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Books
SOCIALISM

G. PLEKHANOV

**UTOPIAN SOCIALISM
OF THE
NINETEENTH CENTURY**

Workers of All Countries, Unite!

G. V. PLEKHANOV

**UTOPIAN SOCIALISM
OF THE
NINETEENTH CENTURY**

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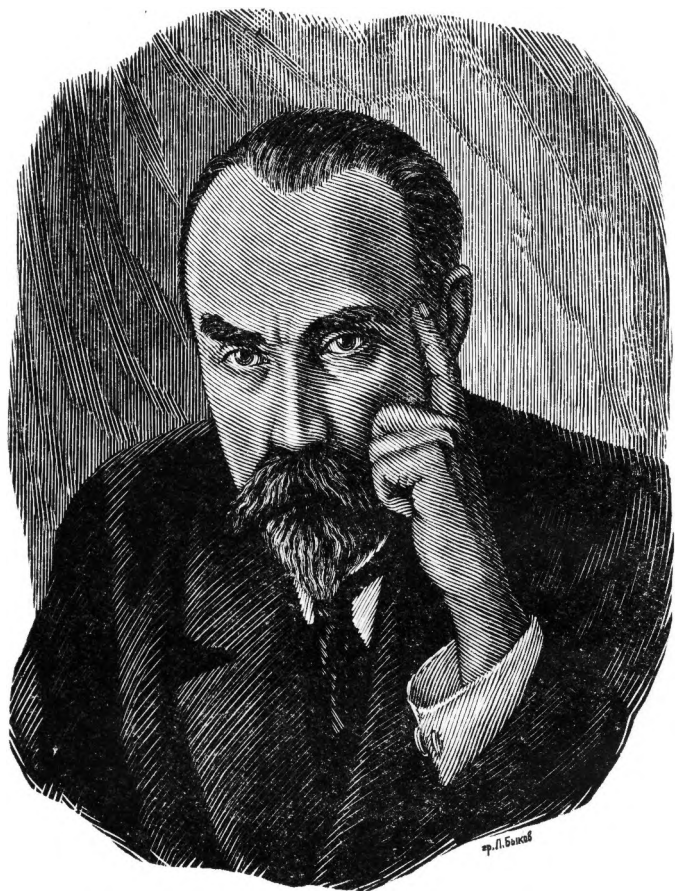
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гг. П. Бичков

PREFACE

One of the most prominent figures in the international labour movement, G. V. Plekhanov, was an eminent theorist, a gifted propagandist and defender of Marxism.

His writings on philosophy were an important contribution to the development of social thought in Russia. Indeed, Lenin called them the finest in international Marxist literature.

His works exerted an indelible influence in substantiating dialectical and historical materialism and scientific socialism, as well as in the history of philosophy, ethics and aesthetics, logic and psychology. He was the author of a number of original ideas which creatively substantiated and developed certain highly important philosophical tenets of Marxism.

Plekhanov brought forward a correct historical appraisal of Russian life at the close of the 19th century, and his theoretical arguments, which proved the need for a working-class party as a decisive factor in ending the crisis the country was going through, were of considerable importance for the destiny of Russia as a whole.

G. V. Plekhanov was born in 1856 in a land-owning family of the small gentry in Tambov Gubernia. He joined the Narodnik¹ revolutionary movement in the seventies, during his student days, and on instructions from the revolutionary centre he emigrated to Switzerland in 1880 to escape arrest by the tsarist police. He spent quite a number of years in that country, making a study of socialist literature, Marx' and Engels's philosophical and economic works, and the world labour movement.

In 1883 Plekhanov came out for the first time in defence and substantiation of Marx and Engels's theory. He organized abroad the *Emancipation of Labour* group, the first Russian Marxist group, which played an important part in fostering revolutionary consciousness in progressive-minded representatives of Russia's working class in the early stages of its development.

That same year Plekhanov's first Marxist work *Socialism and the Political Struggle* was published and sent to Russia. A work of outstanding social significance, it scathingly criticized the old theories in which the Narodniks, the Russian revolutionaries of the time, had grounded their activities.

In 1884 Plekhanov wrote his second book, *Our Differences* which, continuing his criticism of Narodnik views, stated that the time had come for a working-class party to be formed in Russia. "The earliest possible organization of a workers' party is the only means of resolving all the economic and political contradictions of present-day Russia. On that road success and victory lie ahead; all other roads can lead only to defeat and impotence."*

Besides the two works just mentioned, viz., *Socialism and the Political Struggle* (1883) and *Our Differences* (1884), Plekhanov wrote many other Marxist works, important among which are *For Hegel's Sixtieth Anniversary* (1891), *The Development of the Monist View of History* (1895), *Augustin Thierry and the Materialistic Conception of History* (1895), *An Outline History of Materialism* (1896), *On the Materialistic Conception of History* (1897), *The Role of the Individual in History* (1898) and articles directed against Eduard Bernstein, Conrad Schmidt, Pyotr Struvé, Alexander Bogdanov, and Tomáš Carrigue Masaryk.** These and many other of his

* See G. V. Plekhanov, *Selected Philosophical Works*, Vol. I, Gospolitizdat Publishing House, 1956, p. 364.

** For these works by Plekhanov see: G. V. Plekhanov, *Selected Philosophical Works*, Vols. I, II. Gospolitizdat Publishing House, 1956.

writings contain a brilliant defence, substantiation and development of Marxist theory.

The ideas of dialectical materialism and scientific socialism set forth in his book *The Development of the Monist View of History* (1895), his most important philosophical work, dynamited the old Narodnik teachings, which the realities of life had already refuted, and encouraged in genuine fighters for emancipation a sense of confidence in the victory of revolution, and helped educate true revolutionaries.

In Plekhanov's works attention is focussed, in the main, on problems of historical materialism, scientific socialism, the history of philosophy, and criticism of bourgeois sociology. He subjected pre-Marxist systems of philosophy to profound scientific analysis and criticism, revealing their strong and weak points and explaining their inability to interpret the laws of social development.

In unmasking all attempts to gloss over the difference between the principles of Marxism and all pre-Marxist philosophical teachings, Plekhanov showed convincingly that the substantiation of dialectical and historical materialism and the theory of scientific socialism was a revolution in philosophical and social thought.

Utopian Socialism of the Nineteenth Century was written in 1913, when Plekhanov, though in the main still a dialectical materialist, had diverged from revolutionary Marxism in certain highly essential matters of Marxist theory, and taken up an opportunist stand.

An analysis of this work will, however, reveal that even in this Menshevik period of his activities Plekhanov, in his historical and philosophical studies, remained true to the principles of historical materialism. Dealing with the Utopian socialists of England, France and Germany, this study is marked by a profoundly scientific analysis of the subject. Though the author says that he was unable to make a study of the social movements that produced

the Utopian socialists' ideas, his exposition of their views points, in passing as it were, to certain highly important historical facts that conditioned both the character and the direction of the development of these ideas.

What Plekhanov makes a thorough study of is the theoretical sources the Utopian socialists drew from, and the latter's special contribution to the treasure-house of theoretical thought.

This contribution is considered for each of the three countries under review, and moreover is shown through an analysis of concrete historical conditions. At the same time the author shows that all three schools stemmed from the materialistic philosophy of the Enlightenment in 18th-century France, which in its time was the summit of philosophical thought.

Plekhanov consistently develops the thought that Holbach, Helvétius, Diderot and their adherents were militant materialists and ideologists of the French bourgeoisie of that revolutionary period of its history when it came out boldly and resolutely against feudalism and against all mediaeval conceptions and institutions. In his analysis of materialism, atheism, the theory of knowledge, the ethical and historical views of the French materialists and their criticism of feudalism, Plekhanov reveals both their strong and their weak points.

As Plekhanov very correctly points out, French materialism, with all its shortcomings, was a most important landmark in the development of mankind's theoretical thinking. Eighteenth-century French literature owes its lasting value to the close ties of French materialism with the needs of the time, its withering criticism of feudalism, and its militant and consistent atheism.

In their theories, all 19th-century Utopian socialists proceeded from the 18th century materialists' premise that human virtues and vices are determined by circumstances, and that human character is not divinely ordained but results from the influence exerted by man's environment.

Most of Plekhanov's attention is directed towards the views of the British Utopian socialists Charles Hall, Robert Owen and William Thompson, whose main service to mankind Plekhanov sees in their scathing criticism of the capitalist system. In his principal work *The Effects of Civilization on the People in European States* Hall showed that, as the capitalists amassed wealth, the masses became ever more impoverished. "The wealth or power of the one increasing," he wrote, "is the cause of the increase of poverty and subjection of the other."*

This, Hall went on to say, fosters the development of class contradictions and the class struggle. This struggle however is an unequal one since the working class is always forced to give in, for it does not possess the wherewithal to wage it.

Tremendous inequality in the distribution of property is the most characteristic feature of present-day bourgeois civilization.

The same idea, i.e., that poverty springs from inequality, was developed by Owen and other Utopian socialists.

"The world is now saturated with wealth," Owen wrote, "with inexhaustible means of still increasing it—and yet misery abounds! Such at this moment is the actual state of human society."**

The growth of inequality, the continuing impoverishment of the working classes and the mounting wealth of the capitalists caused the greatest anxiety to Utopian socialists of all lands, who devoted much thought to ways and means of removing this palpable tendency in 19th-century social development.

They were preoccupied with the problem of checking this inexplicable phenomenon and setting up social relations that would enable the worker to get the wealth he himself created; if he could not obtain the total product

* See page 20 of the present edition.

** See page 24 of the present edition.

of his labour, things should be arranged in such a way that the worker's share of the product should not be so miserably small.

Bourgeois social relations were criticized by the Utopian socialists, who emphasized that the chief reason of the masses' distress under capitalism lay in the means of production being private property.

The French Utopian socialists Louis Blanc, Jean Reynaud, and Pierre Leroux more or less clearly saw the fundamental social contradiction of their time as the oppositeness of the bourgeoisie to the people (Louis Blanc) and even as the oppositeness of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, two classes comprising the people and differing in their interests (Pierre Leroux).

All the Utopian socialists agreed that education plays an important part in the formation of human character, and that man is fashioned by his environment; hence the demand that all social institutions should direct their activities to improving the most numerous and poverty-stricken class morally, intellectually and physically (Saint-Simon).

A distinctive feature of their outlook was also their firm belief in mankind's progressive development; however, as Plekhanov correctly points out, they thought that "it is not merely a faith in progress that is a distinctive feature of socialism, but the conviction that progress leads to the abolition of '*exploitation of man by man.*' This conviction is insistently repeated in the Saint-Simonists' speeches and writings."*

The German Utopian socialists (Wilhelm Weitling) were close to a realization that the character of future society is determined by the objective course of social development as expressed in the class struggle.

"He (i.e., Weitling—M.S.) said that any replacement of the old by the new is revolution," Plekhanov writes.

* See page 53 of the present edition.

"Therefore communists cannot but be revolutionaries. Revolutions however will not always be sanguinary. To communists a peaceable revolution is preferable to a sanguinary one, but the course of such changes does not depend on them but on the behaviour of the upper classes and of governments."*

It is in this way that Plekhanov leads the reader to realizing that the Utopian socialists' ideas were one of the theoretical sources of Marxism. Expressing the interests of the masses exploited by capital the Utopian socialists attempted to produce theoretical proof of the need for the refashioning of society, and brought forth a number of brilliant conjectures regarding communist society.

