exaggerated in fanciful presentation, have already been *realised*. Only the state to which

they belong does not lie within the frontiers of the German empire, but in Switzerland, the United States, etc. This sort of "state of the future" is a present-day state although existing outside the "framework" of the German empire.

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

Since one has not the courage—and wisely, for the circumstances demand caution—to demand the democratic republic, as the French workers' programmes under Louis Philippe and under Louis Napoleon⁴¹ did, one should not have taken refuge either in the subterfuge, neither "honourable" nor "worthy," of demanding things which have meaning only in a democratic republic from a state which is nothing but a police-guarded military despotism,⁴² embellished with parliamentary forms, alloyed with a feudal admixture, bureaucratically constructed and already influenced by the bourgeoisie, and then to assure this state into the bargain that one thinks one will be able to extort these things from it "by legal means."

Even vulgar democracy, which sees the millennium in the democratic republic and has no suspicion that it is precisely in this last state form of bourgeois society that the class struggle has to be fought out to a conclusion—even it towers mountains above this kind of democratism within the limits of what is permitted by the police and what is logically impermissible.⁴³

That, in fact, by the word "state" the government machinery is understood, or the state in so far as it forms a special organism separated from society through division of labour, is already shown by the words "the German Workers' Party demands *as the economic basis of the state*: a single progressive income tax, etc." Taxes are the economic basis of the government machinery and of nothing else.

In the state of the future as it exists in Switzerland, this demand has been pretty well fulfilled. Income tax presupposes the various sources of income of the various social classes, and hence capitalist society. It is, therefore, not extraordinary that the Liverpool financial reformers, bourgeois headed by Gladstone's brother,⁴⁴ are putting forward the same demand as the programme.

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

1. Universal and *equal elementary education* through the state. Universal compulsory school attendance. Free instruction."

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

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

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

"*Elementary education through the state*" is altogether objectionable. Defining by a general law the financial means of the ele-

* Point 5 under A of Section IV of the Programme. See p. 90.—Ed.

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

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

"*Freedom of science*" says a paragraph of the Prussian constitution. Why then here?

"*Freedom of conscience*"! If one desires at this time of the *Kulturkampf*⁴⁵ to remind liberalism of its old catchwords, then it surely could have been done in the following form: Everyone should be able to attend to his religious as well as his bodily needs without the police sticking their noses in. But the Workers' Party ought at any rate in this connection to have expressed its consciousness of the fact that bourgeois "freedom of conscience" is nothing but the toleration of all possible kinds of *religious freedom of conscience*, and that for its part it endeavours rather to liberate the conscience from the spectre of religion.⁴⁶ But there is a desire not to transgress the "bourgeois" level.

I have now come to the end, for the appendix⁴⁷ that now follows in the programme does not constitute a characteristic component part of it. Hence I can be very brief here.

2. "Normal working day."

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

3. "Restriction of women's labour and prohibition of child labour."

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

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

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

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

4. "State supervision of factory, workshop and domestic industry."

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

5. "Regulation of prison labour."

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

6. "An effective liability law."

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

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

In short, this appendix also is distinguished by slovenly editing. *Dixi et salvavi animam meam.*⁴⁸