

Utopia

THOMAS MORE

Thomas More (1478–1535) was an important political and literary figure of the “Northern Renaissance” of the early sixteenth century. At one time a close adviser to Britain’s King Henry VIII, More fell into disfavor when Henry broke with the Roman Catholic Church to establish the Church of England with himself as head. For refusing to approve Henry’s action, More was beheaded. Four centuries later the Roman Catholic Church recognized him as a saint. Before his difficulties with Henry VIII began, More wrote *Utopia* (1516), a book in which he imagined a society from which the evils of envy and poverty had been banished. In the following selection More’s main character, the fictitious explorer Raphael Hythloday, traces the evils of European society to the private ownership of property, which he contrasts to the virtues of the island commonwealth of Utopia, where private property and even money have been abolished.

Source: More wrote *Utopia* in Latin. The following selections are from the first English translation, by Ralph Robynson in 1551. We have made numerous changes, including some minor abridgments, to put these passages into a style and language more accessible to modern readers.

UTOPIA¹

From Book I

"I have no doubt, Master More," said Hythloday, "that wherever men have private property and money is the measure of everything, there it is hardly possible for the commonwealth to be justly governed or to flourish in prosperity. Unless, that is, you think that justice is done when all things are in the hands of evil men, or that prosperity and happiness are found when everything is divided among a few—and even those few do not really thrive—while all the rest live in misery and wretchedness."

"This is so different from the wise and godly ordinances of the Utopians, among whom a few laws are sufficient to keep everything well and happily ordered. In Utopia virtue is greatly esteemed, and even though all things are owned in common, everyone has everything in abundance. Now compare them with the many nations that are always making new, but unsatisfactory, laws. In these countries every man claims that he has his own property, or private goods; but the new laws they make every day are not enough to enable everyone to enjoy or defend those things that he calls his own. This much is made plain by the never-ending legal suits that constantly arise. When I consider these things, then, I have to agree with Plato, and I do not wonder that he made no laws for those who refused to share their wealth equally. For this wise man clearly foresaw that the only way to promote the well-being of the public as a whole is to establish equality of all goods.² Such equality can never be found where every man's goods are his private property. For there every man lays claims to as much as he can get. Then, no matter how great the abundance, a few divide all the riches among themselves, leaving the rest in poverty. And for the most part, the poor are more worthy to be happy and prosperous than the others. The rich are covetous, crafty, and really quite useless; the poor, on the other hand, are lowly, simple, and by their daily labor more beneficial to the common welfare than to themselves.

Thus I am fully persuaded that no equitable and just distribution of goods can be made, and

that there can be no true well-being in human affairs, unless private property is outlawed and banished. But as long as private property is the rule, the heavy and inevitable burden of poverty and wretchedness will weigh down the largest and best part of mankind. I grant that this burden may be eased, but it cannot be wholly removed while private property reigns. There might be a law that prohibits anyone from possessing more than a certain measure of land, perhaps, or more than a certain sum of money. Or there might be laws preventing the king from being too powerful, or the people from being too proud and unruly. Still other laws might proclaim that public offices must not be obtained by bribes and gifts, or that they cannot be bought or sold. Putting offices up for sale simply encourages the officials to regain the money they spent by defrauding and plundering the public; and if the offices go to those who offer bribes and gifts, the government will be in the hands of the rich, not the wise. By laws such as these, in short, the evils of which I have been speaking can be lightened and mitigated, just as people who are desperately ill and beyond cure can be kept alive with constant care. But these nations will never be completely cured and brought to a healthy condition while every man is master of his own property. You may cure one part, but in doing so you aggravate the illness of another. Helping one person harms another, for nothing can be given to anyone unless it is taken from someone else. . . ."

From Book II (Hythloday's Account of Utopia)

Where money is the standard of everything, many vain and superfluous occupations must be pursued, although they serve only for wanton luxury and false pleasure. If the same multitude that now is occupied in work were divided into the few occupations that the truly necessary work requires, the abundance of goods that would ensue would be so great that the prices would doubtless be too low for the craftsmen

to maintain their livelihood. But if all these who are now busy in useless occupations, with the whole flock of those who live idly and slothfully, consuming and wasting every one of them more of those things that come from other men's labor than two of the workers themselves do—if all these, I say, were set to useful occupations, you can easily see how little would be enough, even too much, to supply us with everything we require for the sake of necessity or comfort. Yes, or even for pleasure, as long as the pleasure be true and natural.

This is made plain by the life of Utopia itself. There in each city, including the adjoining countryside, scarcely 500 persons of all those who are neither too old nor too weak to work are excused from labor. Among these are the Syphogrants,³ who are exempted by law from labor. Yet they do not take advantage of the exemption because they want to set an example by their labor that will encourage others to work. There are also the scholars to whom the people, upon the recommendation of the priest and secret election by the Syphogrants, give an exemption from labor so that they may devote themselves to learning. But if any of the scholars fails to meet the expected standards, he is immediately plucked back to the company of workers. On the other hand, it often happens that a craftsman so earnestly devotes his free time to learning, and so profits by his diligence, that he is taken from his handicraft and promoted to the company of the learned.

From these scholars the ambassadors, priests, and Tranibors⁴ are chosen, as is the prince himself, whom they in their old tongue called Barzanes, and now call Ademus.⁵ The rest of the people are neither idle nor occupied with useless work, so it may easily be judged how much good work they may do in a few hours. They also have the advantage that in most of the necessary trades they need not work as much as other nations do. First of all, the building or repairing of houses takes everywhere else so many men's time because the careless heir allows the house his father built to fall into decay. So while he might have preserved it at little cost, his successor is now constrained to build it anew at

great expense. Many times also one man has so refined and delicate a taste that he sets no value on a house that cost another man much money. As the house is neglected and shortly falls into ruin, the man of refined taste builds another one in another place at no less cost. But among the Utopians, where all things are in good order and the commonwealth is well-regulated, it very seldom happens that they choose a new plot to build a house upon. They not only find quick remedies for existing faults, but also prevent those that are likely to occur. In this way their houses last long with little labor and small repairs—so long that their carpenters and builders sometimes have almost nothing to do, in which case they hew timber at home, and square and trim stones, so that if any work needs to be done, it may be finished even more speedily.

Now note how few workers their clothing requires. First of all, while they are at work they are dressed in simple leather or skins that will last seven years. When they go out they put on a cloak which hides the other homely apparel. These cloaks throughout the island are all the same color, and that is the natural color of the wool. They therefore not only need much less wool than people in other countries, but the wool they do need costs them much less. Linen is made with less labor, so it is used more. But in linen only whiteness is valued, and in wool only cleanliness. As for the fineness of the thread, they don't care. Yet this is why in other places four or five cloth gowns of diverse colors, and as many silk coats, are not enough for one man. Yes, and if he is the fashionable sort, even ten are too few. But in Utopia one garment will serve a man very well for two years. Why should he desire more? If he had them, he would be neither better protected from the cold nor in any way appear better dressed.

Because they are all engaged in useful occupations, there is plenty of everything they need; and because a few workers are enough for each craft, they sometimes bring out great numbers of people to repair the highways, if any need repair. Many times, also, when they have no such work to do, an open proclamation is made that they should devote fewer hours to work. For

the authorities do not force the citizens to labor unnecessarily. Why should they? The chief aim of the constitution and government is to spare people as much time as possible from necessary occupations so that they can leave the labor of the body and give time to the freedom and culture of the mind. For this, they suppose, is what makes for a truly happy life. . . .

The Utopians use gold and silver in such a way as to prevent anyone from placing a greater value on these metals than they naturally deserve. Who does not see that these metals are less valuable than iron? Men can live no better without iron than without fire and water. But nature has given gold and silver no use that we could not do without. It is the folly of men that sets a higher value on them because they are rare. Nature, however, as a tender and loving mother, has placed the best and most necessary things in the open all about us, such as air, water, and the earth itself, and has hidden farthest from us vain and useless things. . . .

The Utopians have devised, then, a plan that is as consistent with their laws and customs as it is contrary to ours, where gold is so cherished. The plan may even seem incredible, as a result, to those unfamiliar with it. They eat and drink from earthen and glass vessels, which are well and cleverly made, but which have little value. Of gold and silver, however, they make chamber pots and similar containers that serve for the most vile uses, not only in their common halls, but in everyone's private house.⁶ Furthermore, they make great chains and fetters of these metals to bind their slaves.⁷ Finally, those who commit crimes must wear gold rings on their ears and fingers, gold chains around their necks, and gold crowns around their heads. In this way the Utopians arrange to have gold and silver serve as marks of reproach and infamy. Other peoples grieve if they must do without these metals, as if gold and silver were their own lives. But if they should be taken all at once from the Utopians, no one there would think he had lost as much as a penny.

They gather pearls from the sea and diamonds and rubies from certain rocks. They do not search for them, but if they find them by

chance they cut and polish them, then decorate their infants with them. In their early years the children are fond and proud of such ornaments. When they are a little older and wiser, though, they see that only children wear such trifles, and they put them away as shameful, without any bidding from their parents, just as our children cast away their marbles, rattles, and dolls when they grow older. How these laws and customs, so different from other nations, lead to different ideas and desires was made most clear to me by the arrival of the ambassadors of the Anemolians.⁸

These ambassadors came to Amaurot⁹ while I was there. Because they came to negotiate great and weighty matters, three representatives from each Utopian city gathered before them. The ambassadors of other countries who had been there before knew the manners of the Utopians, so they knew that no honor was given to sumptuous and costly apparel—silks were condemned, gold considered disgraceful—and they came to Amaurot in plain and simple clothing. But the Anemolians, who lived far away and had little acquaintance with Utopia, decided upon hearing that Utopians all wore the same simple clothing that they must not have the things they did not wear. Being more proud than wise, the Anemolians determined to dress as gorgeously as the gods themselves, and thus to dazzle the eyes of the poor Utopians with their glistening clothes. So in came the three ambassadors with 100 servants dressed in many colors, most of them in silk. The ambassadors themselves, who were noblemen in their own country, wore clothes of gold, with great gold chains, gold hanging from their ears, gold rings on their fingers, brooches and strings of gold glistening with pearls and jewels upon their caps—trimmed and adorned, in short, with all those things which among the Utopians were either the punishment of slaves, the mark of disgrace upon wrong-doers, or trifles for young children's play. It would have done a man good, therefore, to have seen how proudly they displayed their peacock feathers, how much they made of their painted sheaths, and how loftily they advanced themselves when they compared

their brilliant apparel with the poor garments of the Utopians, who swarmed into the streets. On the other hand, it was no less pleasant to see how much they were deceived and how far they missed their purpose. For to the eyes of the Utopians, except for the few who had been in other countries, all that gorgeous apparel seemed shameful. In fact, they saluted the lowest and most abject of the Anemolians, mistaking them for the nobles, while they ignored the ambassadors, whom they judged to be slaves because of their golden chains. You should have seen the children who had thrown away their pearls and jewels dig and push when they saw these items on the ambassadors' capes. "Look Mother," they said, "at that big ninny who still wears pearls and jewels like a little child." But the mother would earnestly say, "Hush, Son, I think he is one of the ambassador's fools." Others found fault with the golden chains because they were so small and weak that a slave could easily break them; or so large that he might slip them off and run away.

But when the ambassadors had been there a day or two and saw so much gold so little esteemed, and more gold in the chains of one fugitive slave than in all their costly ornaments, they put away shamefully all that gorgeous array of which they had been so proud. For their part, the Utopians marveled that anyone who may behold the stars or the sun could be so foolish as to delight in the sparkling of a trifling stone, or that any man is so mad as to count himself a better person for the fine quality of the wool he wears. No matter how fine, they say, the same wool was once worn by a sheep, which was nothing but a sheep the whole time she wore it.

They marvel also that gold, so useless in itself, is now valued so highly among all people that man himself is held in less esteem than gold. A lumpish blockhead, with no more wit than an ass, nevertheless shall have many wise and good men at his command simply because he has a great heap of gold. But if the gold should be taken from him and given to the lowest servant in his household either by fortune or by some subtle trick of the law (which no less than fortune raises up the low and pulls down

the high), then he as well as his money shall shortly go into the service of his servant. . . .

I have described to you as truly as I could the form and order of that commonwealth which in my judgment is not only the best, but the only one that can rightly claim the name of a commonwealth or republic. In other places they speak of the common good, but every man procures his private good. Here, where nothing is private, the common affairs are their real concern. In both cases they have good reason to act as they do. For in other countries, no matter how prosperous the country may be, who knows that he will not starve if he makes no special provision for himself? Therefore he is compelled to look out for himself rather than the people—that is, for others. Where all things are owned in common, on the contrary, no one shall lack anything necessary for his private use, so long as the common storehouses and barns are sufficiently stocked. There nothing is distributed in a niggardly way, nor is anyone poor. And though no one owns anything, yet everyone is rich. For what can be richer than to live joyfully, free from worries about making a living? No man is vexed by his wife's importunate complaints, nor dreads poverty for his sons, nor sorrows because he cannot provide a dowry for his daughter. Instead, the Utopians do not worry at all about the livelihood and prosperity of themselves and their kin: their wives, their children, their nephews, their children's children, and all that shall follow in their posterity. Besides this, they provide as much for those who were once laborers, but are now too weak to work, as for those who are still working.

Now I would like to see if anyone is so bold as to compare this with the so-called justice of other nations—among whom, upon my soul, I can find no sign of equity and justice. Is it justice when a rich goldsmith or money-lender, or anyone who either does nothing at all or nothing necessary to the common good, has a pleasant and prosperous life, while poor laborers, carters, ironsmiths, carpenters, and plowmen by great and continual toil are barely able to stay alive? Their work is so necessary that no commonwealth could last a year without it;

yet their lives are so wretched and miserable that the condition of the beasts of burden may seem better. . . . Not only are these wretched workers tormented with hard and unprofitable labor, but they must also suffer the prospect of a penniless old age. For their daily wage is so little that it will not suffice for that day, much less yield any surplus that may be saved for the relief of old age.

Is this not an unjust country?¹⁰ It gives great rewards to so-called gentlemen, goldsmiths, and other idlers and flatterers, or to those who devise useless pleasures, on the one hand; then, on the other, it fails to provide for poor plowmen, coal miners, laborers, carters, ironsmiths, and carpenters, without whom no commonwealth can survive. After it has abused the labors of their lusty and flowering years, it abandons them to a miserable death. Besides this, the rich men every day snatch away from the poor some part of their livelihood, either by private fraud or public law. So to their despicable treatment of the workers whose pains promote the public good, the rich now give the name of justice under law.