However, when it came to ways and means of bringing about the desired changes in society, the pre-Marxist socialists immediately revealed their helplessness, their Utopianism, and especially because they could not understand the laws of capitalist development. They were eager to create a social system which would contain no poor, rich, slaves or masters. "But Utopian socialism took little account of the course of historical development. Indeed, Owen often said that the new social order might come suddenly, 'like a thief in the night.'**" The Utopian socialists had no faith in the initiative of the masses, whose emancipation they had given so much thought to and for whose advantage they grudged nothing. Most of them were in favour of peace between the classes and hoped to bring about the social revolution without any struggle, through persuasion of those who wielded power in society.

Saint-Simon, Fourier and the other Utopian socialists condemned the French Revolution of 1789, which they called "a horrifying outburst." The Utopian socialists failed to understand that only the class struggle, the rev-

* See page 66 of the present edition.

** See page 29 of the present edition.

olutionary remodelling of society can lead to the slave of yesterday becoming a free citizen, economically and spiritually independent of the capitalist, his master of yesterday, and that the only way to refashion society is to have the workers, the working people take part in the revolutionary struggle.

Utopian socialism's principal shortcoming lies precisely in its failing to discern the force capable of radically refashioning present-day capitalist society. As Plekhanov put it, the Utopian socialists demanded that "property inequality should be done away with by those very people who enjoyed all the advantages it provided."* This shortcoming was removed by Marxism, which showed that the emancipation of the workers is a matter for the workers themselves. For the task of emancipation to be successfully fulfilled, the workers must form their own working-class party, militant, well-disciplined and equipped with the most advanced revolutionary theory.

"Without a revolutionary theory," Plekhanov wrote, "there is no revolutionary movement in the true sense of the word. Any class which strives for its emancipation, any political party which aims at dominance, is revolutionary only insofar as it represents the most progressive social trends and consequently is a vehicle of the most progressive ideas of its time. An idea which is inherently revolutionary is a kind of dynamite which no other explosive in the world can replace."**

Plekhanov considered Marxism that very kind of theory that explains the working class's real tasks. It is only in Marxism that the working class finds a victory-bringing weapon that will help accomplish the revolutionary refashioning of bourgeois society into a socialist society.

Thus, critically analyzing the views of the Utopian socialists, with their inability to discover and scientifi-

* See page 23 of the present edition.

** See G. V. Plekhanov, *Selected Philosophical Works*, Vol. I, Gospolitizdat Publishing House, 1956, p. 95.

cally establish the laws of historical development, Plekhanov revealed the great significance of Marx and Engels's theory of scientific socialism. He considered the appearance of scientific socialism a portentous event and a vital turning point in the history of human thought.

G. V. Plekhanov's *Utopian Socialism of the Nineteenth Century* contains a scientific analysis of pre-Marxist socialist ideas in the 19th century. It provides a convincing and vivid account of the role and significance of the Utopian socialists as precursors of scientific socialism.

M. Sidorov

UTOPIAN SOCIALISM OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY²

As is always and everywhere the case, West-European letters of the first half of the 19th century were an expression of social life. Since phenomena whose sum total had led to the emergence of the so-called social problem in social theory were beginning to play an important part in the life of society of the period, it might be appropriate to preface a review of that literature with a brief survey of the Utopian socialists' teachings. Though it lies without the scope of the history of literature in the narrow sense of the term, a survey of this kind will provide a better understanding of literary trends proper. Lack of space, however, has obliged me to confine myself to the most important shades of 19th-century Utopian socialism and the principal influences that determined their development.

As Engels pointed out in his polemic with Dühring,³ 19th-century socialism seems at first glance merely a further development of the conclusions arrived at by the philosophy of 18th-century Enlightenment. As an illustration I shall cite the fact that socialist theorists of the period under consideration were anything but averse to appealing to *natural law*,⁴ which featured so prominently in the reasoning of the French Enlighteners. There can be no doubt that the socialists unreservedly accepted the philosophical attitude towards Man adhered to by the Enlighteners in general, and by La Mettrie, Holbach, Diderot and Helvétius in France and David Hartley and Joseph Priestley in Britain in particular. Thus, William Godwin (1756-1836) proceeded from the materialists'

premise that each man's virtues and vices are determined by circumstances whose sum total forms the history of his life.* Hence Godwin drew the conclusion that vice could be driven out of the world if the sum total mentioned above were given the proper character. It remained for him only to decide what measures were capable of instilling the necessary character in the above sum of circumstances, which is precisely the problem dealt with in his principal work *Inquiry Concerning Political Justice and Its Influence on General Virtue and Happiness*, which appeared in 1793. The conclusions Godwin arrived at were very close to what is now called anarchistic communism. In this respect many 19th-century socialists were at great variance with him, but they all agreed with him in taking as the point of departure the theory of the formation of the human character which he had learnt from the materialists.

Such was the most important theoretical influence providing the foundation for the socialist teaching of the 19th century. The most decisive *practical* influences were those of England's industrial revolution at the close of the 18th century, as well as the political upheaval known as the Great French Revolution, especially its *terrorist* period. As can well be understood, the influence of the industrial revolution made itself most felt in England, and that of the Great Revolution, in France.

A. ENGLISH UTOPIAN SOCIALISM

I

I am giving first place to England because she was the first country to go through the industrial revolution which for a long time determined the consequent internal history of civilized societies. That revolution was marked

* In Leslie Stephen's opinion Godwin was more akin in intellectual temperament to the French pre-Revolutionary theorists than

by the rapid development of machine production, which affected relations in production in the sense that independent producers became hired workers employed at more or less large-scale enterprises under the control, and to the advantage, of capitalists. This change in production relations brought England's working population much bitter and prolonged suffering, these harmful consequences being later aggravated by the so-called "enclosures" accompanied by large-scale farming taking the place of the small holdings. The reader will realize that the "enclosures," i.e., the appropriation of common lands by the big landowners, and the "consolidation" of petty holdings into large-scale farms, was bound to lead to a considerable part of the rural population leaving the land for the industrial centres. It is also clear that the country-folk who had been driven out of their native parts swelled the number of "hands" on the labour market, thereby bringing wages down. Never before had pauperism assumed such menacing proportions in England as during the period immediately following the "industrial revolution." In 1784 the poor rates were 5/per inhabitant; in 1818 they had gone up to 13/3d. The poverty-stricken working population of England were in a state of constant unrest: farm-labourers were setting farms on fire, while factory workers were wrecking machinery. These were the first and as yet unconscious steps along the road of protest, made by the exploited against the exploiters. It was only a small section of the working class that, at the beginning of this period, achieved a degree of intellectual development enabling it to wage a conscious struggle for a better future. This section came under the impact of radical political theories and was in sympathy

any other British thinker. (See *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* by Leslie Stephen. 2nd edition, London, 1881, vol. II, p. 264.) Even if we assume that that is the case, still Godwin's point of departure is the same as, for instance, Robert Owen's, Fourier's or the other leading socialists of the European continent.

with the French revolutionaries. As early as 1792 there had arisen the *London Corresponding Society*,⁵ whose membership contained quite a number of workers, artisans and petty traders. Following the practice of revolutionary France, members of this society addressed each other as *citizens*, and displayed a highly revolutionary temper, especially after the execution of Louis XVI. However small the democratic segment capable of being carried away by the advanced ideas of the times, its dangerous frame of mind greatly alarmed the ruling circles, who were fearfully following the course of events in France. The British Government instituted a series of repressive measures against the native brand of Jacobins, so as to whittle down freedom of speech, union and assembly.⁶ At the same time the upper classes' ideologists felt it incumbent upon them to bolster the police's protective endeavours by turning the "*spiritual weapon*" against the revolutionaries. One of the literary monuments of this intellectual reaction was Malthus's inquiry into the law of population,⁷ a sensational piece of writing, which was a reply to Godwin's above-mentioned work on "political justice." While Godwin laid all human troubles at the door of governments and social institutions, Malthus attempted to show that they are engendered not by governments or institutions, but by an inexorable law of Nature, owing to which population grows faster than means of subsistence do.

While it had such dire effects on the conditions of the working class, England's industrial revolution also meant a tremendous development of the country's productive forces. This fact riveted the attention of all research workers, and gave many of them the occasion to assert that the sufferings of the working class were of a temporary character, for on the whole things were progressing very nicely. This optimistic view was however not shared by all, for there were people who were incapable of looking with such Olympian calm upon the sufferings of others. It

was the boldest and most thoughtful of such people that created the socialist literature of England in the first half of the last century.*

In 1805 Dr. Charles Hall (1745-1825) published an inquiry⁸ into the effects of "civilization"—what he meant was the growth of productive forces in the civilized countries—on the conditions of the toiling masses. In this publication Hall demonstrated that the masses were growing poorer as a consequence of "civilization": "The wealth or power of the one increasing," he wrote, "is the cause of the increase of poverty and subjection of the other."**

This assertion is of great importance for the history of theory, for it shows how, in the person of Charles Hall, English socialism clearly realized that the interests of the "wealthy" and the "poor" classes are in mutual opposition. It should be noted that by the "poor" class Hall meant the class of people living by the sale of their "labour," i.e., *proletarians*, while he called "wealthy" the capitalists and the landowners, whose well-being is based on the economic exploitation of the "poor."

Since the "wealthy" live by the economic exploitation of the "poor," the interests of these two classes are in direct opposition to each other. Hall's book contains a section (IV) which is entitled *On the Different Interests of the Rich and the Poor*. Here the author's line of argument might be summed up as follows.

* The "enclosures" gave rise to an entire literature on the agrarian problem. This literature, e.g., the writings of Thomas Spence, William Ogilvie and Thomas Paine, was outstanding in its way and did much to encourage the development of socialist theory in England. However, I am unable to deal with this literature if only for the reason that since it belongs to the 18th century it lies even chronologically outside the scope of my theme.

** Since English socialist publications of the first half of the 19th century are very hard to come by, I have had to quote from recent German translations in referring to some of them. B. Oldenberg's German translation of Hall's book (*Die Wirkungen der Zivilisation auf die Massen*) is the fourth issue (Leipzig 1905) in the series *Hauptwerke des Sozialismus und der Sozialpolitik* published by the late Professor G. Adler. My quotation from Hall has been taken from page 29 in Oldenberg's translation.

Every rich man is to be considered as the *buyer*, every poor man as the *seller*, of labour. It is in the interest of the rich man to get as much of the work of the poor man and to give him as little for it as he can. In other words he wants to get the greatest possible part of the product created by the worker's labour. The worker, on the other hand, strives to get as much of that product as he possibly can. Hence the struggle between them, but one in which they are unequally matched. Without the means of subsistence, the workers are usually worsted, in the way the garrison of a fortress that is short of provisions is obliged to capitulate. Moreover, workers' strikes, it should be remembered, are often put down by the military, while very few countries have laws to prevent masters from combining for the purpose of lowering wages.

Hall compared the conditions of the farm-labourer with those of beasts of burden. If there was any difference between them, then that was not in the labourer's favour, for the death of an ox or a horse was a loss to the owner, while he lost nothing if his worker died.* The masters were resolute in maintaining their wealth and privileges in the struggle against the workers, who, on the contrary, were not equally active in their struggle against the employers, for their poverty had deprived them of the economic and moral power of resistance.** Besides, the employers had on their side the might of the law which ruthlessly punished any encroachment on property rights.*** In view of all this, the question arose as to the share of the nation's annual income that accrued to the working class as a whole. Hall calculated that this class received only one-eighth of the values created by its labour, the other seven-eighths going to the "masters."

* Charles Hall, *The Effects of Civilization on the People in European States*, London, 1850, p. 92.

** *Ibid.*, pp. 93-94.

*** *Ibid.*, p. 168. It should be noted that at that time workers' strikes were punishable offences under British criminal law.

This conclusion cannot of course be considered exact, for Hall underestimated the share of the national income going to the workers. The reader will, however, realize that there is now not the least necessity to expose our author's error. On the contrary the fact should be noted that despite this quantitative error he had a good understanding of the economic nature of capitalism's exploitation of hired labour.

Crime follows in the wake of poverty. In Hall's words, "I cannot help considering all, or almost all that which is called original corruption and evil disposition to be the effects of the system of civilization; and particularly that prominent feature of it, the great inequality of property."* Civilization perverts the poor through material deprivation, and creates in their "masters" vices peculiar to the rich, and in the first place the very worst of vices—a proneness to oppress one's fellow men. That is why social morals would gain very much from the removal of inequality in the possession of property. Can that inequality be removed? Hall thought that it could, and quoted three historical instances of property equality having been established: firstly, among the Jews, secondly, among the Spartans, and thirdly, in Paraguay under the government of the Jesuits. "In all these cases, as far as we know, it was in a great degree successful."**

When it came to the problem of how to remove property inequality Hall pressed for extreme caution, and not caution alone. He believed that reform should be carried out by people who had no private interest in it and were not carried away by passions. Such people were not to be found among the oppressed, who would force the pace. It would be better to appeal to the rich, for when something does not affect ourselves but those who are strangers to us we shall not be in too great a hurry to carry out the demands of justice, no matter how

* *Ibid.*, p. 214.

** *Ibid.*, p. 223.

high our regard for them. "It would be better, therefore, that the redress of the grievances of the poor should originate from the rich themselves."* In other words social peace required that property inequality should be done away with by those very people who enjoyed all the advantages it provided. This approach was characteristic not only of Hall: the vast majority of socialists living at the period under consideration, not only in Britain but on the Continent too, had the same point of view in this matter. In this, Robert Owen,** the greatest of the English Utopian socialists, stood very close to Hall.

II

From the beginning of 1800 Owen owned a large spinning mill in New Lanark, Scotland. The "poor" employed at this mill, who worked long hours for very poor pay, drank heavily, were often taken up for theft, and in general stood on a very low level of intellectual and moral development. When he took over the New Lanark mill, Owen immediately began to improve the workers' conditions: he reduced working hours to 10½ hours, and when the mill came to a standstill because of a shortage of raw materials he did not discharge the "poor," as was, and still is, usually done whenever "hitches" or crises arise, but continued paying them full wages for several months. He also displayed much concern for the upbringing and education of children, and was the first to organize kindergartens in England. These efforts yielded excellent results in all respects, leading to a noticeable improvement in the workers' morals, for a sense of their human dignity had awakened in them. At the same time the mill's earnings increased considerably. All this, taken together, made New Lanark most attractive to those who, full of the milk

* *Ibid.*, p. 173.

** Born March 14, 1771, in Newtown, North Wales; died on Nov. 17, 1858.

of human kindness, were nothing averse to sparing the sheep while keeping the wolves from starving. Owen won fame as a philanthropist, and people of even the very highest rank would visit New Lanark to voice their admiration at the way the well-being of the "poor" was being taken care of. However, Owen himself was not at all satisfied with what he had been able to achieve at New Lanark. With full justice he would say that though his workers were comparatively in a fair way they were still his *slaves*, and little by little this philanthropist, who had won praise from even dyed-in-the-wool reactionaries for his benevolence to his workers, developed into a social reformer, whose "extremes" horrified all "respectable" people in the United Kingdom.

Like Hall, Owen was amazed by the paradox of the growth in Britain's productive forces leading to the impoverishment of the very people that operated them. "The world is now saturated with wealth," he said, "with inexhaustible means of still increasing it—and yet misery abounds! Such at this moment is the actual state of human society." It *could become* wealthy, happy and enlightened, but it was still steeped in ignorance, most of its members living in appalling poverty and semi-starvation. It should not remain in that state; a change for the better was needed, and the change would be most easy. "The world *knows* and *feels* the existing evil: it will look at the new order of things proposed—approve—will the change, and it is done."*

For the world to approve the proposed reform, it would have first to learn what man is by nature, what he has become under the impact of his environment and can become in new conditions created in accordance with the requirements of reason. As Owen put it, before man could

* See his letter published in a number of London newspapers on Aug. 9, 1817 and included in a volume appended to his autobiography: *The Life of Robert Owen Written by Himself*, London 1857, p. 84. This volume goes under the cipher IA, and I shall refer to it quite frequently in the following pages.

be wise and happy, his mind must be born again.* To encourage the rebirth of man's mind Owen wrote his celebrated *Essays* on the formation of human character.**

Like Godwin, Owen was convinced that man's character is determined by his social environment, which is independent of his will. It is from that environment that he gets the views and habits that induce him to behave in one way or another. That is why, through the appropriate measures, the population of any country or even of the whole world can be endowed with any character, from the worst to the finest. The necessary means are in the possession of governments, which can achieve a state of things wherein people can live without knowledge of poverty, crime or punishment, all of which are consequences of miseducation and misrule. Since the aim of government is to make both rulers and governed happy, those who wield political power should immediately address themselves to reforming the social structure.***

The first step towards this reform should consist in making it known to all and sundry that no person belonging to the present generation shall be deprived of his property. This should be followed by the declaration of freedom of conscience and the abolition of institutions exerting an evil influence on public morals, the revision of the poor laws, and, last and most important, by a series of measures directed towards enlightening and educating the people.

"Every state, to be well governed, ought to direct its chief attention to the formation of character; . . . the best governed state will be that which shall possess the best

* See *Life*, IA, p. 86.

** The full title is: *A New View of Society; or Essays on the Principle of the Formation of the Human Character, and Application of the Principle to the Practice*. There are four essays in all, two published at the end of 1812, the other two in early 1813.⁹

*** See pp. 19, 90 and 91 of the second edition of the *Essays*, published in 1816. I shall refer to this publication.

national system of education.”* The system of education should be uniform for the whole state.

Almost all of Owen's subsequent writings and agitation were directed towards further development of the views I have just cited, and to their ardent public defence. Thus, holding that a man's character is conditioned by his environment, Owen raised the issue of the degree in which the conditions surrounding the English worker of the time from his childhood operated in his favour. Since he was familiar with the life of the working class, if only from his New Lanark observations, Owen could reply to the question he had posed only to the effect that the conditions he had named were quite unfavourable. As he put it, the gradual diffusion of manufactures throughout a country was ruining the character of its inhabitants, this change for the worse making them miserable. A moral evil of this kind was most regrettable, but it would remain inescapable until countered by legislation.** Moreover, the struggle brooked no delay. If the workers' conditions at the time were far worse than previously, they would deteriorate more and more as time went on. It was highly probable that England's exports of manufactured goods had attained their utmost height, and that the competition of other states would lead to a fall in England's exports, which would also have a highly adverse influence on the conditions of the working class.***

Owen wanted Parliament to pass a law whereby working hours at machine-operated factories should be limited to 10½, and employment of children under 10 and illiterates even of over 10 should be prohibited. This quite definitely amounted to a demand for the passing of

* Owen, *Essays*, p. 149.

** See *Observations on the Effects of the Manufacturing System: with Hints for the Improvement of those Parts of It which are Most Injurious to Health and Morals; Dedicated Most Respectfully to the British Legislature* (1815). Repeated in *The Life of Robert Owen*, IA. The reference is to a passage on p. 38. See also p. 39.

*** *Ibid.*, p. 39. It would be only too easy to prove that Owen was in error when, in 1815, he thought that Britain's export trade had

factory laws, and, presented by Owen "in the name of the millions of the neglected poor,"¹⁰ was met in some part by an act of Parliament in 1819.¹¹ It is to be regretted that this Act, which met Owen's demands in very niggardly fashion, was in fact a dead letter, for Parliament took no practical steps to ensure its being carried out. The authorities charged with factory inspection later testified that "prior to the Act of 1833,¹² young persons and children were worked all night, and all day, or both *ad libitum*."*

Besides demanding factory legislation Owen, as we know, wanted the poor laws revised,¹⁴ and special villages arranged for the unemployed, where the inhabitants would be able to engage in agricultural and industrial pursuits. Owen placed great hopes on such "villages of unity and mutual cooperation," for he thought that serious steps could be taken there to give working people a proper education and inculcate in them a reasonable view upon life. Since he believed that such "villages" could easily become prosperous, he felt sure that they would be a first step towards a social organization that would know neither "rich" nor "poor," neither "masters" nor "slaves." He proposed that society should "nationalize the poor,"** on the ground that, according to his original plan, the system of education should, as I have already pointed out in discussing the contents of his *Essays* on the formation of human character, be uniform all over the country.

As far back as 1817 Owen made out a detailed schedule of all the expenses entailed in the creation of "villages of unity and mutual cooperation."*** It would now be quite superfluous to add that the rulers had not the least intention of putting his plans into practice. True, they modified the poor law in 1834, but not in the direction our

attained "its utmost height." It would be useful to note that with Owen the *theory of markets* already played a part somewhat similar to that assigned to it by our Narodniks of the eighties.

* Karl Marx, *Capital*, published by O. N. Popova, Vol. I, p. 215.¹³

** *Ibid.*, p. 78.

*** See *Life*, IA, p. 60 and following.

reformer had indicated. Instead of "villages of unity and mutual cooperation" those who stood in need of aid from the community were sent to work-houses, which were convict prisons in everything but name.¹⁵

Despite his failure to induce the "rulers" to institute social reform, Owen did not lose faith in their good will, but felt it incumbent to pursue his cherished ends with his own resources and the aid of those who shared his views. He therefore undertook the foundation of communist colonies in the United Kingdom and in North America. These attempts to accomplish a communist ideal within the narrow framework of a single settlement ended in failure and almost ruined Owen. He himself revealed the chief of the numerous causes of this failure when he said that for such undertakings to be successful the participants therein would have to possess certain moral qualities, which they did not always possess because of the corrupting influence of the social environment on the human character. What thus emerged was that the communist colonies were required to give people a proper education, while on the other hand an education of this kind was a prerequisite for those colonies to be successful. This contradiction, which led to the collapse of so many most noble intentions in the course of the last century, can be resolved only by the historical process of society's development *as a whole*, a process that *by degrees* adapts people's characters to new conditions of existence that arise likewise *by degrees*. Utopian socialism, however, took little account of the course of historical development. Indeed, Owen often said that the new social order might come suddenly, "like a thief in the night."

III

In an address to a public meeting in 1817 Owen said the following to his audience: "My friends, I tell you that hitherto you have been prevented from even knowing what

happiness is, solely in consequence of the errors—gross errors—that have been combined with the fundamental notions of every religion that has hitherto been taught to men. And, in consequence, they have made man the most inconsistent and the most miserable being in existence. By the errors of these systems he has been made a weak, imbecile animal; a furious bigot and fanatic; or a miserable hypocrite.”* No one in Britain had ever pronounced such words before, and they were quite enough to stir up all “respectable” people in the country against Owen, who indeed saw that such people shunned him as a blasphemer. This, however, did not in the least diminish either his outspokenness or his faith in the good will of the powers-that-be. In October 1830 he delivered two lectures on “genuine religion,” which gave a vague idea of the distinctive features of “genuine” religious teaching** but testified most vividly to the profound contempt the lecturer had for all “hitherto existing religions.” In his first lecture he called the latter the sole cause of the disunity, mutual hatred and crime that sadden human life; in the second he said that they had turned the world into a huge madhouse. He went on to assert the imperative need for measures to combat them. All this again was more than enough to infuriate all “worthy” gentlemen in the United Kingdom, and it might have seemed that Owen should realize that none of these would approve of measures directed *against* religions. This, however, was something that he did not wish to realize.