Therefore when I consider all these commonwealths which nowadays flourish everywhere, God help me but I perceive nothing but a conspiracy of the rich, who serve their own interests under the name of the common good. They invent all sorts of ways to keep what they have unjustly acquired, as well as ways to employ the labor of the poor for as little money as possible. These devices, the rich declare, must be kept and observed for the sake of the common good—that is, for the welfare also of the poor people—and so they are made laws. But when these most wicked and vicious men have by their insatiable covetousness divided among themselves all those things that would suffice for *all* men, they are still far from enjoying the happiness of the Utopian commonwealth. In Utopia, where the desire for money is banished along with its use, how great a heap of cares is cut away! How great an occasion for wickedness and mischief is pulled up by the roots! Who does not know that fraud, theft, plunder, brawling, quarreling, faction, strife, chiding, contention,

murder, treason, and poisoning, which are revenged but not prevented by punishment, die out when money dies? Or that fear, grief, care, toils, and anxiety perish the same moment that money perishes? Yes, poverty itself, which only seemed to be the lack of money, would vanish if money were gone.

That you may perceive this more plainly, consider some barren and unfruitful year in which many thousands of people have starved. I dare to say that at the end of that desperate time enough grain might have been found in the rich men's barns to feed everyone whom famine and pestilence killed. So easily might men make their living if that worthy princess, Lady Money, did not stand in the way. I am sure that the rich understand this. Even they must know that it is better to lack nothing one really needs than to have many unnecessary things—better to be rid of innumerable cares and troubles than to be besieged with great riches. I do not doubt that every man's respect for his private interest, or the authority of our savior Christ (who knew and counselled what is best), would have brought all the world long ago into the ways of the public welfare if it were not for that one beast, the princess and mother of all wrongdoing—pride. Pride measures happiness and prosperity not by her own advantages, but by the miseries and disadvantages of others. She would not be content if there were no wretches to mock and scorn, no one whose misery might bring out her happiness, no one whose poverty she might torment and increase by gorgeously displaying her riches. This hellhound creeps into men's hearts and keeps them from entering the right path of life. Pride is so deeply rooted in men's breasts that she cannot easily be plucked out.

Although I would gladly wish the form of a true commonwealth for all nations, I am glad that it has chanced to fall to the Utopians. They have laid such foundations of their commonwealth as shall endure forever, as far as one can foresee. Because the chief causes of ambition and factions and the other vices have been pulled up by the roots, the Utopians are in no jeopardy of the domestic dissension that has brought to ruin the well fortified and strongly

defended wealth and riches of many cities. And as long as perfect concord remains and wholesome laws are enforced at home, the envy of foreign princes will not be able to conquer or shake Utopia, for they have tried many times and always been driven back.

NOTES

1. More coined the word "utopia" as a pun from the Greek *eu-topos*, "good" or "happy place," and *ou-topos*, "no place."—Eds.
2. In the just society Plato envisions in his *Republic*, the rulers, or Guardians, share everything in common, although most of the people are allowed to own private property.—Eds.
3. Hythloday had earlier explained that Utopian cities are divided into groups of 30 households, with each group electing an official called a Syphogrant.—Eds.

4. A Tranibor is an official, elected annually, with authority over 10 Syphogrants and the 300 families they represent.—Eds.
5. In classical Greek, *Barzanes* means "Son of Zeus"; *Ademus*, "without people."—Eds.
6. Strictly speaking, houses are not privately owned in Utopia. According to Hythloday's account, moreover, all houses are alike and every ten years they are redistributed by lottery.—Eds.
7. Most slaves in Utopia are either prisoners of war or people guilty of heinous offenses. There is also a group of what we now would call servants, comprising foreigners who prefer slavery in Utopia to life in their native land.—Eds.
8. *Anemolian* is Greek for "windy people."—Eds.
9. Amaurot is the capital city of Utopia.—Eds.
10. That is, England, and other European countries, and not Utopia.—Eds.

Address to the Inhabitants of New Lanark

ROBERT OWEN

In 1800, Robert Owen (1771–1858) took control of a cotton mill in New Lanark, Scotland. Unlike other mill owners, Owen took great interest in the living conditions of his workers, providing them with decent housing and schools for their children. New Lanark became a great success, as Owen indicates in this excerpt from his address to his workers, and this success encouraged Owen to engage in other social experiments on a broader scale. One of these was the socialist community of New Harmony, Indiana, which Owen launched in 1824, only to see it collapse at great personal expense within four years.

ADDRESS TO THE INHABITANTS OF NEW LANARK

Every society which exists at present, as well as every society which history records, has been formed and governed on a belief in the following notions, assumed as *first principles*.

First,—That it is in the power of every individual to form his own character.

Hence the various systems called by the name of religion, codes of law, and punishments. Hence also the angry passions entertained by individuals and nations towards each other.

Second,—That the affections are at the command of the individual.

Hence insincerity and degradation of character. Hence the miseries of domestic life, and more than one-half of all the crimes of mankind.

Third,—That it is necessary that a large portion of mankind should exist in ignorance and poverty, in order to secure to the remaining part such a degree of happiness as they now enjoy.

Hence a system of counteraction in the pursuits of men, a general opposition among individuals to the interests of each other, and the necessary effects of such a system,—ignorance, poverty, and vice.

Facts prove, however—

First,—That character is universally formed *for*, and not *by*, the individual.

Second,—That *any* habits and sentiments may be given to mankind.

Third,—That the affections are *not* under the control of the individual.

Fourth,—That every individual may be trained to produce far more than he can consume, while there is a sufficiency of soil left for him to cultivate.

Fifth,—That nature has provided means by which population may be at all times maintained in the proper state to give the greatest happiness to every individual, without one check of vice or misery.

Sixth,—That any community may be arranged, on a due combination of the foregoing principles, in such a manner, as not only to withdraw vice, poverty, and, in a great degree, misery, from the world, but also to place *every* individual under circumstances in which he

shall enjoy more permanent happiness than can be given to *any* individual under the principles which have hitherto regulated society.

Seventh,—That all the assumed fundamental principles on which society has hitherto been founded are erroneous, and may be demonstrated to be contrary to fact. And—

Eighth,—That the change which would follow the abandonment of those erroneous maxims which bring misery into the world, and the adoption of principles of truth, unfolding a system which shall remove and for ever exclude that misery, may be effected without the slightest injury to any human being.

Here is the groundwork,—these are the data, on which society shall ere long be rearranged; and for this simple reason, that it will be rendered evident that it will be for the immediate and future interest of every one to lend his most active assistance gradually to reform society on this basis. I say *gradually*, for in that word the most important considerations are involved. Any sudden and coercive attempt which may be made to remove even misery from men will prove injurious rather than beneficial. Their minds must be gradually prepared by an essential alteration of the circumstances which surround them, for any great and important change and amelioration in their condition. They must be first convinced of their blindness: this cannot be effected, even among the least unreasonable, or those termed the best part of mankind, in their present state, without creating some degree of irritation. This irritation must then be tranquillized before another step ought to be attempted; and a general conviction must be established of the truth of the principles on which the projected change is to be founded. Their introduction into practice will then become easy,—difficulties will vanish as we approach them,—and, afterwards, the desire to see the whole system carried immediately into effect will exceed the means of putting it into execution.

The principles on which this practical system is founded are not new; separately, or partially united, they have been often recommended by

the sages of antiquity, and by modern writers. But it is not known to me that they have ever been thus combined. Yet it can be demonstrated that it is only by their being *all brought into practice together* that they are to be rendered beneficial to mankind; and sure I am that this is the earliest period in the history of man when they could be successfully introduced into practice.

I do not intend to hide from you that the change will be great. "Old things shall pass away, and all shall become new."

But this change will bear no resemblance to any of the revolutions which have hitherto occurred. These have been alone calculated to generate and call forth all the evil passions of hatred and revenge: but that system which is now contemplated will effectually eradicate every feeling of irritation and ill will which exists among mankind. The whole proceedings of those who govern and instruct the world will be reversed. Instead of spending ages in telling mankind what they ought to think and how they ought to act, the instructors and governors of the world will acquire a knowledge that will enable them, in one generation, to apply the means which shall cheerfully induce each of those whom they control and influence, not only to think, but to act in such a manner as shall be best for himself and best for every human being. And yet this extraordinary result will take place without punishment or apparent force.

Under this system, before commands are issued it shall be known whether they can or cannot be obeyed. Men shall not be called upon to assent to doctrines and to dogmas which do not carry conviction to their minds. They shall not be taught that merit can exist in doing, or that demerit can arise from not doing that over which they have no control. They shall not be told, as at present, that they must love that which, by the constitution of their nature, they are compelled to dislike. They shall not be trained in wild imaginary notions, that inevitably make them despise and hate all mankind out of the little narrow circle in which they exist, and then be told that they must heartily and sincerely love all their fellow-men. No, my friends, that system which shall make its way into the heart of every

man, is founded upon principles which have not the slightest resemblance to any of those I have alluded to. On the contrary, it is directly opposed to them; and the effects it will produce in practice will differ as much from the practice which history records, and from that which we see around us, as hypocrisy, hatred, envy, revenge, wars, poverty, injustice, oppression, and all their consequent misery, differ from that genuine charity and sincere kindness of which we perpetually hear, but which we have never seen, and which, under the existing systems, we never can see.

That charity and that kindness admit of no exception. They extend to every child of man, however he may have been taught, however he may have been trained. They consider not what country gave him birth, what may be his complexion, what his habits or his sentiments. Genuine charity and true kindness instruct, that whatever these may be, should they prove the very reverse of what we have been taught to think right and best, our conduct towards him, our sentiments with respect to him, should undergo no change; for, when we shall see things as they really are, we shall know that this our fellow-man has undergone the same kind of process and training from infancy which we have experienced; that he has been as effectually taught to deem his sentiments and actions right, as we have been to imagine ours right and his wrong; when perhaps the only difference is, that we were born in one country, and he in another. If this be not true, then indeed are all our prospects hopeless; then fierce contentions, poverty, and vice, must continue for ever. Fortunately, however, there is now a superabundance of facts to remove all doubt from every mind; and the principles may now be fully developed, which will easily explain the source of all the opinions which now perplex and divide the world; and their source being discovered, mankind may withdraw all those which are false and injurious, and prevent any evil from arising in consequence of the varieties of sentiments, or rather of feelings, which may afterwards remain.

In short, my friends, the New System is founded on principles which will enable mankind to *prevent*, in the rising generation, almost

all, if not all of the evils and miseries which we and our forefathers have experienced. A correct knowledge of human nature will be acquired; ignorance will be removed; the angry passions will be prevented from gaining any strength; charity and kindness will universally prevail; poverty will not be known; the interest of each individual will be in strict unison with the interest of every individual in the world. There will not be any counteraction of wishes and desires among men. Temperance and simplicity of

manners will be the characteristics of every part of society. The natural defects of the few will be amply compensated by the increased attention and kindness towards them of the many. None will have cause to complain; for each will possess, without injury to another, all that can tend to his comfort, his well-being, and his happiness. . . . Such will be the certain consequences of the introduction into practice of that system for which I have been silently preparing the way for upwards of five-and-twenty years.

On the Materialist Conception of History

KARL MARX

The following excerpt from Marx's preface to his *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859) provides a particularly clear and succinct account of what Marx meant by "the materialist conception [or interpretation] of history," which he called "a guiding thread for my studies." Following this historical-materialist thread led Marx to conclude that capitalism is a transitory historical stage that will be superseded and replaced by a less competitive, more cooperative, and truly humane and egalitarian economic and social system.

Source: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Selected Works in One Volume* (New York: International Publishers, 1968), pp. 181–185. Reprinted by permission.

ON THE MATERIALIST CONCEPTION OF HISTORY

In the year 1842–43, as editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, I experienced for the first time the embarrassment of having to take part in discussions on so-called material interests. . . . [A]t that time when the good will “to go further” greatly outweighed knowledge of the subject, a philosophically weakly tinged echo of French socialism and communism made itself audible in the *Rheinische Zeitung*. I declared myself against this amateurism, but frankly confessed at the same time . . . that my previous studies did not permit me even to venture any judgment on the content of the French tendencies. . . .

The first work which I undertook for a solution of the doubts which assailed me was a critical review of the Hegelian philosophy of right. . . . My investigation led to the result that legal relations as well as forms of state are to be grasped neither from themselves nor from the so-called general development of the human mind, but rather have their roots in the material conditions of life. . . . The general result at which I arrived and which, once won, served as a guiding thread for my studies, can be briefly formulated as follows: In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions [i.e., shapes or influences] the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material-productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or—what is but a legal expression for the same thing—with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto.

From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations a distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic—in short, ideological—forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself, so can we not judge of such a period of transformation by its own consciousness; on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained rather from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social productive forces and the relations of production. No social order ever perishes before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have developed; and new, higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society itself. Therefore mankind always sets itself only such tasks as it can solve; since, looking at the matter more closely, it will always be found that the task itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution already exist or are at least in the process of formation. In broad outlines Asiatic, ancient, feudal, and modern bourgeois modes of production can be designated as progressive epochs in the economic formation of society. The bourgeois relations of production are the last antagonistic form of the social process of production—antagonistic not in the sense of individual antagonism, but of one arising from the social conditions of life of the individuals; at the same time the productive forces developing in the womb of bourgeois society create the material conditions for the solution of that antagonism. This social formation brings, therefore, the prehistory of human society to a close.

Evolutionary Socialism

EDUARD BERNSTEIN

Eduard Bernstein (1850–1932) believed that Marx's theory of social change was generally correct in outline but false or mistaken in several important details. He therefore favored revising Marx's theory to make it consistent with newly emerging facts—including the fact that the predicted “immiseration of the proletariat” had not occurred. Rather than becoming worse off, Bernstein noted, European and North American workers were increasingly prosperous. This had happened, he claimed, because the capitalist system was “evolving” into socialism as it was transformed by trade unions and working-class or socialist political parties. Bernstein's book *Evolutionary Socialism* (originally published in 1899) provided the classic statement of “revisionist” Marxism.

Source: Eduard Bernstein, *Evolutionary Socialism*, translated by Edith Harvey (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1909), pp. 203–213, 216–222, 224.

EVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISM

... No socialist capable of thinking, dreams today in England of an imminent victory for socialism by means of a violent revolution—none dreams of a quick conquest of Parliament by a revolutionary proletariat. But they rely more and more on work in the municipalities and other self-governing bodies. The early contempt for the trade union movement has been given up; a closer sympathy has been won for it and, here and there also, for the co-operative movement.

And the ultimate aim? Well, that just remains an ultimate aim. "The working classes have no fixed and perfect Utopias to introduce by means of a vote of the nation. They know that in order to work out their own emancipation—and with it that higher form of life which the present form of society irresistibly makes for by its own economic development—they, the working classes, have to pass through long struggles, a whole series of historical processes, by means of which men and circumstances will be completely transformed. They have no ideals to realise, they have only to set at liberty the elements of the new society which have already been developed in the womb of the collapsing bourgeois society." So writes Marx in *Civil War in France*. I was thinking of this utterance, not in every point but in its fundamental thought in writing down the sentence about the ultimate aim. For after all what does it say but that the movement, the series of processes, is everything, whilst every aim fixed beforehand in its details is immaterial to it. I have declared already that I willingly abandon the form of the sentence about the ultimate aim as far as it admits the interpretation that every general aim of the working class movement formulated as a principle should be declared valueless. But the preconceived theories about the drift of the movement which go beyond such a generally expressed aim, which try to determine the direction of the movement and its character without an ever-vigilant eye upon facts and experience, must necessarily always pass into Utopianism, and at some time or other stand in the way, and hinder the real theoretical and practical progress of the movement.

Whoever knows even but a little of the history of German social democracy also knows that the party has become important by continued action in contravention of such theories and of infringing resolutions founded on them. ... A theory or declaration of principle which does not allow attention being paid at every stage of development to the actual interests of the working classes, will always be set aside just as all forswearing of reforming detail work and of the support of neighbouring middle class parties has again and again been forgotten; and again and again at the congresses of the party will the complaint be heard that here and there in the electoral contest the ultimate aim of socialism has not been put sufficiently in the foreground.

[Some of my Marxist critics] ... cart me over to the "opponents of scientific socialism."

Unfortunately for "scientific" socialism, the Marxist propositions on the hopelessness of the position of the worker have been upset in a book [by Marx himself] which bears the title, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. There we read of the "physical and moral regeneration" of the textile workers in Lancashire through the [English] Factory Law of 1847, which "struck the feeblest eye." A bourgeois republic was not even necessary to bring about a certain improvement in the situation of a large section of workers! In the same book we read that the society of today is no firm crystal but an organism capable of change and constantly engaged in a process of change, that also in the treatment of economic questions on the part of the official representatives of this society an "improvement was unmistakable." Further that the author had devoted so large a space in his book to the results of the English Factory Laws in order to spur the Continent to imitate them and thus to work so that the process of transforming society may be accomplished in ever more humane forms. All of which signifies not hopelessness but capability of improvement in the condition of the worker. And, as since 1866, when this was written, the legislation depicted has not grown weaker but has been improved,

made more general, and has been supplemented by laws and organisations working in the same direction, there can be no more doubt to-day than formerly of the hopefulness of the position of the worker. If to state such facts means following the "immortal Bastiat," then among the first ranks of these followers is—Karl Marx.¹

Now, it can be asserted against me that Marx certainly recognised those improvements, but that the chapter on the historical tendency of capitalist accumulation at the end of the first volume of *Capital* shows how little these details influenced his fundamental mode of viewing things. To which I answer that as far as that is correct it speaks against that chapter and not against me.

One can interpret this chapter in very different kinds of ways. I believe I was the first to point out, and indeed repeatedly, that it was a summary characterisation of the tendency of a development which is found in capitalist accumulation, but which in practice is not carried out completely and which therefore need not be driven to the critical point of the antagonism there depicted. Engels has never expressed himself against this interpretation of mine, never, either verbally or in print, declared it to be wrong. Nor did he say a word against me when I wrote, in 1891: "It is clear that where legislation, this systematic and conscious action of society, interferes in an appropriate way, the working of the tendencies of economic development is thwarted, under some circumstances can even be annihilated. Marx and Engels have not only never denied this, but, on the contrary, have always emphasised it." If one reads the chapter mentioned with this idea, one will also, in a few sentences, silently place the word "tendency" and thus be spared the need of bringing this chapter into accord with reality by distorting arts of interpretation. But then the chapter itself would become of less value the more progress is made in actual evolution. For its theoretic importance does not lie in the argument of the general tendency to capitalistic centralisation and accumulation which had been affirmed long before Marx by bourgeois economists and socialists, but in the presentation, peculiar to

Marx, of circumstances and forms under which it would work at a more advanced stage of evolution, and of the results to which it would lead. But in this respect actual evolution is really always bringing forth new arrangements, forces, facts, in face of which that presentation seems insufficient and loses to a corresponding extent the capability of serving as a sketch of the coming evolution. That is how I understand it.

One can, however, understand this chapter differently. One can conceive it in this way, that all the improvements mentioned there, and some possibly ensuing, only create temporary remedies against the oppressive tendencies of capitalism, that they signify unimportant modifications which cannot in the long run effect anything substantially against the critical point of antagonisms laid down by Marx, that this will finally appear—if not literally yet substantially—in the manner depicted, and will lead to catastrophic change by violence. This interpretation can be founded on the categorical wording of the last sentences of the chapter, and receives a certain confirmation because at the end reference is again made to the *Communist Manifesto*, whilst Hegel also appeared shortly before with his negation of the negation—the restoration on a new foundation of individual property negated by the capitalist manner of production.

According to my view, it is impossible simply to declare the one conception right and the other absolutely wrong. To me the chapter illustrates a dualism which runs through the whole monumental work of Marx, and which also finds expression in a less pregnant fashion in other passages—a dualism which consists in this, that the work aims at being a scientific inquiry and also at proving a theory laid down long before its drafting; a formula lies at the basis of it in which the result to which the exposition should lead is fixed beforehand. The return to the *Communist Manifesto* points here to a real residue of Utopianism in the Marxist system. Marx had accepted the solution of the Utopians in essentials, but had recognised their means and proofs as inadequate. He therefore undertook a revision of them, and this with the zeal, the critical acuteness, and love of truth of

a scientific genius. He suppressed no important fact, he also forbore belittling artificially the importance of these facts as long as the object of the inquiry had no immediate reference to the final aim of the formula to be proved. To that point his work is free of every tendency necessarily interfering with the scientific method.

For the general sympathy with the strivings for emancipation of the working classes does not in itself stand in the way of the scientific method. But, as Marx approaches a point when that final aim enters seriously into the question, he becomes uncertain and unreliable. Such contradictions then appear as were shown in the book under consideration, for instance, in the section on the movement of incomes in modern society. It thus appears that this great scientific spirit was, in the end, a slave to a doctrine. To express it figuratively, he has raised a mighty building within the framework of a scaffolding he found existing, and in its erection he kept strictly to the laws of scientific architecture as long as they did not collide with the conditions which the construction of the scaffolding prescribed, but he neglected or evaded them when the scaffolding did not allow of their observance. Where the scaffolding put limits in the way of the building, instead of destroying the scaffolding, he changed the building itself at the cost of its right proportions and so made it all the more dependent on the scaffolding. Was it the consciousness of this irrational relation which caused him continually to pass from completing his work to amending special parts of it? However that may be, my conviction is that wherever that dualism shows itself the scaffolding must fall if the building is to grow in its right proportions. In the latter, and not in the former, is found what is worthy to live in Marx.

Nothing confirms me more in this conception than the anxiety with which some persons seek to maintain certain statements in *Capital*, which are falsified by facts. It is just some of the more deeply devoted followers of Marx who have not been able to separate themselves from the dialectical form of the work—that is the scaffolding alluded to—who do this. At least,

that is only how I can explain the words of a man, otherwise so amenable to facts as Karl Kautsky, who, when I observed in Stuttgart that the number of wealthy people for many years had increased, not decreased, answered: "If that were true then the date of our victory would not only be very long postponed, but we should never attain our goal. If it be capitalists who increase and not those with no possessions, then we are going ever further from our goal the more evolution progresses, then capitalism grows stronger, not socialism."²

That the number of the wealthy increases and does not diminish is not an invention of bourgeois "harmony economists," but a fact established by the boards of assessment for taxes, often to the chagrin of those concerned, a fact which can no longer be disputed. But what is the significance of this fact as regards the victory of socialism? Why should the realisation of socialism depend on its refutation? Well, simply for this reason: because the dialectical scheme seems so to prescribe it; because a post threatens to fall out of the scaffolding if one admits that the social surplus product is appropriated by an increasing instead of a decreasing number of possessors. But it is only the speculative theory that is affected by this matter; it does not at all affect the actual movement. Neither the struggle of the workers for democracy in politics nor their struggle for democracy in industry is touched by it. The prospects of this struggle do not depend on the theory of concentration of capital in the hands of a diminishing number of magnates, nor on the whole dialectical scaffolding of which this is a plank, but on the growth of social wealth and of the social productive forces, in conjunction with general social progress, and, particularly, in conjunction with the intellectual and moral advance of the working classes themselves.

Suppose the victory of socialism depended on the constant shrinkage in the number of capitalist magnates, social democracy, if it wanted to act logically, either would have to support the heaping up of capital in ever fewer hands, or at least to give no support to anything that would stop this shrinkage. As a matter of fact it often

enough does neither the one nor the other. These considerations, for instance, do not govern its votes on questions of taxation. From the standpoint of the catastrophic theory a great part of this practical activity of the working classes is an undoing of work that ought to be allowed to be done. It is not social democracy which is wrong in this respect. The fault lies in the doctrine which assumes that progress depends on the deterioration of social conditions. . . .

[In earlier] circumstances a reference to politics could appear only to be a turning aside from more pressing duties. Today these conditions have been to some extent removed, and therefore no person capable of reflecting will think of criticising political action. . . .

[L]aw, or the path of legislative reform, is the slower way, and revolutionary force the quicker and more radical. But that only is true in a restricted sense. Whether the legislative or the revolutionary method is the more promising depends entirely on the nature of the measures and on their relation to different classes and customs of the people.

In general, one may say here that the revolutionary way (always in the sense of revolution by violence) does quicker work as far as it deals with removal of obstacles which a privileged minority places in the path of social progress: that its strength lies on its negative side.

Constitutional legislation works more slowly in this respect as a rule. Its path is usually that of compromise, not the prohibition, but the buying out of acquired rights. But it is stronger than the revolution scheme where prejudice and the limited horizon of the great mass of the people appear as hindrances to social progress, and it offers greater advantages where it is a question of the creation of permanent economic arrangements capable of lasting; in other words, it is best adapted to positive social-political work.

In legislation, intellect dominates over emotion in quiet times; during a revolution emotion dominates over intellect. But if emotion is often an imperfect leader, the intellect is a slow motive force. Where a revolution sins by over haste, the every-day legislator sins by

procrastination. Legislation works as a systematic force, revolution as an elementary force.

As soon as a nation has attained a position where the rights of the propertied minority have ceased to be a serious obstacle to social progress, where the negative tasks of political action are less pressing than the positive, then the appeal to a revolution by force becomes a meaningless phrase. One can overturn a government or a privileged minority, but not a nation. When the working classes do not possess very strong economic organisations of their own, and have not attained, by means of education on self-governing bodies, a high degree of mental independence, the dictatorship of the proletariat means the dictatorship of club orators and writers. I would not wish that those who see in the oppression and tricking of the working men's organisations and in the exclusion of working men from the legislature and government the highest point of the art of political policy should experience their error in practice. Just as little would I desire it for the working class movement itself.

One has not overcome Utopianism if one assumes that there is in the present, or ascribes to the present, what is to be in the future. We have to take working men as they are. And they are neither so universally pauperised as was set out in the *Communist Manifesto*, nor so free from prejudices and weaknesses as their courtiers wish to make us believe. They have the virtues and failings of the economic and social conditions under which they live. And neither these conditions nor their effects can be put on one side from one day to another.

Have we attained the required degree of development of the productive forces for the abolition of classes? In face of the fantastic figures which were formerly set up in proof of this and which rested on generalisations based on the development of particularly favoured industries, socialist writers in modern times have endeavoured to reach by carefully detailed calculations, appropriate estimates of the possibilities of production in a socialist society, and their results are very different from those figures. Of a general reduction of hours of

labour to five, four, or even three or two hours, such as was formerly accepted, there can be no hope at any time within sight, unless the general standard of life is much reduced. Even under a collective organisation of work, labour must begin very young and only cease at a rather advanced age, if it is to be reduced considerably below an eight-hours' day. Those persons ought to understand this first of all who indulge in the most extreme exaggerations regarding the ratio of the number of the nonpropertied classes to that of the propertied. But he who thinks irrationally on one point does so usually on another. . . .

[H]e who surveys the actual workers' movement will also find that the freedom from those qualities which appeared Philistine to a person born in the bourgeoisie, is very little valued by the workers, that they in no way support the morale of proletarianism, but, on the contrary, tend to make a Philistine out of a proletarian. With the roving proletarian without a family and home, no lasting, firm trade union movement would be possible. It is no bourgeois prejudice, but a conviction gained through decades of labour organisation, which has made so many of the English labour leaders—socialists and non-socialists—into zealous adherents of the temperance movement. The working class socialists know the faults of their class, and the most conscientious among them, far from glorifying these faults, seek to overcome them with all their power.

We cannot demand from a class, the great majority of whose members live under crowded conditions, are badly educated, and have an

uncertain and insufficient income, the high intellectual and moral standard which the organisation and existence of a socialist community presupposes. We will, therefore, not ascribe it to them by way of fiction. Let us rejoice at the great stock of intelligence, renunciation, and energy which the modern working class movement has partly revealed, partly produced; but we must not assign, without discrimination to the masses, the millions, what holds good, say, of hundreds of thousands. I will not repeat the declarations which have been made to me on this point by working men [themselves]. . . . [I]t is not every epoch that produces a Marx, and even for a man of equal genius the working class movement of today is too great to enable him to occupy the position which Marx fills in its history. Today it needs, in addition to the fighting spirit, the coordinating and constructive thinkers who are intellectually enough advanced to be able to separate the chaff from the wheat, who are great enough in their mode of thinking to recognise also the little plant that has grown on another soil than theirs, and who, perhaps, though not kings, are warm-hearted republicans in the domain of socialist thought.

NOTES

1. Claude-Frederic Bastiat (1801–1850) was a French economist and opponent of socialism.—Eds.
2. Karl Kautsky (1854–1938) was a Marxist theorist and a leader of the German Social Democratic Party.—Eds.

Revisionism, Imperialism, and Revolution

V. I. LENIN

Marxism-Leninism, as the ideology of the Soviet Union was officially called before the dramatic changes of the late 1980s, was largely the creation of one man. Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (1870–1924)—better known by his revolutionary pseudonym, Lenin—was, until his death, the preeminent Russian revolutionary and Marxian theorist. In “adapting” Marxism to Russian conditions, Lenin made several significant changes. For one, he held that a proletarian revolution could occur in Russia, despite the fact that Russia in the early twentieth century had a relatively small proletariat (the overwhelming majority of Russian workers were not wage-laborers but peasants who tilled the soil). For another, he claimed that only a small, highly organized, conspiratorial “vanguard” party could supply the political will (or “consciousness”) and leadership required to radically transform such an economically and politically backward country. A fiercely combative critic of other interpretations of Marxism, Lenin claimed that his alone was the “true” interpretation; all others—including the “revisionist” view espoused by Bernstein—were deviations from or distortions of Marx’s “scientific” outlook. If revolution had not come to the advanced capitalist countries, as Marx had predicted, that was because the workers in those countries were afflicted with “trade-union consciousness,” that is, the mistaken view that they could organize themselves into trade unions and political parties to work for their interests. This strategy was successful, said Lenin, only because the capitalist countries were exploiting the workers of nonindustrial countries. Such exploitation would cease—and revolution would come to capitalist countries themselves—when workers in those underdeveloped countries made their own anti-colonial or anti-imperialist revolutions.