In his second lecture he declared that those who had learnt the truth were morally bound to help the Government put that truth into practice. He therefore called upon his audience to petition King and both Houses of Parliament for a struggle to be conducted against religions. His

* *Life*, IA, p. 115.¹⁶

** Such a religion would evidently consist in a materialistic view on nature, somewhat tempered by the usual phraseology of deism and supplemented with socialist morality.

draft of the petition to the King said that the latter certainly wanted his subjects to be happy, but their happiness could be achieved only and exclusively by having the unnatural religion they had unfortunately been brought up in replaced by the religion of Truth and Nature. Finally, a religion of this kind could triumph without endangering society; or at worst with some temporary discomfort to it. The King should therefore use his exalted position to induce his ministers to examine the role of religion in the formation of human character. The petition to the two Houses of Parliament was couched in similar terms.* The two drafts were approved by the audience, but of course they did not do the least good to Owen's cause.

The religious views that have developed on a given social foundation give the latter their sanction. Anybody who attacks a religion shakes its social basis, which is why those who are interested in preserving a given social order are not given to tolerance when it comes to religious convictions. Still less are they inclined to wage a *struggle* against religion. This was something that Owen lost sight of, which meant that he was unable to draw all the practical conclusions that followed from his own teaching on the formation of human character.

If any given individual's character is determined by the conditions he is brought up in, it is evident that the character of any given social class is determined by its conditions too. A class that lives by exploiting other classes will always be inclined to defend social injustice, not rise up against it. Inasmuch as Owen hoped to induce the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie to introduce reforms that would put an end to society's division into classes, he fell into the same contradiction—without even noticing the fact—that had been such a stumbling block to 18th-century materialistic philosophy. This philosophy taught that man, with all his opinions and habits, is the product

* Both lectures given by Owen were published in a supplement to his *Lectures on an Entirely New State of Society*.

of his environment, and at the same time asserted that it is people's opinions that mould the social environment and all its characteristics. "C'est l'opinion qui gouverne le monde," the materialists asserted, all 18th-century Enlightenmenters concurring in this with them. The reason why they appealed to more or less enlightened monarchs was that they had an unshakable belief in the force of "opinion." Robert Owen too shared that unshakable belief. A follower of the 18th-century materialists, he repeated after them that "opinions govern the world,"* and, following their example, he tried to enlighten the "rulers." In his attitude towards the working class he was evidently guided for a long time by the impressions he had received at New Lanark. Whilst he spared no effort to help the "working poor," he had no faith in their ability to take independent action. Since he lacked faith in that ability, he could only advise them to follow one course of action, namely, to engage in no struggle against the rich but to behave in such a way that the latter should not be afraid to institute social reform. In April, 1819, he had published in the press his *Address to the Working Classes*** in which, while regretfully stating that among working people there was much dissatisfaction with the conditions of life, he repeated that a man's character is determined by his social environment. With this truth in mind, working people should not, in his opinion, accuse the "rich" for their attitude towards the "poor." The rich were influenced exclusively by an anxiety to preserve their privileged social status. This striving should be respected by working people. Moreover, if the privileged wished to amass more wealth, the workers should offer no opposition in the matter. It was not the past that called for attention, but the future, that is to say, attention should be focussed exclusively on social reform. The reader may well ask

* *Lectures on an Entirely New State of Society*, p. 151. (Lecture 11.)

** In Britain the term *working classes* is still frequently used instead of the *working class*.

what changes would be brought about by a reform that would not only maintain privileges but would enrich the privileged even more. In Owen's opinion the tremendous productive forces then commanded by mankind would reward the workers for all the concessions made by them, if only those forces would be properly planned and utilized. As Rodbertus was to do later on, Owen insisted not on the working class getting the whole product of their labour, but on the portion accruing to them not being too small. His communism, as we can see, tolerated a certain social inequality, but that inequality would have to be under the control of society and not exceed certain limits laid down by society. Owen was convinced that "the rich and the poor, the governors and the governed, have really but one interest."* Till the end of his life he remained a convinced supporter of *social peace*.

Any class struggle is a political struggle. One who condemns struggle between the classes will naturally attach no significance to political action on their part. It is therefore not surprising that Owen was opposed to parliamentary reform. He thought that in general universal suffrage would be undesirable till the people were given proper education, and he was set against the democratic and republican aspirations of his time. If the republicans and the democrats would cease to attack governments, then, as he thought, a beneficial change in the government of the world might be rationally expected.**

Owen never belonged to the Chartist party, which was fighting for *political* equality for workers, but since the upper classes evinced no desire to support his plans of *social* reform he was obliged perforce to place his hopes on the labour movement. In the early thirties, when that movement was becoming ever broader and even formid-

* *Life*, IA, pp. 229-230.

** *Ibid.*, IA, Introductory, III.

able, Owen attempted to make use of the proletariat's mounting power for the achievement of his cherished aims. In September 1832 he organized an "equitable labour exchange bazaar" in London, and almost at the same time he established close contacts with workers' trade unions. Here again, however, the practical results did not come up to his expectations.

Equitable exchange means exchange of products according to the amount of labour expended on their production. If, however, a given product does not meet a social requirement nobody will take it, and the labour expended by the producer will be wasted. For products *always* to be exchangeable according to the amount of labour each of them embodies—in other words to preclude the law of *value* operating through constant fluctuations of *prices*—a planned organization of production is required. The latter should be organized in such a way that each producer's labour should be consciously directed to meeting a definite social need. Until that is achieved price fluctuations are inevitable, which means that "equitable exchange" is impossible too. When that is achieved there will be no need for "equitable exchange," because in that case products will no longer be *exchanged* for one another but will be *distributed* among the members of society according to norms established therein. Owen's "equitable labour exchange bazaars"* testified to the fact that, despite their interest in economic problems, he and his adherents did not yet realize the difference between *commodity* (unorganized) production on the one hand and *communist* (organized) production on the other.

Owen established contacts with the trade unions in the hope that they would help him, in a short space of time, to cover Britain with a network of cooperatives that would provide the foundation for the new social structure. He always held the firm opinion that the social revolution would be brought about *without any struggle*, and with

* Besides the London bazaar another was opened in Birmingham.

that end in view he wanted to turn the instrument of *class struggle*, which the trade unions always are in greater or lesser degree, into an instrument of *peaceful* social reform. This was nothing but a Utopian plan, and Owen soon realized that he and the trade unions would have to follow different roads. Those trade unions that were most in sympathy with the cooperative idea were then preparing most energetically for a *general strike*, something that is never and nowhere possible without disturbing *social peace*.*

Owen and his followers met with a far greater measure of practical success in the sphere of *consumers'* societies, but his attitude towards such societies was rather cool since he considered them close to ordinary "trading companies."

It is because they reflected with particular clarity both the strong and the weak points of Utopian socialism that I have dwelt with Owen's activities at such length. Since I have mentioned these points here, I shall be able to limit myself to brief references to them in the course of my further exposition.

Some students of the question think that Owen's influence was of no benefit to the English labour movement. That is a tremendous, strange and unforgivable error. A tireless propagandist of his ideas, Owen spurred the working class to thought, confronting that class with the most important and *fundamental* problems of the structure of society, and supplying it with many data required for the correct solution of those problems, at least in theory. If in the main his *practical* activities bore a *Utopian* character, it must be admitted that in this too he frequently gave his contemporaries some highly useful lessons. He was the real founder of the cooperative movement in

* In this work I am dealing only with the history of certain *ideas*, not with that of a social *movement*, but I shall remark in passing that during the period in which Owen was close to the trade unions very many British workers were inclined towards practical methods of waging the class struggle, methods highly reminiscent of those so dear to the "revolutionary" syndicalists of to-day.¹⁷

Britain, and there was absolutely nothing Utopian in his demand for factory legislation. Neither was there anything Utopian in his emphasizing the need for at least primary education for children and adolescents employed as factory hands. He was of course mistaken in turning his back on politics and condemning the class struggle, but—and this is a remarkable fact—workers who were affected by his teachings were able to correct his errors. In learning Owen's cooperative, and in part his communist, ideas they simultaneously played an active part in the *political* movement of the British proletariat at the time. At least, that was the line taken by the most gifted among them, such as Lovett, Hetherington,¹⁸ Watson and others.*

It might be added that in fearlessly preaching the "true religion" and reasonable relations between the sexes Owen helped to develop the working class's consciousness in more than the social sphere.**

Besides Great Britain and Ireland, Owen's direct influence also made itself felt in the United States of America.***

IV

According to Professor H. S. Foxwell of Cambridge, who was most hostile towards socialism, it was not Owen but Ricardo who provided the English socialists with the

* More about these men can be found in M. Beer's recently published book *Geschichte des Sozialismus in England*, S. 280 et seq. Deserving of special attention is Hetherington's *Will* (pp. 282 and 283). Lovett and Hetherington were active in the Chartist movement. Lovett wrote an autobiography *The Life and Struggles of William Lovett, in his Pursuit of Bread, Knowledge and Freedom*, London, 1876.

** Hetherington's *Will* shows the way in which the most gifted of the workers understood Owen's true religion. Here we read, among other things that the only religion worthy of mankind consists in a moral way of life, wishing well to one another and in mutual support.¹⁹

*** See Chapter II in *The Owenite Period* in Morris Hillquit's *History of Socialism in the United States*, New York, 1903, which has been translated into German and Russian.

most telling of spiritual weapons.* That was not quite the case. True, Engels pointed out with justice that inasmuch as the theories of present-day socialism derive from bourgeois political economy they are all, with almost no exception, related to Ricardo's theory of value. There has been quite sufficient reason for that. It is, however, beyond dispute that, to say the least, many English socialists whose teachings were based on Ricardo's theory of value were disciples of Owen and turned to bourgeois political economy from a desire to use its conclusions so as to proceed further in the direction in which their teacher's mind was working. Those who cannot be called Owen's disciples were evidently in close spiritual contact with the communist anarchist Godwin and turned to Ricardo only with the purpose of revealing, in his person, the contradiction between political economy and its own (and fundamental) tenets. Of Owen's followers I shall first of all mention William Thompson.** In the introduction to his *Inquiry* (referred to above in a footnote) Thompson raised the problem of the reason why a people that exceeded all others in the reserves of raw materials, machinery, houses and supplies of foodstuffs at its disposal, as well as in the number of industrious working people belonging to it, should nevertheless suffer great hardship.*** This was a question which, as we have already seen, had attracted Owen's attention since practically the early years of the 19th century and was quite definitely formulated by him in some of his published works. Thompson further expressed surprise at the fact that the fruit of working men's labour was taken away from them in some mysterious

* See page LXXI et seq. of his *Geschichte der Sozialistischen Ideen in England*, which is the introduction to the German translation of William Thompson's well-known *Inquiry into the Principles of the Distribution of Wealth Most Conducive to Human Happiness*. In quoting from this work I shall refer to the German translation by Oswald Collmann, published in Berlin in 1903.

** Born 1785; died 1833.

*** See p. 16 of the German translation.

way through no fault of theirs. This was a question to be met in almost all of Owen's writings. But Thompson himself admitted that it was precisely the questions of this kind that aroused in "us" an interest in the distribution of wealth. So, if Thompson addressed himself to Ricardo—which he actually did, and borrowed a great deal in the process—this was the consequence of the influence previously exerted on him by Owen. Ricardo was, of course, far more of a political economist than Owen ever was, but Thompson's angle of approach to problems of political economy was quite different from Ricardo's. The latter asserted and tried to prove that labour is the sole source of a commodity's value, but he was quite reconciled to the working people's inferior and wretched condition in bourgeois society, and this was something that Thompson could not reconcile himself to. He wanted the distribution of commodities to cease contradicting the fundamental law of their production; in other words he demanded that any *labour*-produced value should go to the *working people*. In making this demand he was following in Owen's footsteps.

An absolutely similar demand was brought forward by all the other English socialists, who based themselves on Ricardo's economic theory. Ricardo's main work was published in 1817.* In 1821 an anonymous little brochure in the form of an open letter to Lord John Russell was published in which bourgeois society was censured for being built on the exploitation of working people.** This was followed by a series of other writings, outstanding in their way. They did not all originate from Owen's followers, some indeed being written by authors who were more or less attracted to anarchism. Besides Thompson, I shall mention another two of Owen's followers, John Gray, and

* The title is *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*.

** Entitled *The Source and Remedy of the National Difficulties, A Letter to Lord John Russell*. For this letter, see also Marx's *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, Dritter Band. Stuttgart, 1910, SS. 281-306.

J. F. Bray; among writers with more or less anarchistic leanings I shall mention Percy Ravenstone, and Thomas Hodgskin.*

For a long time all these writers were in oblivion, but when they were remembered—partly thanks to Marx, who made mention of them in his polemic with Proudhon—their works were alleged to be the source whence Marx took his theory of surplus-product and surplus-value. The Webbs even went so far as to speak of “Hodgskin’s illustrious disciple, Karl Marx.”** That assertion is not in keeping with the facts of the case. It is true that in the English socialists’ economic writings one may meet not only the theory that labour is exploited by capital, but even such expressions as “surplus produce” and “surplus value” and

* Thompson’s inquiry into distribution appeared in 1824, to be followed the next year by his *Labour Rewarded*. In 1825 Gray (1798-1850) published *A Lecture on Human Happiness* and in 1831 his *Social System*. Of importance for the history of economic theory, John Bray’s *Labour’s Wrongs and Labour’s Remedy; or the Age of Might and the Age of Right* was published in Leeds in 1839. This book is remarkable, among other things, for the author displaying an inclination to abandon the idealistic outlook on history, peculiar to all Utopian socialists, and accept a materialistic outlook (note his statement on page 26 to the effect that society cannot at will change the directions of its opinions). True this inclination did not induce Bray to engage in any serious analysis of the fundamental causes of social development.

I shall also refer to Thomas Rowe Edmonds’s *Practical Moral and Political Economy*, London, 1828. In Edmonds’s opinion the working class receives only one-third of the values it creates, the other two-thirds going to the employers (see pp. 107, 116, 288). This is still close to the truth in Britain today. His opinion of the social cause of *pauperism* (pp. 109-110) is also worthy of note. In 1821 Ravenstone published his brochure *A Few Doubts as to the Correctness of Some Opinions Generally Entertained on the Subjects of Population and Political Economy*; of Hodgskin’s works the following present the greatest interest here: 1. *Labour Defended Against the Claims of Capital*, London, 1825; 2. *Popular Political Economy*; 3. *The Natural and Artificial Right of Property Contrasted*, London, 1832. For Ravenstone and Hodgskin, see Marx, *op. cit.*, pp. 306-380. There is another work on Hodgskin, viz. *Thomas Hodgskin* (1787-1869). Par *Elie Halévy*. Paris, 1903.

** *The History of Trade Unionism*, London, 1894, p. 147.

"additional value." However, the gist of the matter lies in scientific concepts, not in words. As for the former, any informed and *impartial* person will have to admit that Hodgskin was, to say the least, as inferior in stature to Marx as Rodbertus was. People have stopped calling Marx a disciple of Rodbertus; there is ground to believe that the time is not distant when Marx will no longer be called a disciple of the English socialists of the twenties of the last century.* However, enough on this point. Although Marx was never a "disciple" of Hodgskin, Thompson or Gray, it is of the utmost importance for the history of socialist theory that these English socialists achieved an insight into the theory of political economy that was remarkable for the period, and, as was noted by Marx, even made a significant step forward as compared with Ricardo.²⁰ In this respect, they were far in advance of Utopian socialists in France and Germany. Had our N. G. Chernyshevsky²¹ been acquainted with them, he would probably have translated some one of them, and not Mill.

* Hodgskin's real attitude to Marx is to be seen from the criticism—highly sympathetic criticism, it should be noted—levelled against the former's views in Volume 3 of *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, already referred to by me above. In the field of political economy Marx looks upon the English socialists in the same way as he regarded Augustin Thierry, Guizot or Mignet in the scientific explanation of history. In both cases we have before us not teachers but merely predecessors who prepared certain material—true, of great value—for the edifice of theory that Marx was later to erect. As for Marx's predecessors, the history of the scientific solution of the problem of labour's exploitation by capital should not be confined to the English socialists of the first half of the 19th century. A fairly clear understanding of the nature and origin of this exploitation was displayed by certain 17th-century English writers, as for instance in *The Law of Freedom in a Platform: Or, True Magistracy Restored. Humbly Presented to Oliver Cromwell*. By Gerrard Winstanley, London, 1651, p. 12; see also *Proposals for Raising a College of Industry of All Useful Trades and Husbandry with Profit for the Rich, a Plentiful Living for the Poor, and a Good Education for Youth*, London, 1695, p. 21, and finally *Essays About the Poor, Manufactures, Trade Plantations and Immorality*, etc. By John Bellers, London, 1699, pp. 5-6. It is strange that no one has yet hit upon the discovery that Marx drew his economic theory from the works I have just named.

B. FRENCH UTOPIAN SOCIALISM

I

Whilst the "industrial revolution" was in progress in England during the second half of the 18th century, a fierce struggle was raging between the third estate and the old regime in France. According to a well-known opinion, the former then comprised the whole of the French people with the exception of the "privileged," the struggle against whom was of a *political* character. When political power was torn from the "privileged" by the third estate, the latter naturally used it to abolish the economic and social institutions, whose sum total formed the foundation of the old political order. The highly variegated elements that made up the third estate were all vitally interested in this struggle against such institutions, which is why all progressive writers in 18th-century France were unanimous in condemning the *old* social and political order. But that was not all. United in condemning that order, they also differed very little from one another in their view on the kind of *new* social order they wanted to see. Of course, there could not but be certain shades of opinion in the progressive camp, but despite these shades of opinion that camp was united in its efforts to establish the social order we now call the bourgeois. So powerful was that unanimity that even people who did not sympathize with the bourgeois ideal had to bow to it at the time. Here is an example.

In his polemic with the Physiocrats²² the Abbé de Mably, who was quite well known at the time, voiced opposition to the principle of private property and the social inequality it entails. As he himself put it, he "could not part with the pleasing idea of the community of property"; in other words, he came out in defence of communism. This convinced communist, however, considered himself in duty bound to declare that the idea of the community of property seemed impracticable to him. "No human force could now attempt to restore equality without bringing about

disorders far greater than those that it would remove.”* Such was the force of circumstances: even if one recognized in theory the advantages inherent in communism, one had to content oneself with the idea of the old order yielding to the bourgeois order, not to the communist.

When the revolution had installed the bourgeois order, there flared up a mutual struggle between all the various elements comprising the third estate. The social stratum then forming the embryo of the proletariat of today began a war against the “rich,” whom they bracketed with the aristocracy. Though communist ideas were wholly alien to this social stratum’s most outstanding representatives, such as Robespierre and Saint-Just, communism did appear on the historical scene, in the person of “Gracchus” Babeuf, in order to play a part in the final act of the great historical drama. Organized by Babeuf and his adherents, the conspiracy known as *la conjuration des égaux*²³ was a kind of prologue to the yet uncompleted struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, which is one of the most characteristic features of 19th-century France’s domestic history. On second thought, the *conjuration des égaux* might be more precisely called a *prologue to the prologue* to this struggle. The arguments brought forward by Babeuf and his followers merely suggested in a vague fashion that they had an understanding of the historical gist of the new social order they had doomed to extinction. They knew one single truth, which they insisted on most emphatically: “In a real society there should be neither rich nor poor.” Since the society produced by the revolution contained both rich and poor, the revolution could not be considered completed until that society yielded place to “a real society.”** How

* *Doutes proposés aux philosophes économistes sur l'ordre naturel et essentiel des sociétés politiques.* Par Monsieur l'Abbé de Mably. A la Haye MDCCL XVIII, p. 15.

** See *Analyse de la doctrine de Babeuf, tribun du peuple, proscrit par le directoire exécutif pour avoir dit la vérité*, published in the

far the Babeuvists' ideas were removed from those we met in our discussion of English Utopian socialism can be seen from the following.

The English socialists attached tremendous historical importance to modern society's possession of mighty productive forces. In their opinion the existence of such forces made it possible, for the first time, to refashion society in such a way that it should contain neither rich nor poor. In contrast to this, some Babeuvists were fully reconciled to the possibility that all the arts, including the technical, might perish when their communist ideal was achieved. The Manifesto of the "égaux" frankly said: "Let all the arts perish if necessary, as long as we have real equality."* It is true that this manifesto from the pen of Silvain Maréchal was not to the liking of many Babeuvists, who even did not help to distribute it. Buonarroti himself, however, wrote that when he, together with Debon, Darthé and Lepelletier, came out in defence of the plan for a communist revolution, he argued as follows: "It has been said that inequality has accelerated the progress of truly useful arts; even if that were true it must now cease, since new progress will not be able to add anything to the real happiness of all."** That means that from now on mankind does not stand in any considerable need of technical development. It is probable that Marx and Engels had in mind, among other things, such Babeuvist reasoning when they said in their *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, that the revolutionary literature that accompanied early proletarian movements was reactionary since it preached general asceticism and the establishment of a primitive equality.²⁴

This ascetic feature was absent from the writings of

supplement to Philippe Buonarroti's well-known book *Gracchus Babeuf et la conjuration des égaux*. I have the Paris edition of 1869, which is somewhat abridged.

* *Gracchus Babeuf*, etc., p. 70.

** Ph. Buonarroti, *Gracchus Babeuf et la conjuration des égaux*, Paris, 1869, pp. 49, 50.

French 19th-century socialists, who, on the contrary, were highly sympathetic towards technical progress.

It may safely be said that even Fourier's strange and, it must be frankly admitted, ridiculous vision of anti-lions, anti-sharks, anti-hippopotamuses and similar kind beasts that would appear to serve man and attend to his comfort was nothing but an acknowledgement—clad in fantastic attire—of the importance and boundlessness of technical progress in the future. At the same time—and this is of the utmost importance for the history of theory—the vast majority of French Utopian socialists lagged far behind their English colleagues in an understanding of the real nature of the social and economic consequences of contemporary technical progress.

II

As we know, the English socialists held that the development of productive forces hastens the division of society into two classes, the "rich" on the one hand, and the "poor" on the other, the opposition between them being understood as that between the class of employers and the class of hired working people. The employers appropriate the greater part of the value created by the workers' labour. All this was already clear to Charles Hall, but it was realized very slowly by the French socialist writers. Even those French socialists who understood that the contradictory interests of capital and hired labour is the most important contradiction in modern society never realized this contradiction with the clarity revealed in the works of Thompson, Gray or Hodgskin.