Source: V. I. Lenin, *Izbrannye proizvedenii a v dvukh tomakh* (*Selected Works in Two Volumes*), Moscow, 1936, vol. 1, pp. 39–45; and pp. 587–89; vol. 2, pp. 133–46; Translated expressly for this volume by Anna Brailovsky.

MARXISM AND REVISIONISM

A well-known saying proclaims that if geometrical axioms concerned human interests they would most likely be refuted. Theories of natural history that concerned the old prejudices of theology provoked, and still provoke, the most rabid opposition. It is no wonder that the teaching of Marx, which directly serves to enlighten and organise the leading class in contemporary society, indicates the tasks facing this class, and demonstrates the inevitable (by virtue of economic development) replacement of the present system by a new order—it is no wonder that this teaching has had to fight for every step along the path of its life.

There is no point of even speaking of bourgeois science and philosophy, taught in the official manner by official professors in order to befuddle the rising generation of the propertied classes and to “coach” it against enemies external and internal. This science will not even hear of Marxism, declaring it to have been refuted and annihilated. Both young scholars making a career of refuting socialism, and [decrepit] elders, preserving the testaments of all sorts of outworn “systems,” attack Marx with equal fervor. The growth of Marxism, and the fact that its ideas are spreading and taking hold among the working class, inevitably provokes greater frequency and intensity of these bourgeois sorties against Marxism, which becomes stronger, more hardened and more vigorous each time it is “annihilated” by official science.

But even among doctrines connected with the struggle of the working class, prevalent mainly among the proletariat, it was very far from immediate that Marxism attained a firm position. In the first half-century of its existence (from the 1840s on) Marxism was engaged in combat with theories fundamentally hostile to it. In the early forties Marx and Engels settled accounts with the radical Young Hegelians who subscribed to the viewpoint of philosophical idealism. At the end of the forties a struggle emerges in the field of economic doctrine—against Proudhonism. The fifties mark the culmination of this struggle in criticism of

the parties and doctrines that manifested themselves in the stormy year of 1848. In the sixties the struggle shifts from the field of general theory to a field closer to the immediate workers' movement: the ejection of Bakuninism from the International. In the early seventies in Germany, the Proudhonist Mühlberger comes for a brief time to the fore, and in the late seventies it is the positivist Dühring. But the influence of either on the proletariat is already absolutely insignificant. Marxism has already unquestionably conquered all other ideologies of the workers' movement.

By the nineties this victory was, in its main features, complete. Even in the Romance-language countries, where the traditions of Proudhonism held their ground longest of all, the workers' parties in effect built their programmes and tactics on Marxist foundations. The revived international organisation of the workers' movement—in the form of periodic international congresses—established itself immediately and almost without resistance on Marxist grounds in every essential. But after Marxism had ousted all the more or less self-contained doctrines hostile to it, the tendencies that had been expressed in those doctrines began to seek other pathways. The forms and causes of the struggle changed, but the struggle continued. And the second half-century of the existence of Marxism began (in the nineties) with a struggle of a current hostile to Marxism being waged within Marxism itself.

Bernstein, a one-time orthodox Marxist, gave his name to this current, having come forth with the most noise and the most consistent articulation of corrections to Marx—a re-examination of Marx, revisionsim. Even in Russia where—owing to the economic backwardness of the country and the preponderance of a peasant population weighed down by the remnants of serfdom—non-Marxist socialism naturally persisted longest of all; even in Russia, it is plainly, before our very eyes, transforming into revisionism. Both in the agrarian question (the programme of the municipalisation of all

land) and in general questions of programme and tactics, our Social-Narodniks [trans. note: Social-Populists] are increasingly substituting the "corrections" to Marx for the moribund, obsolescent remnants of the old system, which in its own way was self-contained and fundamentally hostile to Marxism.

Pre-Marxist socialism has been defeated. It now continues the struggle not on its own independent ground, but on the general ground of Marxism, as revisionism. Let us take a look, then, at what the ideological content of revisionism may be.

In the sphere of philosophy revisionism took up the rear of bourgeois professorial "science." The professors went "back to Kant"—and revisionism dragged along after the neo-Kantians. The professors repeated the [banalities] uttered a thousand times by the priests against philosophical materialism—and the revisionists, smiling condescendingly, mumbled . . . that materialism had been "refuted" long ago. The professors disparaged Hegel as a "dead dog," and preaching idealism themselves, only an idealism a thousand times more petty and banal than Hegel's, contemptuously shrugged their shoulders at the subject of dialectics—and the revisionists clambered after them into the swamp of the philosophical banalization of science, replacing "clever" (and revolutionary) dialectics with "simple" (and calm) "evolution." The professors earned their official keep by adjusting both their idealist and their "critical" systems to approach the reigning medieval "philosophy" (i.e., to theology)—and the revisionists sidled up to them, trying to make religion a "private affair" not in relation to the modern state, but in relation to the party of the leading class.

There is no need to speak of what significance such "corrections" of Marx had in actual class terms: the matter is self-evident. . . .

Going on to political economy, it must be noted first of all that in this sphere the "corrections" of the revisionists were much more multifaceted and circumstantial; attempts were made to influence the public with "new data on economic development." It was said that consolidation and the ousting of small-scale production

by large-scale production do not occur in agriculture at all, while they occur in the spheres of commerce and industry extremely slowly. It was said that crises had now become rarer and weaker, and that cartels and trusts would probably enable capital to eliminate crises altogether. It was said that the "theory of collapse" toward which capitalism is headed was unfounded, given the tendency of class antagonisms to become milder and less acute. It was said, finally, that it would not be amiss to correct Marx's theory of value, too. . . .

The struggle against the revisionists on these questions reanimated the theoretical thinking of international socialism as fruitfully as did Engels's controversy with Dühring twenty years earlier. The arguments of the revisionists were examined on hand of facts and figures. It was proven that the revisionists were systematically painting contemporary small-scale production in rosy tones. The technical and commercial superiority of large-scale *production* over small-scale, not only in industry, but also in agriculture, is proven by irrefutable facts. But in agriculture, commodity production is far less developed, and modern statisticians and economists are usually not particularly capable of singling out the special branches (sometimes even the operations) of agriculture that indicate the progressive involvement of global economic *exchange*. On the ruins of natural economy, small-scale production survives on a continually worsening diet, by chronic starvation, by lengthening the working day, by deterioration in the quality and care of cattle, in a word, by the very same methods with which cottage industry survived in the face of capitalist manufacture. Every advance in science and technology inevitably and implacably undermines the foundations of small-scale production in capitalist society; and the task of socialist political economy is to investigate this process in all its frequently complicated and [convoluted] forms, and to demonstrate to the small-scale producer the impossibility of his holding his own under capitalism, the hopelessness of peasant farming under capitalism, and the necessity for the peasant to adopt the viewpoint of the proletariat.

On this question the revisionists sinned in the scientific sense, by superficial generalisations of facts snatched one-sidedly out of the context of the capitalist system as a whole; in the political sense, they sinned in that they inevitably, whether they wanted to or not, invited or urged the peasant to take the point of view of the small proprietor (i.e., the point of view of the bourgeoisie) instead of urging him to take the point of view of the revolutionary proletariat.

With the theory of crises and the theory of collapse, matters stood even worse for revisionism. Only for a very brief time, and only for the most short-sighted people, was it conceivable to think of refashioning the foundations of Marx's theory under the influence of a few years of industrial boom and prosperity. That crises were not a thing of the past was very quickly demonstrated to the revisionists by reality: crisis came after prosperity. The forms, the sequence, the picture of particular crises changed, but crises remained an inevitable component of the capitalist system. Cartels and trusts, while they unify production, at the same time exacerbate for all to see the anarchy of production and the proletariat's lack of financial means, thereby making class antagonisms more acute to an unprecedented extent. It is precisely the most recent gigantic trusts that make especially obvious, to an especially great extent, that capitalism is heading for collapse—in the sense both of isolated political and economic crises and in the sense of the complete collapse of the entire capitalist system. The recent financial crisis in America and the horrible increase of unemployment all over Europe, to say nothing of the impending industrial crisis of which many signs portend—all this has led to the recent "theories" of the revisionists becoming forgotten by everybody, including, it seems, many of the revisionists themselves. Only it would not do well to forget the lessons this instability of the intellectuals has taught the working class.

As to the theory of value, it need only be said that apart from rather vague hints and sighs in the direction of Böhm-Bawerk, here the

revisionists have contributed absolutely nothing, and have therefore left no traces whatever in the development of scientific thought.

In the sphere of politics, revisionism did actually try to re-examine the foundation of Marxism, namely, the doctrine of class struggle. Political freedom, democracy and universal suffrage eliminate the ground for class struggle—we were told—and render false the old proposition of the *Communist Manifesto* that laborers have no fatherland. In a democracy, so they would have it, since the "will of the majority" rules, one must neither view the state as an organ of class rule, nor reject alliances with the progressive social-reform bourgeoisie against the reactionaries.

It's indisputable that these revisionist objections amounted to a rather well-constructed system of views: namely, the long familiar liberal-bourgeois views. The liberals have always said that bourgeois parliamentarism destroys classes and class divisions, since all citizens without distinction have the right to vote and the right to participate in the government of the country. The whole history of Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century, and the whole history of the Russian revolution in the early twentieth, plainly demonstrate how absurd such views are. Economic distinctions are not mitigated but aggravated and intensified under the freedom of "democratic" capitalism. Parliamentarism does not eliminate, but lays bare the essence of the most democratic bourgeois republics as organs of class oppression. By helping to enlighten and to organise immeasurably wider masses of the population than those which had previously taken an active part in political events, parliamentarism thus paves the way not for the elimination of crises and political revolutions, but for the maximum intensification of civil war during such revolutions. The events in Paris in the spring of 1871 and in Russia in the winter of 1905 showed clear as day how inevitably this intensification comes about. The French bourgeoisie, without a moment's hesitation, made a deal with the national enemy, with the foreign army which had ruined its fatherland, in order to crush the proletariat

movement. Whoever does not understand the inevitable inner dialectics of parliamentarism and bourgeois democracy—which leads to an even more abrupt resolution of disputes by mass violence than in previous times—will never be able to conduct, on the ground of this parliamentarism, campaigns of propaganda and agitation consistent in principle, actually preparing the working-class masses for victorious participation in such “disputes.” The experience of alliances, agreements and blocs with social-reform liberalism in the West and with the liberal reformists (Cadets) in the Russian revolution has convincingly shown that these agreements only blunt the consciousness of the masses, not strengthening but weakening the actual significance of their struggle, linking fighters with elements that are least capable of fighting and the most unreliable and treacherous. French Millerandism—the largest experiment in applying revisionist political tactics on a wide and truly national scale—has provided a practical appraisal of revisionism that will never be forgotten by the proletariat all over the world.

A natural complement to the economic and political tendencies of revisionism was its attitude to the ultimate aim of the socialist movement. “The ultimate aim is nothing; the movement is everything”—this catch-phrase of Bernstein’s expresses the essence of revisionism better than many long deliberations. To determine its conduct on a case to case basis, to adapt itself to the events of the day and to the vagaries of political trifles, to forget the fundamental interests of the proletariat and the basic features of the entire capitalist system, and all of capitalist evolution, to sacrifice these fundamental interests for the real or assumed advantages of the moment—such is the politics of revisionism. And it patently follows from the very nature of this politics that it may assume an infinite variety of forms, and that every more or less “new” issue, every more or less unexpected and unforeseen turn of events, though such a turn may alter the basic course of development only to a minute degree and only for the briefest period, will always inevitably give rise to one or another variety of revisionism.

The inevitability of revisionism is predicated on its class roots in modern society. Revisionism is an international phenomenon. No socialist who is even the least bit informed and capable of thinking could have the slightest doubt that the relation between the orthodox and the Bernsteinians in Germany, the Guesdists and the Jaurèsists (and now particularly the Broussists) in France, the Social Democratic Federation and the Independent Labour Party in Great Britain, Brouckère and Vandervelde in Belgium, the Integralists and the Reformists in Italy, the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks in Russia, is everywhere essentially of the same kind, notwithstanding the immense variety of national conditions and historical factors in the present circumstances of all these countries. The “division” within contemporary international socialism now runs essentially along the same line in all the different countries of the world, which testifies to a tremendous step forward in comparison to what was happening thirty or forty years ago, when non-uniform tendencies in different countries were struggling within one unified international socialist movement. And even the “revisionism from the left” that has now taken form in the Romance-language countries as “revolutionary syndicalism” is also adapting itself to Marxism, “correcting” it: Labriola in Italy and Lagardelle in France constantly make appeals from Marx-the-improperly-understood to Marx-who-understands-properly.

We cannot stop here to analyse the ideological content of *this* revisionism, which is still far from being as developed as opportunist revisionism: it has not yet become internationalized, has not yet withstood a single large-scale practical clash with a socialist party in even a single country. We confine ourselves therefore to that “revisionism from the right” that was described above.

Wherein lies its inevitability in capitalist society? Why is it more profound than the differences of national particularities and of degrees of capitalist development? Because in every capitalist country, at the side of the proletariat, there are always broad strata of petty bourgeoisie, small proprietors. Capitalism arose

and is constantly arising out of small-scale production with numerous "middle strata" that are inevitably generated anew by capitalism (appendages to the factory, cottage industry, small workshops scattered all over the country in the face of the demands of big industries, such as the bicycle and automobile industries, etc.). These new small producers are just as inevitably cast out again into the ranks of the proletariat. It is quite natural that the petty-bourgeois world-view should again and again crop up in the ranks of the broad workers' parties. It is quite natural that this should be so and always will be so, right up to the upheavals of the proletarian revolution. For it would be a profound mistake to think that the "complete" proletarianisation of the majority of the population is necessary to carry out such a revolution. What we now frequently experience only in the domain of ideology: disputes over theoretical corrections to Marx; what now crops

up in practice only with regard to particular individual issues of the labour movement, in the form of tactical disagreements with the revisionists and divisions on those grounds—is bound to be experienced by the working class on an incomparably larger scale, when the proletarian revolution exacerbates all the disputed questions, concentrates all dissonances on points that are of the most immediate importance in determining the conduct of the masses, and compels in the heat of battle to distinguish enemies from friends, and to cast out bad allies in order to deal decisive blows to the enemy.

The ideological struggle waged by revolutionary Marxism against revisionism at the end of the nineteenth century is but a prelude to the great revolutionary battles of the proletariat, which is marching forward toward the complete victory of its cause despite all the vacillations and weaknesses of the petty bourgeoisie.

IMPERIALISM: THE HIGHEST STAGE OF CAPITALISM

... When nine-tenths of Africa had been seized (by 1900), when the whole world had been divvied up, inevitably there arrived the era of monopoly colonial possession and, consequently, of particularly acute struggle for the division and the repartition of the world.

The extent to which monopolistic capitalism has intensified all the contradictions of capitalism is generally known. It suffices to point to the high cost of living and to the tyranny of the cartels. This intensification of contradictions constitutes the most powerful driving force of the transitional period of history that began with the time of the final victory of global finance capital.