Saint-Simon,* who carried on the cause of the ideologists of the 18th-century third estate, did not speak of the workers' exploitation by the employers, but only of both employers and workers, *taken together*, being subject to

* Born Oct. 17, 1760; died May 19, 1825.

exploitation by an "idle" class consisting in the main of the aristocracy and the bureaucracy. To Saint-Simon the employers were the natural representatives and defenders of the workers' interests. His disciples went farther than he. When they analyzed what is meant by the "idle class" they included in it not only the *landowners*, who exploited the "toiling class" by exacting land-rent, but also the *capitalists*. However, and this is noteworthy, they considered as capitalists only those whose income came from interest on capital. They claimed that the employers' profits were identical to workers' wages.* The same obscurity is to be seen—and twenty-five years later at that!—in Proudhon** who wrote in March, 1850: "Now, as previously, union between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat means the liberation of the serf, and a defensive and offensive alliance of industrialists and working people against the capitalist and the nobleman." Louis Blanc*** saw things in a much clearer light, for he saw the social contradiction we are here considering as the opposition between the *bourgeoisie* and the *people*. However, when he spoke of the bourgeoisie he meant "the aggregate of all such citizens who, possessing capital or implements of labour, work with the aid of the means belonging to them and depend on others only in a certain degree." How is one to understand the word "only"? Besides, how is one to understand Louis Blanc's statement that the citizens comprising the bourgeoisie *work* with the means they possess? Does that mean that he is speaking only of the petty *artisan* bourgeoisie? Or should that be understood to mean that, like the Saint-Simonists, Louis Blanc considered the employers' profits to be his wages? No answer is provided to these questions. Blanc defines the people as "the aggregate of citizens who possess no capital and are therefore completely dependent on others for the prime

* See *Le Producteur*, t. I, p. 245.

** Born 1809; died 1865.

*** Born 1811; died 1882.

necessities of life.”* This definition as such is unobjectionable. However, being “dependent on others” is something that can vary widely; consequently Blanc’s definition of the people does not fall in with the far more precise concept of the hired workingman which the English socialists used in their researches. In general, Louis Blanc took little interest in economic ideas. A far greater interest in them was displayed by Jean Reynaud** and Pierre Leroux*** both of whom were previously members of the school of Saint-Simon but soon outgrew his theory. The *people*, Reynaud asserted, consists of *two* classes whose interests are mutually opposed to each other, i.e., the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. He called proletarians “those who produce the entire wealth of a nation but have no income except the wages for their labour.” By bourgeois he understood “those who possess capital and live on income from that capital.” Pierre Leroux acknowledged that these definitions were correct and even tried to calculate the number of proletarians. He estimated them at thirty million in France,**** which is of course excessive, for even present-day France does not have that number. This enhanced calculation is to be explained by the fact that Leroux included not only all peasants in the country, but even the beggars who, he said, numbered up to four million. A similar error was made by Reynaud, who included the “village peasantry” in the proletariat, despite his own definition of the term. Reynaud and Leroux’s views in this matter are very close to those of our *Trudoviks*.²⁵

The reader will no doubt understand why the economic views of the French socialists of the Utopian period were not marked by the clarity peculiar to the English social-

* *Histoire de dix ans*, 1830-1840. 4me éd., t. I, p. 4. Notes.

** Born 1806; died 1863.

*** Born 1797; died 1871.

**** See *De la plutocratie*, Boussac, 1848, p. 25. The first edition of this book came out in 1843.

ists: in England the distinctive features of capitalist relations in production were far more clear-cut than in France.

The lucidity of the economic views held by English socialists of the period did not prevent them from being confident that the proletariat and the bourgeoisie—two classes whose economic interests are diametrically opposed—could bring about social reform in full harmony and agreement. The English socialists saw the class struggle in present society, but they utterly condemned it and refused to have their plans for reform linked up with the class struggle. In this respect there was no difference between them and most French socialists. Disagreed on many questions, Saint-Simon and the Saint-Simonists, Fourier and the Fourierists, Cabet, Proudhon and Louis Blanc all fully agreed that social reform called for full reconciliation, not struggle, between the classes.

We shall see later that not all French Utopian socialists rejected the class struggle, but what we should now remember is that most of them disfavoured that struggle and that their negative attitude explains why they had no use for *politics*.

In the mid-thirties, Victor Considérant,* Fourier's most outstanding follower, jubilated over the decline in French public's interest in politics. He attributed that decline to the "theoretical" errors made by the politicians, who instead of seeking for means of harmonizing interests actually encouraged their mutual conflict, which, according to Considérant, was "to the advantage of only those who traded on it."**

At first glance, the peaceful frame of mind of most Utopian socialists seems somewhat strange in a country like France which had but recently been swept by a great revolution and where, it might have seemed, progressive-

* Born 1808; died 1893.

** *Débâcle de la Politique en France*, Paris 1836, p. 16.

minded people should have held the revolutionary tradition very dear. Closer examination, however, will reveal that it was these very memories of the recent revolution that induced progressive ideologists like Considérant to seek after ways and means of putting an end to the class struggle. These ideologists' peaceable mood was a psychological reaction against the revolutionary passions of 1793. The overwhelming majority of French Utopian socialists were horrified by the thought of the mutual conflict of interests becoming as aggravated as in that memorable year. In his very first work, *Théorie des quatre mouvements et des destinées sociales*, published in 1808, Fourier was indignant over the "catastrophe of 1793," which, as he put it, reduced civilized society to a state of barbarism. For his part, even before Fourier, Saint-Simon called the French Revolution a horrifying explosion and the greatest of all scourges.* This attitude towards the "catastrophe of 1793" even made Fourier frown upon the Enlightenment philosophy of the 18th century, to which however he owed the groundwork of his own theory. Neither did Saint-Simon approve of that philosophy, at least inasmuch as he thought it destructive and responsible for the events of 1793. In his opinion, it was the fundamental task of 19th-century social thought to inquire into the measures to be taken so as "*to put an end to the revolution.*"** In the thirties and the forties his followers wanted to solve the same problem, the only difference being that these were concerned not with the revolution of the close of the 18th century, but with that of 1830. One of their chief arguments in favour of social reform was that the latter ("association," "organisation") would check the revolution, and moreover they used the spectre of revolution to frighten their opponents. In 1840 *Enfantin*

* *Œuvres choisies* de C.-H. de Saint-Simon, t. I, Bruxelles, 1859, pp. 20-21.

** My italics.

praised the Saint-Simonists for their outcry "Voici les barbares!" which they raised in the thirties when they saw the proletariat display its strength in the successful rising against the throne. Ten years later, he expressed pride that he was reiterating the same cry, "Voici les barbares!"*

III

The proletariat's emergence on the historical scene is tantamount to the appearance of "barbarians." That was what *Enfantin* thought, an opinion shared by most French Utopian socialists.** All this was highly characteristic of their way of thought in general and their attitude towards the political struggle in particular.

The Utopian socialists were ardent in the defence of the working class's interests and ruthless in unmasking many of bourgeois society's contradictions. Towards the end of his life Saint-Simon taught that "all social institutions must strive for the moral, intellectual and physical improvement of a class that is the most numerous and the poorest." With noble indignation Fourier asserted that the condition of the workers in civilized society was worse than that of wild beasts.***

But while they bemoaned the sad condition of the working class and bent every effort to help it, the Utopian socialists had no faith in that class's capacity for independent action; when they had that faith it frightened them. As we have just seen, to *Enfantin* the appearance of the proletariat was for all the world like a barbarian invasion. As far back as 1802 Saint-Simon wrote, addressing "the class that possesses no property": "Consider

* "Correspondance *politique*," 1835-1840, Paris, 1849, p. 6.

** A reflection of this view is to be seen in certain of *Herzen's* writings.²⁶

*** *Œuvres complètes* de Ch. Fourier, Paris, 1841, t. IV, pp. 191-192.

what took place in France when your comrades were in power; they brought on famine.”*

The following contrast presents definite interest: until the February revolution of 1848 ideologists of the bourgeoisie were by no means opposed to the political struggle of the classes. In 1820 Guizot wrote that the middle class must possess political power if it wished to secure its interests in the struggle against the reactionaries, who for their part were striving to seize power and use it to suit their own interests.** When the reactionaries rebuked him for preaching the class struggle, thereby encouraging evil passions, they heard the retort that the entire history of France had been “made” by the class struggle and they should be ashamed of forgetting that history just because “its conclusions” had proved unfavourable to them.***

Guizot believed in the initiative of the “middle class,” i.e., the bourgeoisie and was unafraid of that initiative, which was the reason why he wished to prove the necessity of political struggle between the classes. Of course, he did not approve of the “catastrophe of 1793”; far from it! For a time he thought that it could not happen again, but in 1848 he began to view the matter in a different light, and then himself became a supporter of social peace. It was in this fashion that the social thought changed and underwent modification under the impact of social development.

The reader should now be reminded that the socialist minority in France of the time was not in the least set against politics or the class struggle. In its way of thinking, this minority differed considerably from the majority I have already spoken of. It derived directly from Babeuf and his partisans. Philippe Buonarroti,**** a descendant

* *Œuvres choisies*, t. I, p. 27.

** *Du Gouvernement de la France et du ministère actuel*, Paris, 1820, p. 237.

*** See the *Avant-Propos* to the third edition of the above-quoted *Du Gouvernement de la France*.

**** Born 1761 in Pisa; died 1837 in Paris.

of Michelangelo and an active member of the "conjunction des égaux," a Tuscan who became a citizen of France by decree of the Convent, brought the Babeuvists' revolutionary tradition into 19th-century Utopian socialism. His work published in Brussels in 1828 and already mentioned above (*Histoire de la conspiration pour l'égalité, dite de Babeuf, suivie du procès auquel elle a donné lieu*)* had a tremendous influence on the thinking of the revolutionary minority of French socialists.** The very fact that this minority came under the influence of a former member of the "conjunction des égaux" shows that, unlike the majority, it was not deterred by memories of the "catastrophe of 1793." Auguste Blanqui,*** the most famous representative of this minority, was a steadfast revolutionary till the end of his long life.

If Saint-Simon insisted on the need for measures *to put an end* to the revolution, and if the majority of French socialists fully agreed with him in the matter, the Babeuvist-influenced minority fully agreed with the *égaux* that the revolution was not yet over, since the rich had gained possession of all the good things of life. Herein lies the fundamental difference between the two trends in French Utopian socialism: one wished to put an end to the revolution, while the other wanted to carry it on.

Those who wished to put an end to the revolution were naturally eager to harmonize all interests mutually conflicting in society. To quote Considérant: "*the best way for each class to ensure its particular interests lies in linking them up with the interests of the other classes.*"****

That was the opinion held by all peaceable Utopian socialists, who differed among themselves only in the steps

* *The History of the Plot for Equality, Known as the Babeuf Plot. With a Supplement on the Process it Led to.*

** Regarding this see: I. Chernov, *Le parti républicain en France*, Paris 1901, pp. 80-89, 281-292. It should be noted that the author has given a wrong appraisal of Blanqui's attitude towards Babeuvism and Saint-Simonism.

*** Born 1805; died Jan. 1, 1881.

**** *Débâcle de la politique en France*. Italics by Considérant. p. 63.

required to reconcile the interests of all classes of society. Almost each of the peaceable founders of socialist systems produced his own plan of guaranteeing the interests of the *propertied class*. Fourier, for instance, recommended that the product of labour should be distributed in the society of the future in such a way as to provide the working people with five-twelfths, the capitalists with four-twelfths, and, finally, representatives of the talents with three-twelfths of aggregate of that product. All other peaceable Utopian plans of distribution invariably made certain concessions to the capitalists; otherwise the interests of the propertied class would not be ensured, thus precluding all hope of a *peaceable solution of the social problem*. The interests of the capitalists—and of the “rich” in general—could be ignored only by those socialists who were not afraid of relinquishing that hope, i.e., by those who preferred the *method of revolutionary action*. This method was preferred by the Babeuvists at the close of the 18th century; French 19th-century socialists who had come under Babeuvist influence were also inclined to employ it. Those who thought in this fashion and did not deem it necessary to spare the interests of the “rich” openly styled themselves not only revolutionaries, but communists into the bargain. In general, during the entire period under discussion the difference in the French concepts of “socialism” and “communism” lay in the fact that, in their projects for the social scheme of the future, the socialists envisaged a certain—and sometimes very considerable—inequality in the possession of property, while this was rejected by the communists.

As we have just seen, a leaning towards a revolutionary mode of thought should have made it easier for the French reformers to adopt the communist programme. Indeed, revolutionaries like Théodore Dézamy* and Au-

* Historians of French socialism have had little to say about Dézamy, though in many respects his views deserved more attention. To my regret, lack of space prevents me too from setting forth his

guste Blanqui adhered to communism. Not all communists however were revolutionaries. Most prominent among representatives of peaceful communism was Étienne Cabet,* who so graphically expressed the peaceable tendency of most French socialists when he said: "*If I held a revolution in my hand, I would keep it clenched even if I would have to die in exile.*"** Like the 18th-century Enlighteners, Cabet believed in the power of Reason and thought that the advantages of communism would be understood and appreciated even by the propertied class. This was something the revolutionary communists did not count on, and consequently they preached the class struggle.

Incidentally, it should not be thought that the tactics they used resembled those of present-day international social democracy, which, as is well known, rejects neither the class struggle nor politics. They were *conspirators* in the main. In the history of international socialism it would be hard to discover a more typical *conspirator* than Auguste Blanqui. The tactic of conspiracy leaves little scope for the *masses'* initiative. Though the French communist revolutionaries relied on the masses more than their contemporary peaceable socialists did, their conception of the future refashioning of society envisaged the masses merely as *supporting* the conspirators, who were to be the sole

teaching, but I shall only say that it reveals more clearly than any other the intimate ideological link between the French Utopian socialists and especially their left wing—the communists—and the French 18th-century materialists. In the main, Dézamy drew his theory from Helvétius, whom he called a courageous innovator and immortal thinker. Dézamy's chief work *Code de la communauté* was published in Paris in 1843. In 1841 he published a newspaper, *L'Humanitaire*. It is noteworthy that in his polemic with the Bauer brothers Marx called the Dézamy trend scientific.²⁷

* Born 1788, died 1856.

** *Voyage en Icarie*, 1855, p. 565. The passage quoted is italicized in the original. The first edition of this book appeared in March 1842. This book, Cabet's best known, describes life in an imaginary communist society.

source of the principal action.* Conspiratorial tactics are always an unmistakable sign of the working class's inequality, and are discontinued when that class achieves a certain degree of maturity.

IV

Utopian socialists of all shades had a firm faith in mankind's progress. We know what an encouraging effect was produced on the young M. E. Saltykov²⁸ by Saint-Simon's words to the effect that the Golden Age belongs to the future, not the past.²⁹ A firm faith in progress was also inherent in the 18th-century Enlighteners, as exemplified in the noble Condorcet. It is not merely a faith in progress that is a distinctive feature of socialism but the conviction that progress leads to the abolition of "*exploitation of man by man.*" This conviction is insistently repeated in the Saint-Simonists' speeches and writings.** Here is what they said: "...In the past, the social system was based in one degree or another on the exploitation of man by man; from now on the greatest progress will consist in putting an end to that exploitation, whatever form it is conceived in. . . .""*** This aspiration was shared by socialists of all other schools, but their plans of social organization did not always come close to that goal. As we already know, these plans often accepted a certain social inequality which in the final analysis could be grounded only in the "exploitation of man by man." Only the communists escaped this inconsistency, which on the one hand stemmed from a desire to reconcile the interests of all classes so as to preclude the class struggle,

* For P. Buonarroti's attitude towards the people's initiative see an interesting remark in Paul Robiquet's *Buonarroti et la secte des Egaux d'après les documents inédits*, Paris, 1910, p. 282.

** Saint-Simon's own statements contain only hints at this; I have already pointed out that in certain respects the Saint-Simonists went much farther than their teacher.

*** See *Doctrine saint-simonienne*.—Exposition, Paris, 1854, p. 207,

and on the other from a vague realization of what was actually the *economic essence* of that exploitation. It was not without reason that the communist Dézamy levelled against the Saint-Simonists the reproof that their "aristocratie des capacités" and "political theocracy" would in practice lead to almost what was to be seen in contemporary society.* The crux of the matter did not lie in plans for the social organization of the future, which did not materialize in any case. What was important was the fact that the Utopian socialists put into social circulation a great idea, which when it had penetrated into workers' minds became the most powerful cultural force of the 19th century. The preaching of this idea is probably the greatest service rendered by Utopian socialism.

In substantiating in every way the need for the abolition of man's exploitation by man, Utopian socialism could not but deal with that exploitation's influence on public morals. The English socialists, especially Owen and Thompson, had had much to say on its perverting influence on both exploited and exploiters. The same subject is prominent in the French socialists' writings. That is easy to understand. If a man's character is determined by the conditions of his development—and this was reiterated by all Utopian socialists without exception—then it is obvious that his character will become good only if it is allowed to develop in good conditions. For these conditions to become good, the shortcomings in the present organization of society must be eradicated. The 19th-century Utopian socialists rejected asceticism, and in one way or another proclaimed the "rehabilitation of the flesh."** It was for this reason that a striving to "unleash low passions" and

* *Code de la communauté*, p. 49.

** This "rehabilitation" was sometimes itself presented in a Utopian light, as for instance in some of *Enfantin's* fantasies on the theme of the relations between the sexes. In essence it implied an intention to "create the kingdom of Heaven here on earth," as Heine was later to put it.³⁰ (See also *De l'Humanité* by Pierre Leroux, t. I, p. 176 et seq., edition of 1845.)

ensure the triumph of man's *animal* wants over his superior aspirations was ascribed to the Utopian socialists. This was slander of a low order indeed, for they never disregarded the necessity of man's spiritual development. Some of them stated quite unequivocally that social reform was needed as a prerequisite of spiritual development. The Saint-Simonists had made some strikingly pointed remarks about the poor prospects of morality flourishing in contemporary society. They said that the latter could not *prevent* crime but could only *punish* it, which was why "the hangman is the sole certified instructor of morals."* It is noteworthy that the Saint-Simonists rejected not only the "hangman" but violence as a means of improving human morals in general, and in this socialists of all other schools were again in full agreement with them. Even the communist revolutionaries recognized violence only as a means of removing the obstacles to the refashioning of society. With the same energy as the Saint-Simonists they denied that the "hangman" could be an "instructor" of public morals. They also understood very well that crime is prevented not by punishment but only by the elimination of the social causes that induce evil action in man. *In this sense* the most extreme revolutionaries and the most indefatigable conspirators were convinced propagandists of the idea that evil should not be countered through the use of violence.

IV

Of extreme importance too are the views of the Utopian socialists on *education*. We know the close links between R. Owen's concern for the proper education of the rising generation and his views on the formation of human character. These views were shared by socialists of all countries. It is not surprising that they attributed tremendous importance to education. Of the French Utopian

* *Doctrine saint-simonienne*, p. 235.

socialists it was Fourier who expressed the most profound views on the problem of education.

In his opinion, man is not born corrupt; he is corrupted by circumstances. The rudiments of all the passions inherent in the grown-up are present in the child. These beginnings should not be crushed but should be given the right guidance, in which case the passions will become a source of everything that is wholesome, great, useful and generous. Under the present social order, Fourier said, they cannot be given the proper guidance. The contradictions in that order stultify all the teacher's efforts, so that at present education is simply a hollow word. The children of the poor cannot be brought up like the children of rich and privileged people are. It is want that directs the poor man's son when he chooses a calling; he cannot follow his natural inclinations. True, the rich man's son is financially in a position to follow his bent, but his character is perverted by the exclusive status held in society by the privileged class. Education will cease being a hollow word only when "civilization," as Fourier called the bourgeois system, will yield place to a social order grounded in Reason. To working people labour is a heavy burden and a curse at present. In the phalanstery, the community arranged in accordance with the demands of Reason, it will become an attractive ("attrayant") occupation. The sight of work being joyfully carried out by groups of grown-ups will have a most beneficial influence on the rising generation, who will come to love work practically from the cradle. This will be all the easier since children in general like doing things and are eager to imitate work being done by adults. This trait will find proper application only in the phalanstery, where toys will at the same time be implements of labour and any game will turn into productive work. In this way, through its games and imitation, the child will learn to engage in the kind of work that attracts it. That, however, is not enough. *Labour* must be lit up by *knowledge*, which the

young generation are to acquire in doing work that benefits society at large. This incidentally means, according to Fourier, that instruction should assume a character that present-day educationists call the *laboratory system*. It will be carried on as far as possible in the open air and will not contain the least element of *coercion*. Children and young people will be perfectly free to select what they should learn to do and from whom they should get their instruction.

In Fourier's opinion, only a system of this kind is capable of giving the child's natural abilities full development. Its wholesome effect will be augmented by the fact that the elimination of present-day society's contradictions will give full play to the development of people's social instincts. Labour productivity will reach its peak only where man will engage in his favourite occupation *in the society of comrades whom he finds congenial*.

The reader will agree that all these educational considerations are of great value. I shall make mention of another highly interesting feature of Fourier's views, namely, that beginning at the age of three or four children should be taught, by means of various collective exercises, to perform *measured movements*, something like Jacques-Dalcroze's rhythmical gymnastics, which is meeting with such general approval. In the system proposed by this French genius "*l'harmonie mesurée ou matérielle*" was one of the conditions of what he called "*l'harmonie passionnelle*."*

VI

French Utopian socialism also had something to say on art. A good deal was written on the subject by the Saint-Simonists, who wished to turn the *poet* into a prophet and herald of new social truths, but it was probably Pierre

* See *Œuvres complètes de Fourier*, t. V, pp. 1-84. *On Rhythm*, pp. 75-80.

Leroux who dealt with the matter more thoughtfully than anybody else did.

Unlike industry, Leroux wrote, which strives to affect the world around us, art is an expression of our own inner life. In other words, "...art is an expression of inner life, or, rather, a life that finds realization, makes itself known to other people and endeavours to become eternal."* On the basis of this conception, Leroux asserted that art neither reproduces *Nature* nor imitates it. Neither can it be an imitation of *art*, i.e., the art of a given period cannot be a reproduction of the art of another period. Genuine art of any definite period of history expresses the aspirations of that period, and of no other. "Art develops from generation to generation like a big tree, which grows year by year, raises its crest towards the sky, and at the same time sinks its roots ever deeper into the soil."** The beautiful has been termed the principle of art. That is wrong, because artists very often depict what is ugly, repulsive or even horrible. The realm of art is far more extensive than that of the beautiful since art is a graphic expression of life, and it is not everything in life that is beautiful.*** It may well be asked: what then is meant by an artistic expression of life? In Leroux's opinion that means expressing it by means of symbols, and he is most categorical in this statement. "The symbol is the only principle in art,"**** he said. However, by symbolic expression he understood an expression of life in *terms of images* in general. When V. G. Belinsky³² said that the thinker expresses his ideas by means of syllogisms, whilst the artist does it by means of images he

* See his *Discours aux artistes*, which was first published in the November and December issues of the *Revue Encyclopédique* of 1831 and reprinted in his *Œuvres*, Paris 1850, t. I. The quotation is from p. 66.