Monopolies, oligarchy, the striving for domination rather than the striving for freedom, the exploitation of an increasing number of small or weak nations by a handful of the richest or most powerful nations—all this has given birth to those distinctive features of imperialism that compel us to characterize it as parasitic or decaying capitalism. More and more prominently there emerges, as one of the

tendencies of imperialism, the creation of the "rentier state," the usurer state, in which the bourgeoisie lives increasingly on the export of capital and by "clipping coupons." It would be a mistake to believe that this tendency to decay precludes the rapid growth of capitalism. No. In the epoch of imperialism, certain branches of industry, certain strata of the bourgeoisie, certain nations demonstrate now one and now another of these tendencies to a greater or lesser degree. On the whole, capitalism is growing immeasurably faster than ever; but not only is this growth becoming more uneven in general, but this unevenness also manifests itself in part in the decay of countries that are richest in capital (Britain).

In regard to the rapidity of Germany's economic development, Riesser, the author of the study on big German banks, states: "The progress of the preceding period (1848-70), which was not overly slow, relates to the speed of all economic development in Germany, including its banks, during the present period (1870-1905) in approximately the same way that the speed of the mail coach in the good old days

relates to the speed of the contemporary automobile, which races so swiftly that it becomes a danger both to the innocent pedestrian, and to the occupants of the car themselves." In its turn, this extraordinarily quickly-growing finance capital—precisely because it has grown so quickly—is not against transitioning to a more "tranquil" possession of colonies that are subject to seizure, and not only by peaceful means, from richer nations. Meanwhile, in the United States, economic development in the last decades proceeded even more rapidly than in Germany, and precisely *thanks* to this fact, the parasitic features of this newest form of American capitalism have emerged with particular prominence. On the other hand, a comparison of, say, the republican American bourgeoisie with the monarchist Japanese or German bourgeoisie demonstrates

that the greatest political distinction diminishes to an extreme degree in the epoch of imperialism—not because it is unimportant in general, but because in all these cases we are talking about a bourgeoisie with the specific features of parasitism.

The high level of monopoly profits received by capitalists in one of the many branches of industry, in one of the many countries, etc., makes it economically possible for them to bribe certain segments of the labor force—and for a time, a fairly considerable minority of them—winning them over to the side of the bourgeoisie in a given industry or nation against all the others. And the intensified antagonism between imperialist nations caused by the partitioning of the world intensifies this tendency.

STATE AND REVOLUTION

Ordinary discussions about the state continually make the same mistake against which Engels cautions here, and which we noted in passing previously. Namely: they continually forget that the elimination of the state also means the elimination of democracy; that the withering away of the state is the withering away of democracy.

At first glance such a claim seems extremely strange and incomprehensible; perhaps some might even become apprehensive that we are expecting the advent of a social order in which the principle of the subordination of the minority to the majority will not be observed—for is not democracy after all the recognition of this principle?

No. Democracy is *not* identical with the subordination of the minority to the majority. Democracy is a *state* that acknowledges the subordination of the minority to the majority; i.e., it is an organization for the systematic use of force by one class against another, one portion of the population against another.

Our ultimate goal is the elimination of the state, i.e. all organized and systematic uses of force, any use of force against people as such. We do not expect the advent of a social order in which the principle of the subordination

of the minority to the majority would not be observed. But we are convinced that as we strive for socialism it will begin to evolve into communism, and in conjunction with this any necessity for the use of force against people in general, for the *subordination* of one person to another, one portion of the population to another, will vanish—for people will become *habituated* to observing the fundamental conditions of society *without force* and *without subordination*.

It is in order to underscore this element of habit that Engels speaks of a new *generation*, which has "grown up under new, free social conditions [and] will turn out to be capable of tossing out all that state system rubbish"—any state system, including the democratic republican state system.

To explain this requires examining the question of the economic basis for the withering away of the state.

The Economic Basis of the Withering Away of the State

The most substantial explanation of this question was provided by Marx in his "Critique of the Gotha Programme" (letter to Bracke,

May 5, 1875, published in *Die Neue Zeit*, Bd. 1, No. 18, 1890-91). The polemical part of this remarkable work, which consists of a critique of Lassalleanism, has, so to speak, overshadowed its positive part; namely: the analysis of the connection between the development of communism and the withering away of the state.

1. Marx's Statement of the Question

From a superficial comparison of Marx's letter to Bracke of May 5, 1875 and our earlier examination of Engels' letter to Bebel of March 28, 1875 it might seem that Marx is far more "pro-state" than Engels, and that the difference between the two authors' views of the state is quite significant.

Engels suggests to Bebel that they quit going on about the state altogether and completely banish the word state from the programme, substituting for it the word "community"; Engels even declares that the Commune was no longer a state in the proper sense. Meanwhile Marx even speaks about the "future state system of communist society," i.e., as if he acknowledges the necessity of the state, even under communism.

But such a view would be fundamentally mistaken. A closer examination demonstrates that the views of Marx and Engels regarding the state and its withering away correspond entirely, and the aforementioned statement by Marx refers specifically to the *dying system* of state.

Clearly, it is out of the question to try to determine the moment that the state shall "wither away" in the future, especially since this obviously constitutes a lengthy process. The apparent difference between Marx and Engels is explained by the difference between the tasks that each set for himself and pursued. Engels set himself the task of demonstrating to Bebel—explicitly, bluntly, and in broad strokes—the utter absurdity of the prevailing prejudices regarding the state (which were shared to no small degree by Lasalle). Marx touches upon *this* question only in passing. He is interested in a different theme: the *development* of communist society.

Marx's entire theory is nothing other than the application of the theory of development—in its most consistent, complete, considered, and richly meaningful form—to modern capitalism. It is natural that for Marx the question would arise of the application of this theory also to the *impending* collapse of capitalism and to the *future* development of *future* communism.

But on the basis of what *facts* could one pose the question of the future development of future communism?

On the basis of the fact that it *arises* out of capitalism, develops historically from capitalism, and results from the action of the social force that is *born* of capitalism. In Marx, there is not the shadow of the attempt to construct utopias and vainly guess about what cannot be known. Marx posits the question of communism as a naturalist writer would for instance posit the question of the development of a new biological variety, given that we know that it arose in such and such a way, and is evolving in a certain particular direction.

First of all, Marx sweeps away the confusion introduced by the Gotha Programme into the question of the relationship between state and society.

... "Contemporary society"—he writes—"is a capitalist society, which exists in all civilized countries more or less free of an admixture of medievalism, more or less differentiated by the particular historical development of each country, more or less developed." In contrast, "the contemporary state" changes with each state border. It is completely different in the Prussian-German empire from that in Switzerland; completely different in England from that in the United States. "The contemporary state," consequently, is a fiction.

However, despite the colorful variety of their forms, the various states of various civilized countries have this in common between them—that they are standing on the soil of contemporary bourgeois society, in a more or less developed stage of capitalism. They therefore have certain common essential characteristics. In this sense, one can speak of a "contemporary state system" in contrast to that future in

which its current root, bourgeois society, shall wither away.

Consequently the question presents itself thus: what sort of transformation will the state system undergo in communist society? In other words: what social functions will then remain that are analogous to state functions? This question can only be answered scientifically; and regardless of how many thousands of times the word "people" is combined with the word "state," this will not bring us "the smallest bit closer to its resolution." . . .

Having ridiculed any discussion of the "people's state" in this manner, Marx poses the question and cautions, as it were, that in order to answer it scientifically one may bring to bear only well-established scientific facts.

The first thing that is established with complete certainty by the entire theory of development, and all of science as a whole—and which the utopians had forgotten, and which today's opportunists, who are afraid of socialist revolution, are forgetting—is the circumstance that historically there must undoubtedly be a special stage or special phase of *transition* from capitalism to communism.

2. The Transition from Capitalism to Communism

. . . . "Between capitalism and communist society"—Marx continues—"lies a period of revolutionary transformation of one into the other. This period also corresponds with a transitional political period, and the state during this period can be nothing other than the *revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*." . . .

This conclusion rests for Marx upon the analysis of the role the proletariat plays in contemporary capitalist society, upon the facts concerning the development of this society and irreconcilability of the opposing interests of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

Previously the question had been posed this way: in order to secure its emancipation, the proletariat must overthrow the bourgeoisie, win political power, establish its revolutionary dictatorship.

Now the question is posed somewhat differently: the transition from capitalist society, which is evolving toward communism, to communist society is not possible without a "transitional political period," and the state during this period could only be the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

How then does this dictatorship relate to democracy?

We have seen that the "Communist Manifesto" simply places two concepts side by side: "the transformation of the proletariat into the ruling class" and "the attainment of democracy." On the basis of everything that has been set out above it is possible to determine more precisely how democracy changes in the transition from capitalism to communism.

In capitalist society, provided it develops under the most favourable conditions, we have a more or less complete democracy in a democratic republic. But this democracy is always hemmed in by the narrow frame of capitalist exploitation, and for that reason always remains in essence a democracy for the minority, only for the propertied classes, only for the rich. In capitalist society, freedom always remains approximately the same as it had been in the ancient Greek republics: freedom for the slave owners. Due to the conditions of capitalist exploitation, contemporary slaves for hire remain so crushed by need and poverty that "democracy is their last concern," "politics is their last concern"; that in the ordinary, peaceful course of events, the majority of the population is alienated from participation in public and political life.

The correctness of this assertion is perhaps most clearly confirmed by Germany precisely because in this state, constitutional legality has endured with amazing longevity and stability for almost half a century (1871–1914), and during this time, social democracy has been able to achieve far more than it has in other countries toward the "use of legality" and toward the organization of such a high proportion of workers into a political party; like no where else in the world.

And what is this greatest proportion of politically conscious and active wage slaves out of

all those observed in capitalist society? One million members in the Social-Democratic Party—out of 15 million wage workers! Three million in trade organizations—out of 15 million!

Democracy for a paltry minority, democracy for the rich—that is the democracy of capitalist society. If we take a closer look at the mechanism of capitalist democracy, then we will see everywhere and all over, in the “minor”—supposedly minor—details of voting rights (residential requirements, the exclusion of women, etc.), and in the technical aspects of the representative institutions, and in the *de facto* obstacles to the right of assembly (public buildings are not for “paupers!”), and in the purely capitalist organization of the daily press, and so on, and so forth, then we will see restriction after restriction upon democracy. These restrictions, exceptions, obstacles for the poor seem minor, especially in the eyes of one who has never known need and has never come into contact with the oppressed classes in their mass existence (and such are nine-tenths, if not ninety-nine hundredths, of the bourgeois publicists and politicians)—but taken together, these restrictions exclude and push out poverty from politics, from active participation in democracy.

Marx grasped this *essence* of capitalist democracy splendidly when he said in his analysis of the experience of the Commune: the oppressed are allowed once every few years to decide which particular representative of the oppressing class shall represent and repress them in parliament!

But departing from this capitalist democracy—which is inescapably narrow, and stealthily pushes aside the poor, and is therefore hypocritical and deceitful to the core—forward development does not proceed simply, directly, and smoothly “towards greater and greater democracy,” as the liberal professors and petty-bourgeois opportunists would have it. No. Forward development, i.e., development towards communism, proceeds through the dictatorship of the proletariat, and cannot proceed otherwise, for it is impossible to *break the resistance* of the capitalist exploiters through any other agency or any other way.

As for the dictatorship of the proletariat—i.e., the organization of the vanguard of the oppressed into a ruling class for the suppression of the oppressors—it cannot result simply in a mere expansion of democracy. *Simultaneously* with an immense expansion of democracy—which becomes *for the first time* democracy for the poor, democracy for the people, and not democracy for the money-bags—the dictatorship of the proletariat imposes a series of restrictions on the freedom of the oppressors, the exploiters, the capitalists. We must suppress them in order to free humanity from wage slavery, their resistance must be crushed by force; it is clear that where there is suppression, where there is force, there is no freedom and no democracy.

Engels expressed this beautifully in his letter to Bebel when he said . . . that “the proletariat needs the state, not in the interests of freedom but in the interest of the suppression of its opponents, and when it shall become possible to speak of freedom, there will be no state.”

Democracy for the vast majority of the people, and suppression by force, i.e., exclusion from democracy, for the exploiters and oppressors of the people—this is the nature of the transformation of democracy during the *transition* from capitalism to communism.

Only in communist society, when the resistance of the capitalists has been completely broken, when capitalists have disappeared, when there are no classes (i.e., there is no distinction between the members of society with regard to their relation to the social means of production), *only* then does “the state cease to exist and it becomes *possible to speak of freedom*.” Only then will it be possible to realize a democracy that is actually complete, and actually without any exceptions whatsoever. And only then will democracy begin to *wither away*, due to the simple circumstance that, freed from capitalist slavery, from the countless horrors, savageries, absurdities, and infamies of capitalist exploitation, people will gradually become *accustomed* to observing the fundamental rules of community life that have been known for centuries and repeated for thousands of years in all the dictums—and to observe them without

force, without coercion, without subordination, *without the special apparatus* for coercion called the state.

The expression "the state withers away" is very well-chosen, for it indicates both the gradual and the spontaneous nature of the process. Only habit can, and undoubtedly will, have such an effect; for we observe all around us millions of times how easily people become accustomed to observing the necessary rules of community life when there is no exploitation, when there is nothing that arouses indignation, protest and revolt, and creates the need for *suppression*.

And so: in capitalist society we have a democracy that is curtailed, impoverished, false, a democracy only for the rich, for the minority. The dictatorship of the proletariat, the period of transition to communism, will for the first time provide democracy for the people, for the majority, along with the necessary suppression of the minority, the exploiters. Communism alone is capable of providing truly complete democracy, and the more complete it is, the sooner it will become unnecessary and wither away of its own accord.

In other words, under capitalism we have the state in the proper sense of the word; a special machine for the suppression of one class by another, and in particular, of majority by the minority. Obviously, the success of an undertaking such as the systematic suppression of the exploited majority by the exploiting minority requires the utmost ferocity and savagery of suppression, it requires seas of blood, through which mankind wades its way in conditions of slavery, serfdom, and wage labor.

Furthermore, in the *transition* from capitalism to communism suppression is *still* necessary, but it is already the suppression of the exploiting minority by the exploited majority. A special apparatus, a special machine for suppression, the "state," is *still* necessary, but it is already a transitional state. It is no longer a state in the proper sense of the word; for the suppression of the exploiting minority by the majority of yesterday's wage slaves is a task so comparatively easy, simple and natural that it will cost far less bloodshed than suppressing the revolt of slaves, serfs, or wage-laborers, and it will come out

much cheaper for mankind. And it is compatible with the spread of democracy to such an overwhelming majority of the population that the need for a *special machine* of suppression will begin to disappear. The exploiters, naturally, are unable to suppress the people without the most complex machine for performing such a task, but the *people* can suppress the exploiters even with a very simple "machine," virtually without a "machine," without a special apparatus, by the simple *organization of the armed masses* (such as the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies—we note, getting a bit ahead of ourselves).

Finally, only communism makes the state absolutely unnecessary, for there is *nobody* to be suppressed—"nobody" in the sense of a *class*, of a systematic struggle against a particular section of the population. We are not utopians, and do not in the least deny the possibility and inevitability of excesses on the part of *individual persons*, or the need to suppress *those* excesses. But, in the first place, no special machine, no special apparatus of suppression, is needed for this: this will be done by the armed people themselves, as simply and easily as any crowd of civilized people, even in modern society, breaks apart a fight or prevents the violation of a woman. And, secondly, we know that the root social cause of excesses, which consist in breaking the rules of the community, is the exploitation of the people, their need and their poverty. With the removal of this chief cause, excesses will inevitably begin to "wither away." We do not know how quickly and in what succession, but we do know they will wither away. With their withering away the state will wither away too.

Without veering off into utopias, Marx defined in more detail what can be defined *now* with regard to this future; namely: differentiation between the lower and higher phases (levels, stages) of communist society.

3. The First Phase of Communist Society

In the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Marx refutes in detail Lassalle's idea that under socialism the worker will receive the "undiminished" or "full product of his labor." Marx shows that

it is also necessary to deduct from the total social labor of all society a reserve fund, and a fund for the expansion of production and for the replacement of "worn out" machinery, and so on; and then, from the means of consumption, a fund for the upkeep of government, for schools, hospitals, old people's homes, and so on.

Instead of Lassalle's hazy, unclear, general phrase ("the full product of his labor to the worker"), Marx provides a sober reckoning of how exactly socialist society will have to keep house. Marx attempts a concrete analysis of the conditions of life in a society without capitalism, and says:

What we are dealing with here [in analyzing the programme of the workers' party] is not a communist society that has *developed* on its own foundations, but, on the contrary, one that is just *emerging* precisely from capitalist society, for that reason, in every respect, economically, morally, and intellectually, it still bears the hallmarks of the old society from the depths of which it emerged.

It is this communist society, which has just emerged into the light of day out of the depths of capitalism and which bears in every respect the hallmarks of the old society, that Marx calls the "first," or lowest, phase of communist society.

The means of production have already ceased to be the private property of individuals. The means of production belong to the whole of society. Each member of society, having performed a given portion of the socially necessary work, receives from society an attestation that he has done a such and such an amount of work. And on the basis of this attestation, he receives from the public store of consumer goods a corresponding quantity of products. After deducting the amount of labor that goes to the public fund, every worker, consequently, receives from society as much as he has given to it.

"Equality" seems to reign supreme.

But when Lassalle says, having in mind such a social order (which is usually called socialism, but in Marx goes by the term "the first phase of communism"), that this is "fair distribution," that this is "the equal right of all to an equal

product of labor," Lassalle is mistaken and Marx clarifies his mistake.

"Equal right," says Marx, "is actually present here, but it is *still* a right under 'bourgeois law,' [translator's note: Russian uses the same word for "law" and "right"] which like any law *presupposes inequality*." Any law is an application of the *same* measure to different people who in reality are not the same, are not equal to one another; and that is why "equal right" is a violation of equality and an injustice. In point of fact, everyone, having performed a share of social labor equal to the others, receives an equal share of the social product (after the above-mentioned deductions).

But in the meantime, individual people are not equivalent: one is stronger, another is weaker; one is married, another is not; one has more children, another has fewer, and so on.

". . . Given equal labor," Marx concludes, "and hence an equal share in the social consumption fund, one will in fact receive more than another, one will turn out to be richer than another, and so on. To avoid all this, instead of being equal the right must be unequal."

It follows, then, that the first phase of communism is not yet capable of providing justice and equality: differences and unjust differences in wealth will still remain, but the *exploitation* of man by man will have become impossible, for there will be no possibility to seize the *means of production*—the factories, machines, land, and so on—and make them private property. In smashing Lassalle's petty-bourgeois, vague phrase about "equality" and "justice" *in general*, Marx shows the *course of development* of communist society, which is *compelled* at first to eliminate *only* the particular "injustice" that the means of production have been seized by individuals, and which is *unable* simultaneously to also eliminate the further injustice, which consists in the distribution of consumer goods "according to the amount of labor performed" (and not according to needs).

The vulgar economists, including the bourgeois professors, and including "our own" Tugan, constantly reproach the socialists for supposedly forgetting about the inequality

of people and "dreaming" of eliminating this inequality. Such a reproach, as we see, only proves the extreme ignorance of the bourgeois ideologists.

Not only does Marx take into account the inevitable inequality of people with the greatest exactitude, but he equally takes into account that simply transforming the means of production into the common property of the entire society (commonly called "socialism") *does not remove* the inadequacies of distribution and the inequality of "bourgeois laws," which *continue to prevail* because products are divided "in accordance with labor."

... "But these inadequacies," Marx continues, "are inevitable in the first phase of communist society in the form in which it emerges, after prolonged birth pangs, from capitalist society. The law can never be above the economic structure of society and the cultural development conditioned by it."

In this way, in the first phase of communist society (usually called socialism) "bourgeois law" is *not* abolished in its entirety, but only in part, only in proportion to the economic revolution already attained, i.e., only with respect to the means of production. "Bourgeois law" recognizes them as the private property of individuals. Socialism makes them *common* property. *To that extent*—and only to that extent alone—"bourgeois law" disappears.

However, it still persists in its other part; it persists in its capacity as regulator (determining factor) of the distribution of products and the distribution of labor among the members of society. "He who does not work should not eat"—this socialist principle is already realized. "An equal quantity of products for an equal quantity of labor"—this socialist principle is already realized too. But this is not yet communism, and it does not yet abolish "bourgeois law," which gives unequal individuals equal quantities of products in exchange for unequal (actually unequal) amounts of labor.

This is an "inadequacy," says Marx, but it is unavoidable in the first phase of communism; for one cannot believe, without falling into utopianism, that having overthrown capitalism

people will immediately learn to work for society with *no rules of law whatsoever*. Neither does the abolition of capitalism provide the economic prerequisites for *such* a change immediately.

But aside from "bourgeois law," there *are* no other rules. So therefore, there still remains the need for a state, which, while safeguarding the common ownership of the means of production, would safeguard equality of labor and the equality of product distribution.

The state withers away because there are no more capitalists, no more classes, and therefore it is no longer possible to suppress any class at all.

But the state has not withered away completely yet, because there remains the safeguarding of "bourgeois law," which sanctifies actual inequality. For the state to wither away completely, complete communism is necessary.

4. The Higher Phase of Communist Society

Marx continues:

... In the higher phase of communist society, when the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labor has disappeared; when the antithesis between mental and physical labor has disappeared with it; when labor has ceased being merely a means to make a living and becomes in itself life's prime want; when the productive forces have grown in tandem with the all-round development of the individual, and all the springs of societal wealth will flow at their fullest capacity—only then will it be possible to completely overstep the narrow horizon of bourgeois law and society shall be able to inscribe on its banners: From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!

Only now can we fully appreciate the correctness of Engels' remarks in which he mercilessly ridiculed the absurdity of combining the words "freedom" and "state." So long as the state exists there is no freedom. When there is freedom, there will be no state.

The economic basis for the complete withering away of the state consists in communism at that advanced stage of development at which the antithesis between mental and physical labor

disappears, and consequently, one of the most significant sources of contemporary social inequality also disappears—a source, moreover, that cannot on any account be removed all at once, solely by the conversion of the means of production into public property, solely by the expropriation of the capitalists.

This expropriation will create the *possibility* for the tremendous development of production capacities. And seeing how even now capitalism is already *retarding* this development incredibly, and how much progress could be made on the basis of contemporary technological achievements, we are entitled to say with complete confidence that the expropriation of the capitalists will inevitably result in an enormous expansion of the production capacities of human society. But how quickly this development progresses, how quickly it will arrive at the break with the division of labor, at the elimination of the antithesis between mental and physical labor, at the transformation of labor into “life’s prime want”—this we do not and *cannot* know.

That is why we are entitled to speak only of the inevitable withering away of the state, emphasizing the protracted nature of this process and its dependence upon the speed of the development of the *highest* phase of communism, and leaving completely open the question of the duration or of the concrete forms of this withering away—for the basis on which to resolve such questions *does not exist*.

It will be possible for the state to wither away completely when society effects the rule: “From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs,” i.e., when people have become so accustomed to observing the fundamental rules of communal life and their labor has become so productive that they will voluntarily work *according to their ability*. “The narrow horizon of bourgeois law,” which compels one to calculate with the coldness of Shylock whether one has worked an extra half hour more than the next person, whether one has not been paid less than the next—this narrow horizon will then be overcome. The distribution of products will then no longer require society to regulate the amount of product that everyone

receives; each will freely take “according to his needs.”

From the bourgeois point of view, it is easy to declare that such a social order is “sheer utopia” and to sneer at the socialists for promising everyone the right to receive from society, without any control of the individual citizen’s labor, any quantity of truffles, cars, pianos, etc. Such sneering is what most bourgeois “learned” people get away with even nowadays, but in this way they only reveal their own ignorance and their mercenary defense of capitalism.

Ignorance—for no socialist would ever think to “promise” that the highest phase of communism will arrive; and the *prediction* of the great socialists that it will arrive also presupposes something *other* than the present-day productivity of labor and the present-day philistines capable, like Pomyalovsky’s seminarians, of damaging the stores of communal wealth “for no reason” and demanding the impossible.

Until the “highest” phase of communism arrives, socialists demand the *strictest* control by society and *by the state* over the measure of labor and the measure of consumption; however, this control must *begin* with the expropriation of the capitalists, with control over the capitalists by the workers, and it must be carried out not by a state of bureaucrats, but by a state of *armed* workers.

The mercenary defence of capitalism by the bourgeois ideologists . . . consists precisely in the fact that they substitute arguments and discussions about the distant future for the vital and burning question of *present-day* politics: the expropriation of the capitalists, the conversion of *all* citizens into workers in the service of one large “syndicate”—namely, the whole state; and the complete subordination of all the work of this entire syndicate to a state that is truly democratic, *the state of the Soviets of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies*.

In essence, when a learned professor . . . speaks of foolhardy utopias, of the demagogic promises of the Bolsheviks, of the impossibility of “introducing” socialism, what he has in mind is in fact the highest stage or phase of communism, the introduction of which no one has even

conceived, much less promised, for it absolutely cannot be "introduced."

And this brings us to the question of the scientific distinction between socialism and communism, which Engels touched upon in his above-quoted argument about the incorrectness of the term "Social-Democrat." Politically, the distinction between the first, or lower, and the higher phase of communism will in time, most likely, be tremendous. But it would be ridiculous to acknowledge it at this point, under capitalism; and it is only isolated anarchists who might have put it at the forefront (if there are still any left among the anarchists who have learned nothing in the wake of the "Plekhanov" conversion of the Kropotkins, Grave, Corneli-seen, and other "stars" of anarchism into social-chauvinists or "anarcho-trenchists"—such as Ghe, one of the few anarchists who still maintain a sense of honor and a conscience).

But the scientific difference between socialism and communism is clear. What is usually called socialism is what Marx called the "first," or lower, phase of communist society. To the extent that the means of production become *communal* property, the word "communism" is also applicable here, providing we do not forget that this is *not* complete communism. The great significance of Marx's explications consists in that fact that here, too, he consistently applies materialist dialectics, the theory of development, and regards communism as something which develops *out of* capitalism. Instead of scholastically-invented, "concocted" determinations and fruitless arguments over words (What is socialism? What is communism?), Marx provides an analysis of what might be called the stages of the economic maturity of communism.

In its first phase, or first stage, communism *cannot* as yet be fully economically mature, fully free from the traditions or vestiges of capitalism. That is the source of interesting phenomena such as the retention of "the narrow horizon of *bourgeois* law" under communism in its first phase. Of course, bourgeois law in regard to the distribution of *consumer* goods inevitably presupposes a *bourgeois state* as well, for law is

nothing without an apparatus capable of *enforcing* the observance of the rules of law.

It follows that not only does bourgeois law remain for a time under communism, but even the bourgeois state, without the bourgeoisie!

This may seem like a paradox or simply a dialectical mind game, of which Marxism is often accused by people who have not taken the slightest trouble to study its extraordinarily profound content.

But in point of fact, life shows us remnants of the old in the new at every step, both in nature and in society. And Marx did not arbitrarily insert a bit of "bourgeois" law into communism, but rather took what is economically and politically inevitable in a society emerging out of the *bowels* of capitalism.

Democracy has enormous significance in the struggle of the working class against the capitalists for the emancipation of the former. But democracy is by no means an ultimate boundary not to cross; it is merely one of the stages on the path from federalism to capitalism and from capitalism to communism.

Democracy means equality. The great significance of the proletariat's struggle for equality, and of the banner of equality, is clear if it is understood correctly in the sense of the elimination of *classes*. But democracy means only *formal* equality. And as soon as equality is achieved for all members of society *in relation* to ownership of the means of production, i.e., equality of labor and equality of wages, humanity will inevitably be confronted with the question of going further: from formal equality to actual equality, i.e., to the realization of the rule "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs." By what stages, by way of what practical measures humanity will proceed toward this supreme aim we do not and cannot know. But it is important to realize how infinitely deceitful is the ordinary bourgeois conception that socialism is supposedly something lifeless, rigid, fixed once and for all, when in reality *only* with socialism will there begin a rapid, genuine, truly mass movement forward in all spheres of public and private life, in which the *majority*, and after that the whole, of the population participates.

Democracy is a form of the state, one of its varieties. And consequently, like any state, it represents the organized, systematic use of force against people. On the one hand. But, on the other hand, it signifies the formal recognition of equality between citizens, the equal right of all to determine the structure of the state and its administration. And this, in turn, is bound up with in the fact that, at a certain stage in the development of democracy, it first of all rallies an anti-capitalist revolutionary class, the proletariat, and gives it the opportunity to shatter, smash to bits, wipe off the face of the earth the bourgeois, even the republican-bourgeois, state machine, the standing army, the police and the bureaucracy and to replace them with a *more* democratic—though still a state—machine in the form of a mass of armed workers who transition to universal participation of the people in the militia.

Here “quantity turns into quality”: *such* a degree of democracy implies stepping out of the framework of bourgeois society and beginning its socialist reorganization. If *everyone* actually takes part in the administration of the state, capitalism really can’t hold on. And the development of capitalism, in turn, creates the *preconditions* for truly “everyone” to *be able* to take part in the administration of the state. These preconditions include: universal literacy, which has already been achieved in a number of the most advanced capitalist countries; then the “training and disciplining” of millions of workers by the large, complex, socialized apparatus of the postal service, railways, big factories, large-scale commerce, banking, etc., etc.

Given these *economic* preconditions, it is quite possible to proceed immediately, overnight, from overthrowing the capitalists and the bureaucrats to replacing them with armed workers, with the universally armed population, in the task of *control* of production and distribution, in the task of *keeping account* of labor and products. (One should not confuse the question of control and accounting with the question of the scientifically trained staff of engineers, agronomists, and so on. These gentlemen are working today in obedience to the wishes of

the capitalists and will work even better tomorrow in obedience to the wishes of the armed workers).

Accounting and control—that is *the chief thing* that is required for the “arrangement,” the proper functioning, of the *first phase* of communist society. *All* citizens are transformed here into hired employees of the state, which consists of the armed workers. *All* citizens become employees and workers of a *single* nationwide state “syndicate.” The important thing is that they should work equally, do their proper share of work, and get equal pay. The accounting and control of this have been *simplified* by capitalism to the utmost and reduced to the extraordinarily simple operations—which any literate person can manage—of observation and recording, knowledge of the four operations of arithmetic, and issuing appropriate receipts.

When the *majority* of the people begin, independently and everywhere, to keep such accounts and exercise such control over the capitalists (now converted into employees) and over the petty little intellectuals who keep their capitalist affectations, then this control will become truly universal, general, and national; and there will be no getting away from it, there will be “nowhere to hide.”

The whole of society will have become a single accounting office and a single factory, with equality of labor and equality of pay.

But this “factory” discipline, which—having defeated the capitalists, having overthrown the exploiters—the proletariat will extend to the whole of society, does not in any way represent our ideal, our ultimate goal. Rather, it is only a *step* that is necessary to radically cleanse society of all the vileness and loathsomeness of capitalist exploitation, *and to make further progress.*

From the moment all members of society, or at least the vast majority of them, have learned to manage the state *themselves*, have taken this task into their own hands, have organized control over the insignificant capitalist minority, over the petty gentry who wish to preserve their capitalist affectations and over the workers who have been thoroughly corrupted by capitalism—from this moment the

need for government of any kind begins to disappear altogether. The more complete the democracy, the closer the moment when it becomes unnecessary. The more democratic the "state," which consists of the armed workers and is "no longer a state in the proper sense of the word," the quicker *every form* of state begins to wither away.

For when *everyone* learns to govern and will actually manage societal production on their own, and independently maintain account of and control over the parasites, the children of the gentry, the swindlers and other like "guardians of capitalist traditions," then the escape

from this national accounting and control will inevitably become so insurmountably difficult, such a rare exception, and will probably be accompanied by such swift and severe punishment (for the armed workers are practical men and not sentimental little intellectuals, and they scarcely allow anyone to trifle with them), that the *necessity* of observing the simple, fundamental rules of any communal living will very soon become a *habit*.

And then the door will be thrown wide open for the transition from the first phase of communist society to its higher phase, and with it to the complete withering away of the state.

Looking Backward

EDWARD BELLAMY

Like Eduard Bernstein and some anarcho-communists, the American socialist Edward Bellamy (1850–1898) thought that the process of evolution was leading inevitably to a cooperative socialist society. Unlike the anarchists, however, Bellamy believed that the state would continue to have a role under socialism, albeit a very different one. Bellamy put these ideas into his best-selling novel *Looking Backward* (1888). There Bellamy's late nineteenth-century hero, Julian West, falls into a deep, trancelike sleep, awakening (or so it seems) in the year 2000 to find that a socialist evolution had occurred in the interim. In the following excerpts from *Looking Backward*, West's host, Dr. Leete, and the minister, Mr. Barton, lament the evils of the old capitalist system and explain the advantages of the new, and more just, socialist society.

LOOKING BACKWARD

By way of attempting to give the reader some general impression of the way people lived together in those days, and especially of the relations of the rich and poor to one another, perhaps I cannot do better than to compare society as it then was to a prodigious [stage-]coach which the masses of humanity were harnessed to and dragged toilsomely along a very hilly and sandy road. The driver was hunger, and permitted no lagging, though the pace was necessarily very slow. Despite the difficulty of drawing the coach at all along so hard a road, the top was covered with passengers who never got down, even at the steepest ascents. These seats on top were very breezy and comfortable. Well up out of the dust, their occupants could enjoy the scenery at their leisure, or critically discuss the merits of the straining team. Naturally such places were in great demand and the competition for them was keen, every one seeking as the first end in life to secure a seat on the coach for himself and to leave it to his child after him. By the rule of the coach a man could leave his seat to whom he wished, but on the other hand there were many accidents by which it might at any time be wholly lost. For all that they were so easy, the seats were very insecure, and at every sudden jolt of the coach persons were slipping out of them and falling to the ground, where they were instantly compelled to take hold of the rope and help to drag the coach on which they had before ridden so pleasantly. It was naturally regarded as a terrible misfortune to lose one's seat, and the apprehension that this might happen to them or their friends was a constant cloud upon the happiness of those who rode.

But did they think only of themselves? you ask. Was not their very luxury rendered intolerable to them by comparison with the lot of their brothers and sisters in the harness, and the knowledge that their own weight added to their toil? Had they no compassion for fellow beings from whom fortune only distinguished them? Oh, yes; commiseration was frequently expressed by those who rode for those who had to pull the coach, especially when the vehicle

came to a bad place in the road, as it was constantly doing, or to a particular steep hill. At such times, the desperate straining of the team, their agonized leaping and plunging under the pitiless lashing of hunger, the many who fainted at the rope and were trampled in the mire, made a very distressing spectacle which often called forth highly creditable displays of feeling on the top of the coach. At such times the passengers would call down encouragingly to the toilers of the rope, exhorting them to patience, and holding out hopes of possible compensation in another world for the hardness of their lot, while others contributed to buy salves and liniments for the crippled and injured. It was agreed that it was a great pity that the coach should be so hard to pull, and there was a sense of general relief when the specially bad piece of road was gotten over. This relief was not, indeed, wholly on account of the team, for there was always some danger at these bad places of a general overturn in which all would lose their seats.

It must in truth be admitted that the main effect of the spectacle of the misery of the toilers at the rope was to enhance the passengers' sense of the value of their seats upon the coach, and to cause them to hold on to them more desperately than before. If the passengers could only have felt assured that neither they nor their friends would ever fall from the top, it is probable that, beyond contributing to the funds for liniments and bandages, they would have troubled themselves extremely little about those who dragged the coach.

I am well aware that this will appear to the men and women of the twentieth century as incredible inhumanity, but there are two facts, both very curious, which partly explain it. In the first place, it was firmly and sincerely believed that there was no other way in which Society could get along, except the many pulled at the rope and the few rode, and not only this, but that no very radical improvement even was possible, either in the harness, the coach, the roadway, or the distribution of the toil. It had always been as it was, and it always would be so.

It was a pity, but it could not be helped, and philosophy forbade wasting compassion on what was beyond remedy.

The other fact is yet more curious, consisting in a singular hallucination which those on the top of the coach generally shared, that they were not exactly like their brothers and sisters who pulled at the rope, but of finer clay, in some way belonging to a higher order of beings who might justly expect to be drawn. This seems unaccountable, but, as I once rode on this very coach and shared that very hallucination, I ought to be believed. The strangest thing about the hallucination was that those who had but just climbed up from the ground, before they had outgrown the marks of the rope upon their hands, began to fall under its influence. As for those whose parents and grandparents before them had been so fortunate as to keep their seats on the top, the conviction they cherished of the essential difference between their sort of humanity and the common article was absolute. . . .

Production and Distribution

[T]he warehouse . . . [provided a] remarkable illustration . . . of the prodigiously multiplied efficiency which perfect organization can give to labor. It is like a gigantic mill, into the hopper of which goods are being constantly poured by the train-load and ship-load, to issue at the other end in packages of pounds and ounces, yards and inches, pints and gallons, corresponding to the infinitely complex personal needs of half a million people. Dr. Leete, with the assistance of data furnished by me as to the way goods were sold in my day, figured out some astounding results in the way of the economies effected by the modern system.

As we set out homeward, I said: "After what I have seen today, together with what you have told me, and what I learned under Miss Leete's tutelage at the sample store, I have a tolerably clear idea of your system of distribution, and how it enables you to dispense with a circulating medium. But I should like very much to know something more about your system of production. You have told me in general how

your industrial army is levied and organized, but who directs its efforts? What supreme authority determines what shall be done in every department, so that enough of everything is produced and yet no labor wasted? It seems to me that this must be a wonderfully complex and difficult function, requiring very unusual endowments."

"Does it indeed seem so to you?" responded Dr. Leete. "I assure you that it is nothing of the kind, but on the other hand so simple, and depending on principles so obvious and easily applied, that the functionaries at Washington to whom it is trusted require to be nothing more than men of fair abilities to discharge it to the entire satisfaction of the nation. The machine which they direct is indeed a vast one, but so logical in its principles and direct and simple in its workings, that it all but runs itself; and nobody but a fool could derange it, as I think you will agree after a few words of explanation. Since you already have a pretty good idea of the working of the distributive system, let us begin at that end. Even in your day statisticians were able to tell you the number of yards of cotton, velvet, woolen, the number of barrels of flour, potatoes, butter, number of pairs of shoes, hats, and umbrellas annually consumed by the nation. Owing to the fact that production was in private hands, and that there was no way of getting statistics of actual distribution, these figures were not exact, but they were nearly so. Now that every pin which is given out from a national warehouse is recorded, of course the figures of consumption for any week, month, or year, in the possession of the department of distribution at the end of that period, are precise. On these figures, allowing for tendencies to increase or decrease and for any special causes likely to affect demand, the estimates, say for a year ahead, are based. These estimates, with a proper margin for security, having been accepted by the general administration, the responsibility of the distributive department ceases until the goods are delivered to it. I speak of the estimates being furnished for an entire year ahead, but in reality they cover that much time only in case of the great staples for which the demand can be calculated on as steady. In the great majority of

smaller industries for the product of which popular taste fluctuates, and novelty is frequently required, production is kept barely ahead of consumption, the distributive department furnishing frequent estimates based on the weekly state of demand.

"Now the entire field of productive and constructive industry is divided into ten great departments, each representing a group of allied industries, each particular industry being in turn represented by a subordinate bureau, which has a complete record of the plant and force under its control, of the present product, and means of increasing it. The estimates of the distributive department, after adoption by the administration, are sent as mandates to the ten great departments, which allot them to the subordinate bureaus representing the particular industries, and these set the men at work. Each bureau is responsible for the task given it, and this responsibility is enforced by departmental oversight and that of the administration; nor does the distributive department accept the product without its own inspection; while even if in the hands of the consumer an article turns out unfit, the system enables the fault to be traced back to the original work-man. The production of the commodities for actual public consumption does not, of course, require by any means all the national force of workers. After the necessary contingents have been detailed for the various industries, the amount of labor left for other employment is expended in creating fixed capital, such as buildings, machinery, engineering works, and so forth."

"One point occurs to me," I said, "on which I should think there might be dissatisfaction. Where there is no opportunity for private enterprise, how is there any assurance that the claims of small minorities of the people to have articles produced, for which there is no wide demand, will be respected? An official decree at any moment may deprive them of the means of gratifying some special taste, merely because the majority does not share it."

"That would be tyranny indeed," replied Dr. Leete, "and you may be very sure that it does not happen with us, to whom liberty is as dear as

equality or fraternity. As you come to know our system better, you will see that our officials are in fact, and not merely in name, the agents and servants of the people. The administration has no power to stop the production of any commodity for which there continues to be a demand. Suppose the demand for any article declines to such a point that its production becomes very costly. The price has to be raised in proportion, of course, but as long as the consumer cares to pay it, the production goes on. Again, suppose an article not before produced is demanded. If the administration doubts the reality of the demand, a popular petition guaranteeing a certain basis of consumption compels it to produce the desired article. A government, or a majority, which should undertake to tell the people, or a minority, what they were to eat, drink, or wear, as I believe governments in America did in your day, would be regarded as a curious anachronism indeed. Possibly you had reasons for tolerating these infringements of personal independence, but we should not think them endurable. I am glad you raised this point, for it has given me a chance to show you how much more direct and efficient is the control over production exercised by the individual citizen now than it was in your day, when what you called private initiative prevailed, though it should have been called capitalist initiative, for the average private citizen had little enough share in it."

"You speak of raising the price of costly articles," I said, "How can prices be regulated in a country where there is no competition between buyers or sellers?"

"Just as they were with you," replied Dr. Leete. "You think that needs explaining," he added, as I looked incredulous, "but the explanation need not be long; the cost of the labor which produced it was recognized as the legitimate basis of the price of an article in your day, and so it is in ours. In your day, it was the difference in wages that made the difference in the cost of labor; now it is the relative number of hours constituting a day's work in different trades, the maintenance of the worker being equal in all cases. The cost of a man's work in a trade so difficult that in order to attract

volunteers the hours have to be fixed at four a day is twice as great as that in a trade where the men work eight hours. The result as to the cost of labor, you see, is just the same as if the man working four hours were paid, under your system, twice the wages the other gets. This calculation applied to the labor employed in the various processes of a manufactured article gives its price relatively to other articles. Besides the cost of production and transportation, the factor of scarcity affects the prices of some commodities. As regards the great staples of life, of which an abundance can always be secured, scarcity is eliminated as a factor. There is always a large surplus kept on hand from which any fluctuations of demand or supply can be corrected, even in most cases of bad crops. The prices of the staples grow less year by year, but rarely, if ever, rise. There are, however, certain classes of articles permanently, and others temporarily, unequal to the demand, as, for example, fresh fish or dairy products in the latter category, and the products of high skill and rare materials in the other. All that can be done here is to equalize the inconvenience of the scarcity. This is done by temporarily raising the price if the scarcity be temporary, or fixing it high if it be permanent. High prices in your day meant restriction of the articles affected to the rich, but nowadays, when the means of all are the same, the effect is only that those to whom the articles seem most desirable are the ones who purchase them. Of course the nation, as any other caterer for the public needs must be, is frequently left with small lots of goods on its hands by changes in taste, unseasonable weather, and various other causes. These it has to dispose of at a sacrifice just as merchants often did in your day, charging up the loss to the expenses of the business. Owing, however, to the vast body of consumers to which such lots can be simultaneously offered, there is rarely any difficulty in getting rid of them at trifling loss. I have given you now some general notion of our system of production, as well as distribution. Do you find it as complex as you expected?"

I admitted that nothing could be much simpler.

"I am sure," said Dr. Leete, "that it is within the truth to say that the head of one of the myriad private businesses of your day, who had to maintain sleepless vigilance against the fluctuations of the market, the machinations of his rivals, and the failure of his debtors, had a far more trying task than the group of men at Washington who nowadays direct the industries of the entire nation. All this merely shows, my dear fellow, how much easier it is to do things the right way than the wrong. It is easier for a general up in a balloon, with perfect survey of the field, to manoeuvre a million men to victory than for a sergeant to manage a platoon in a thicket."

"The general of this army, including the flower of the manhood of the nation, must be the foremost man in the country, really greater even than the President of the United States," I said.

"He is the President of the United States," replied Dr. Leete, "or rather the most important function of the presidency is the headship of the industrial army."

"How is he chosen?" I asked.

"I explained to you before," replied Dr. Leete, "when I was describing the force of the motive of emulation among all grades of the industrial army, that the line of promotion for the meritorious lies through three grades to the officer's grade, and thence up through the lieutenantcies to the captaincy or foremanship, and superintendency or colonel's rank. Next, with an intervening grade in some of the larger trades, come the general of the guild, under whose immediate control all the operations of the trade are conducted. This officer is at the head of the national bureau representing his trade, and is responsible for its work to the administration. The general of his guild holds a splendid position, and one which amply satisfies the ambition of most men, but above his rank, which may be compared—to follow the military analogies familiar to you—to that of a general of division or major-general, is that of the chiefs of the ten great departments, or groups of allied trades. The chiefs of these ten grand divisions of the industrial army may be compared to

your commanders of army corps, or lieutenant-generals, each having from a dozen to a score of generals of separate guilds reporting to him. Above these ten great officers, who form his council, is the general-in-chief, who is the President of the United States.

"The general-in-chief of the industrial army must have passed through all the grades below him, from the common laborers up. Let us see how he rises. As I have told you, it is simply by the excellence of his record as a worker that one rises through the grades of the privates and becomes a candidate for a lieutenantancy. Through the lieutenantancies he rises to the colonelcy, or superintendent's position, by appointment from above, strictly limited to the candidates of the best records. The general of the guild appoints to the ranks under him, but he himself is not appointed, but chosen by suffrage."

"By suffrage!" I exclaimed. "Is not that ruinous to the discipline of the guild, by tempting the candidates to intrigue for the support of the workers under them?"

"So it would be, no doubt," replied Dr. Leete, "if the workers had any suffrage to exercise, or anything to say about the choice. But they have nothing. Just here comes in a peculiarity of our system. The general of the guild is chosen from among the superintendents by vote of the honorary members of the guild, that is, of those who have served their time in the guild and received their discharge. As you know, at the age of forty-five we are mustered out of the army of industry, and have the residue of life for the pursuit of our own improvement or recreation. Of course, however, the associations of our active lifetime retain a powerful hold on us. The companionships we formed then remain our companionships till the end of life. We always continue honorary members of our former guilds, and retain the keenest and most jealous interest in their welfare and repute in the hands of the following generation. In the clubs maintained by the honorary members of the several guilds, in which we meet socially, there are no topics of conversation so commonly as those which relate to these matters, and the young aspirants for guild leadership who can pass the

criticism of us old fellows are likely to be pretty well equipped. Recognizing this fact, the nation entrusts to the honorary members of each guild the election of its general, and I venture to claim that no previous form of society could have developed a body of electors so ideally adapted to their office, as regards absolute impartiality, knowledge of the special qualifications and record of candidates, solicitude for the best result, and complete absence of self-interest.

"Each of the ten lieutenant-generals or heads of departments is himself elected from among the generals of the guilds grouped as a department, by vote of the honorary members of the guilds thus grouped. Of course there is a tendency on the part of each guild to vote for its own general, but no guild of any group has nearly enough votes to elect a man not supported by most of the others. I assure you that these elections are exceedingly lively."

"The President, I suppose, is selected from among the ten heads of the great departments," I suggested.

"Precisely, but the heads of departments are not eligible to the presidency till they have been a certain number of years out of office. It is rarely that a man passes through all the grades to the headship of a department much before he is forty, and at the end of a five years' term he is usually forty-five. If more, he still serves through his term, and if less, he is nevertheless discharged from the industrial army at its termination. It would not do for him to return to the ranks. The interval before he is a candidate for the presidency is intended to give time for him to recognize fully that he has returned into the general mass of the nation, and is identified with it rather than with the industrial army. Moreover, it is expected that he will employ this period in studying the general condition of the army, instead of that of the special group of guilds of which he was the head. From among the former heads of departments who may be eligible at the time, the President is elected by vote of all the men of the nation who are not connected with the industrial army."

"The army is not allowed to vote for President?"

"Certainly not. That would be perilous to its discipline, which it is the business of the President to maintain as the representative of the nation at large. His right hand for this purpose is the inspectorate, a highly important department of our system; to the inspectorate come all complaints or information as to defects in goods, insolence or inefficiency of officials, or dereliction of any sort in the public service. The inspectorate, however, does not wait for complaints. Not only is it on the alert to catch and sift every rumor of a fault in the service, but it is its business, by systematic and constant oversight and inspection of every branch of the army, to find out what is going wrong before anybody else does. The President is usually not far from fifty when elected, and serves five years, forming an honorable exception to the rule of retirement at forty-five. At the end of his term of office, a national Congress is called to receive his report and approve or condemn it. If it is approved, Congress usually elects him to represent the nation for five years more in the international council. Congress, I should also say, passes on the reports of the outgoing heads of departments, and a disapproval renders any one of them ineligible for President. But it is rare, indeed, that the nation has occasion for other sentiments than those of gratitude toward its high officers. As to their ability, to have risen from the ranks, by tests so various and severe, to their positions, is proof in itself of extraordinary qualities, while as to faithfulness, our social system leaves them absolutely without any other motive than that of winning the esteem of their fellow citizens. Corruption is impossible in a society where there is neither poverty to be bribed nor wealth to bribe, while as to demagoguery or intrigue for office, the conditions of promotion render them out of the question."

"One point I do not quite understand," I said. "Are the members of the liberal professions eligible to the presidency? and if so, how are they ranked with those who pursue the industries proper?"

"They have no ranking with them," replied Dr. Leete. "The members of the technical professions, such as engineers and architects, have

a ranking with the constructive guilds; but the members of the liberal professions, the doctors and teachers, as well as the artists and men of letters who obtain remissions of industrial service, do not belong to the industrial army. On this ground they vote for the President, but are not eligible to his office. One of its main duties being the control and discipline of the industrial army, it is essential that the President should have passed through all its grades to understand his business."

"That is reasonable," I said; "but if the doctors and teachers do not know enough of industry to be President, neither, I should think, can the President know enough of medicine and education to control those departments."

"No more does he," was the reply. "Except in the general way that he is responsible for the enforcement of the laws as to all classes, the President has nothing to do with the faculties of medicine and education, which are controlled by boards of regents of their own, in which the President is ex-officio chairman, and has the casting vote. These regents, who, of course, are responsible to Congress, are chosen by the honorary members of the guilds of education and medicine, the retired teachers and doctors of the country."

"Do you know," I said, "the method of electing officials by votes of the retired members of the guilds is nothing more than the application on a national scale of the plan of government by alumni, which we used to a slight extent occasionally in the management of our higher educational institutions."

"Did you, indeed?" exclaimed Dr. Leete, with animation. "That is quite new to me, and I fancy will be to most of us, and of much interest as well. There has been great discussion as to the germ of the idea, and we fancied that there was for once something new under the sun. Well! well! In your higher educational institutions! that is interesting indeed. You must tell me more of that."

"Truly, there is very little more to tell than I have told already," I replied. "If we had the germ of your idea, it was but as a germ. . . ."

[Later Julian West attends a church service and hears the following sermon.—Eds.]

Mr. Barton's Sermon

"We have had among us, during the past week, a critic from the nineteenth century, a living representative of the epoch of our great-grandparents. It would be strange if a fact so extraordinary had not somewhat strongly affected our imaginations. Perhaps most of us have been stimulated to some effort to realize the society of a century ago, and figure to ourselves what it must have been like to live then. In inviting you now to consider certain reflections upon this subject which have occurred to me, I presume that I shall rather follow than divert the course of your own thoughts. . . .

"Although the idea of the vital unity of the family of mankind, the reality of human brotherhood, was very far from being apprehended by them as the moral axiom it seems to us, yet it is a mistake to suppose that there was no feeling at all corresponding to it. I could read you passages of great beauty from some of their writers which show that the conception was clearly attained by a few, and no doubt vaguely by many more. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that the nineteenth century was in name Christian, and the fact that the entire commercial and industrial frame of society was the embodiment of the anti-Christian spirit must have had some weight, though I admit it was strangely little, with the nominal followers of Jesus Christ.

"When we inquire why it did not have more, why, in general, long after a vast majority of men had agreed as to the crying abuses of the existing social arrangement, they still tolerated it, or contented themselves with talking of petty reforms in it, we come upon an extraordinary fact. It was the sincere belief of even the best of men at that epoch that the only stable elements in human nature, on which a social system could be safely founded were its worst propensities. They had been taught and believed that greed and self-seeking were all that held mankind together, and that all human associations would fall to pieces if anything were done to blunt the edge of these motives or curb their operation. In a word, they believed—even those who longed to believe otherwise—the exact reverse of what

seems to us self-evident; they believed, that is, that the anti-social qualities of men, and not their social qualities, were what furnished the cohesive force of society. It seemed reasonable to them that men lived together solely for the purpose of overreaching and oppressing one another, and of being overreached and oppressed, and that while a society that gave full scope to these propensities could stand, there would be little chance for one based on the idea of co-operation for the benefit of all. It seems absurd to expect any one to believe that convictions like these were ever seriously entertained by men; but that they were not only entertained by our great-grandfathers, but were responsible for the long delay in doing away with the ancient order, after a conviction of its intolerable abuses had become general, is as well established as any fact in history can be. Just here you will find the explanation of the profound pessimism of the literature of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the note of melancholy in its poetry, and the cynicism of its humor.

"Feeling that the condition of the race was unendurable, they had no clear hope of anything better. They believed that the evolution of humanity had resulted in leading it into a *cul de sac*, and that there was no way of getting forward. The frame of men's minds at this time is strikingly illustrated by treatises which have come down to us, and may even now be consulted in our libraries by the curious, in which laborious arguments are pursued to prove that despite the evil plight of men, life was still, by some slight preponderance of considerations, probably better worth living than leaving. Despising themselves, they despised their Creator. There was a general decay of religious belief. Pale and watery gleams, from skies thickly veiled by doubt and dread, alone lighted up the chaos of earth. That men should doubt Him whose breath is in their nostrils, or dread the hands that moulded them, seems to us indeed a pitiable insanity; but we must remember that children who are brave by day have sometimes foolish fears at night. The dawn has come since then. It is very easy to believe in the fatherhood of God in the twentieth century. . . .

"You know the story of that last, greatest, and most bloodless of revolutions. In the time of one generation men laid aside the social traditions and practices of barbarians, and assumed a social order worthy of rational and human beings. Ceasing to be predatory in their habits, they became co-workers, and found in fraternity, at once, the science of wealth and happiness. 'What shall I eat and drink, and wherewithal shall I be clothed?' stated as a problem beginning and ending in self, had been an anxious and an endless one. But when once it was conceived, not from the individual, but the fraternal standpoint, 'What shall we eat and drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?'—its difficulties vanished.

"Poverty with servitude had been the result, for the mass of humanity, of attempting to solve the problem of maintenance from the individual standpoint, but no sooner had the nation become the sole capitalist and employer than not alone did plenty replace poverty, but the last vestige of the serfdom of man to man disappeared from earth. Human slavery, so often vainly scotched, at last was killed. The means of subsistence no longer doled out by men to women, by employer to employed, by rich to poor, was distributed from a common stock as among children at the father's table. It was impossible for a man any longer to use his fellow-men as tools for his own profit. His esteem was the only sort of gain he could thenceforth make out of him. There was no more either arrogance or servility in the relations of human beings to one another. For the first time since the creation every man stood up straight before God. The fear of want and the lust of gain became extinct motives when abundance was assured to all and immoderate possessions were made impossible of attainment. There were no more beggars nor almoners. Equity left charity without an occupation. The ten commandments became well-nigh obsolete in a world where there was no temptation to theft, no occasion to lie either for fear or favor, no room for envy where all were equal, and little provocation to violence where men were disarmed of power to injure one another. Humanity's ancient dream of liberty, equality,

fraternity, mocked by so many ages, at last was realized.

"As in the old society the generous, the just, the tender-hearted had been placed at a disadvantage by the possession of those qualities, so in the new society the cold-hearted, the greedy, and self-seeking found themselves out of joint with the world. Now that the conditions of life for the first time ceased to operate as a forcing process to develop the brutal qualities of human nature, and the premium which had heretofore encouraged selfishness was not only removed, but placed upon unselfishness, it was for the first time possible to see what unperverted human nature really was like. The depraved tendencies, which had previously overgrown and obscured the better to so large an extent, now withered like cellar fungi in the open air, and the nobler qualities showed a sudden luxuriance which turned cynics into panegyrists and for the first time in human history tempted mankind to fall in love with itself. Soon was fully revealed, what the divines and philosophers of the old world never would have believed, that human nature in its essential qualities is good, not bad, that men by their natural intention and structure are generous, not selfish, pitiful, not cruel, sympathetic, not arrogant, godlike in aspiration, instinct with divinest impulses of tenderness and self-sacrifice, images of God indeed, not the travesties upon Him they had seemed. The constant pressure, through numberless generations, of conditions of life which might have perverted angels, had not been able to essentially alter the natural nobility of the stock, and these conditions once removed, like a bent tree, it had sprung back to its normal uprightness. . . .

"But how is it with us who stand on this height which they gazed up to? Already we have well-nigh forgotten, except when it is especially called to our minds by some occasion like the present, that it was not always with men as it is now. It is a strain on our imaginations to conceive the social arrangements of our immediate ancestors. We find them grotesque. The solution of the problem of physical maintenance so as to banish care and crime, so far from seeming to us an ultimate attainment, appears but

as a preliminary to anything like real human progress. We have but relieved ourselves of an impertinent and needless harassment which hindered our ancestors from undertaking the real ends of existence. We are merely stripped for the race; no more. We are like a child which has just learned to stand upright and to walk. It is a great event, from the child's point of view, when he first walks. Perhaps he fancies that there can be little beyond that achievement, but a year later he has forgotten that he could not always walk. His horizon did but widen when he rose, and enlarge as he moved. A great event indeed, in one sense, was his first step, but only as a beginning, not as the end. His true career was but then first entered on. The enfranchisement of humanity in the last century, from mental and physical absorption in working and scheming for the mere bodily necessities, may be regarded as a species of second birth of the race, without which its first birth to an existence that was but a burden would forever have remained unjustified, but whereby it is now abundantly vindicated. Since then, humanity has entered on a new phase of spiritual development, an evolution of higher faculties, the very existence of which in human nature our ancestors scarcely

suspected. In place of the dreary hopelessness of the nineteenth century, its profound pessimism as to the future of humanity, the animating idea of the present age is an enthusiastic conception of the opportunities of our earthly existence, and the unbounded possibilities of human nature. The betterment of mankind from generation to generation, physically, mentally, morally, is recognized as the one great object supremely worthy of effort and of sacrifice. We believe the race for the first time to have entered on the realization of God's ideal of it, and each generation must now be a step upward.

"Do you ask what we look for when unnumbered generations shall have passed away? I answer, the way stretches far before us, but the end is lost in light. For twofold is the return of man to God 'who is our home,' the return of the individual by the way of death, and the return of the race by the fulfilment of the evolution, when the divine secret hidden in the germ shall be perfectly unfolded. With a tear for the dark past, turn we then to the dazzling future, and, veiling our eyes, press forward. The long and weary winter of the race is ended. Its summer has begun. Humanity has burst the chrysalis. The heavens are before it."