** *Ibid.*, p. 68.

*** This thought was later expressed by N. G. Chernyshevsky and Count L. N. Tolstoj.³¹

**** *Ibid.*, pp. 65-67.

was in full agreement with Leroux.* In developing his views, *Pyotr the Red-headed* arrived at the conclusion that the artist is free but not as independent as is imagined by many. "Art is life which turns to life." The artist commits an error when he ignores the life about him. Leroux thought *art for art's sake* a "kind of selfishness,"** but he had a feeling that "art for art's sake" is after all the outcome of artists' dissatisfaction with their social environment. That was why he was prepared to prefer it to the vulgar art that expresses bourgeois society's base inclinations, "basely materialistic" inclinations as Leroux put it. At least, he attached far higher value to the "morbid" poetry that produced Goethe's *Werther* and *Faust* than to the vulgar art mentioned above. "Poets," he says "show us hearts as proud and as independent as those depicted by Goethe. Only give that independence a purpose so that it will thereby turn into heroism. . . . In a word, show us, in all your works, the individual's fate as linked up with that of mankind. . . . Turn the Titans of Goethe and Byron into human beings, but do not thereby deprive them of their noble character."*** In their time these views played an important part in the history of France's literary development. It is common knowledge, for instance, that they exerted a great influence on George Sand. On the whole, if there were such among the French Romanticists that rejected the principle of art for art's sake, as for example—besides George Sand—Victor Hugo, it may well be considered that their literary views did not develop without the influence of the socialist literature of the period.

* Russian progressive Westerners of the forties, as is well known, were most sympathetically inclined towards Leroux, whom they out of prudence dubbed *Pyotr the Red-headed*. This sympathy did not of course apply solely to his *literary* views; it is worth while noting that they also agreed with him in the fundamental problems of aesthetics.

** From the article "Considérations sur Werther et en général sur la poésie de notre époque," which appeared in 1839 and was reprinted in v. I of Leroux's *Works*, pp. 431-451. The reference to selfishness of art for art's sake is on p. 447 therein.

*** *Ibid.*, p. 450.

C. GERMAN UTOPIAN SOCIALISM

I

In respect of theory, French and English Utopian socialism was intimately linked with the philosophy of the Enlightenment in 18th-century France. This is only partly true of their German counterpart. Among German socialists there were people whose views had developed under the *direct* impact of French *Utopian socialism*, and consequently under the *indirect* influence of the French *Enlighteners*. There were also such whose social views were grounded in the conclusions of German, not French, philosophy. Ludwig Feuerbach exerted a greater influence on the development of German socialist theory than any other German philosopher. There was in German socialism an entire school whose theoretical constructions cannot be understood without a previous acquaintance with the philosophy of the author of *Das Wesen des Christenthums* (the so-called true or philosophical socialism).³³ That is why I shall touch upon this school only in an article on the development of German philosophical thought from Hegel to Feuerbach, and here confine myself to the trend in German socialism that held aloof from German philosophy and derived from the influence of French socialist literature on German minds.

If France of the time lagged far behind England in economic development, Germany was far behind in France's wake. Three-quarters of the Prussian population lived in rural areas, while handicraft production was predominant in all German towns. It was only in some very few provinces, as for instance in Rhenish Prussia, that modern industrial capitalism had made any considerable advance. The German apprentice's legal standing can be summed up as complete defencelessness against police arbitrariness. In Violand's words: "Whoever has even once visited police headquarters in Vienna in the morning will remember how many hundreds of apprentices stand for hours in a narrow

corridor, waiting for their travel-permits to be re-examined, while a policeman with a sabre or stick in his hand watches them like an overseer of slaves. The police and Justice seem to have joined hands to drive these poor people to despair."* It was these desperate poor people, who were treated like cattle, to quote Violand, that were the chief disseminators of the ideas of French socialism in the Germany of the thirties and the forties. Wilhelm Weitling,** the outstanding communist writer (a tailor by trade) came from their midst, and it is to his views that we shall here devote our main attention. Before doing so, I would like to say a few words about a work by the gifted Georg Büchner, who died at an early age.***

An "underground" edition entitled *Der Hessische Landbote*, it was printed at a secret printshop in Offenbach in July, 1834, and was addressed to the peasantry. It is a remarkable fact, for in neither English nor French socialist literature were there any appeals made to the peasants, and in Germany itself *Der Hessische Landbote* was a solitary phenomenon. Weitling and those who shared his views wrote their works for the working class, i.e., properly speaking, for the artisans. It was only the Russian socialists of the seventies of the last century who addressed their appeals chiefly to the peasantry.

In content *Der Hessische Landbote* may be called Narodnik in character, for it dealt with "the immediate needs of the mass of the people," to quote an expression our Narodniks often used. In it Büchner compared the free and easy life of the rich, one that is like a never-ending feast, to the poor man's bitter lot with its ceaseless round of toil. He went on to speak of the heavy taxes that were crushing the people, and subjected the existing form of

* See Bernhard Becker, *Die Reaktion in Deutschland gegen die Revolution von 1848*, Braunschweig, 1873, S. 68.

** Born in 1808; emigrated to the United States in 1849, where he died in 1871.³⁴

*** Born in 1813; died in 1837. His brother was Ludwig Büchner, who later became well known.

rule to scathing criticism. Finally he advised the people to rise up against their oppressors, citing historical parallels, particularly the 1789 and 1830 revolutions in France, which had proved the possibility of successful uprisings by the people.

At that time a revolutionary appeal to the peasants had no chance of success. As it was, the peasants handed over to the authorities the copies of *Der Hessische Landbote* that had been scattered about during the night outside their cottages. The remaining copies were seized by the police, and Büchner had to take to flight to escape arrest. However, the fact that he used the language of a revolutionary in addressing the peasants was characteristic of German socialist thought in the thirties. *Friede den Hütten! Krieg den Palästen!*³⁵ (*Peace for the cottages! War on the palaces!*) was the call Büchner uttered in his *Landbote*, and this was a call for a class struggle. Weitling made the same call to his readers. It was only in the works of German socialist writers who stemmed from the philosophical school of Feuerbach that a peaceable frame of mind revealed itself and was predominant for a time.

When he preached the class struggle, Büchner failed to realize the importance of politics in that struggle. He had no use for the advantages of a constitutional form of regime. Like our Narodniks, he was afraid that by bringing about bourgeois domination a constitution would make the conditions of the people even worse. "If our constitutionalists succeeded in overthrowing the German governments and founding a united monarchy or republic* that would lead to the creation of a financial aristocracy, as in France. Things had better remain as they are." This kind of attitude towards a constitution was also close to the viewpoint of our Narodniks. Of course, as a revolutionary Büchner could not be a supporter of the appalling political order that then existed; he too stood for a republic, but not for a

* The constitutionalists wanted to bring about the political unification of Germany.

kind that would bring the rule of a financial aristocracy in its train. What he wanted was for the revolution to ensure first the people's material interests. On the other hand he considered German liberalism impotent precisely for the fact that it would not or could not make the interests of the toiling masses the foundation of its political aspirations.

Büchner equated the problem of liberty with the problem of force, a view that was to be so well developed many years later by Lassalle in his speech on the essence of a constitution.³⁶

Büchner also wrote a drama, *Danton's Tod*. I shall not engage in a literary appraisal of this drama, but shall merely remark that it is imbued with the "pathos" of a vain and agonizing quest for the conformity of great historical movements to specific laws. Here is what he wrote in a letter to his fiancée evidently at the time he was working on this drama: "During the last few days I have been trying all the time to take up my pen, but have been unable to write a single word. I have made a study of the history of revolution, and have felt, as it were, crushed by history's cruel fatalism. In human nature I see a repulsive mediocrity, and in human relationships an irresistible force that belongs to all in general and nobody in particular. The individual is but the foam on the crest of a wave; grandeur is something merely accidental; the power of genius is but a comic puppet show, a ridiculous striving to struggle against an iron law, which can at best be only recognized, but cannot be subdued to one's will."³⁷ Utopian socialism of the 19th century could not cope with the problem of the conformity of mankind's historical development to laws, nor could the French Enlighteners of the 18th century. I shall say more: it was just because it was unable to solve the problem we are speaking of that the socialism of the period under consideration was Utopian. However, Büchner's persistent efforts to solve that problem showed that he could no longer be content with the viewpoint of Uto-

pian socialism. When A. I. Herzen was writing his book *From the Other Shore*³⁸ he was wrestling with the same problem that had previously tormented Büchner.

II

I have already mentioned that in Germany French socialist ideas were disseminated by artisan apprentices. This came about in the following way: it is common knowledge that when they had learnt their trade, the apprentices spent several years travelling from place to place, often leaving the German borders. When they came to more highly developed countries they often adhered to progressive social movements. In France they got acquainted with socialist ideas, most frequently sympathizing with socialism's extreme shade, viz. *communism*. The most outstanding theoretician of German socialism, the tailor Weitling whom I have already mentioned, also experienced the influence of the French Utopian socialists, and became a communist too.

Utopian socialism did not appeal to the objective course of historical development, but to people's kindly feelings. To use an expression much in vogue among German writers, it was a *socialism of the emotions*. Weitling was no exception to the general rule. He too appealed to the emotions of those whom he addressed, interlarding his words with Biblical quotations. His first work *Die Menschheit wie sie ist und wie sie sein sollte*, which was published in 1838, commenced with the following extract from the Gospel: "But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them . . . then saith He unto His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He send forth labourers into His harvest."

These words from the Gospel were expounded by Weitling in the sense that the harvest is a mankind that is ripening for perfection, while community of property on

earth is its fruit. As he said, addressing his readers: "The commandment of love calls you to the harvest while the harvest calls you to its enjoyment. If you wish to harvest and enjoy, you will thereby be carrying out the commandment of love."*

Owen proceeded from the theory of the formation of human character, i.e., from a certain concept of human nature. The same concept was accepted by the French Utopian socialists, each of whom adapted it to meet his own needs. Weitling was no exception. Following Fourier, he proceeded from an analysis of man's passions and requirements, and based his plans for a society of the future on the results of that analysis.** He did not, however, attach any absolute significance to his plan. As he said, such plans were good, properly speaking, in proving the possibility and necessity of social reform. "The more such works are written, the more proofs of its use the people will get. However, it is with our blood that we shall have to write the best plan..."*** This infers a more or less vague realization of the character of the future society being determined by the objective course of social development, which, among other factors, is expressed in the revolutionary class-struggle. Weitling addressed himself not to the "rich" or even to all mankind, without distinction of title or estate, but only to "people of labour and care." He sharply rebuked Fourier for the concession he had made to capital in his plan for the distribution of products. In Weitling's opinion, to make such concessions meant putting old patches on mankind's new attire, and making mock of the present and all future generations.**** He said

* See p. 7 of the New York edition of this publication, 1854.

** This provided for ten peasants forming a *Zug* and electing a *Zugführer*. Ten of the latter would elect an *Ackermann*, a hundred *Ackermänner* a *Landwirtschaftsrath*, and so on and so forth. (*Die Menschheit*, S. 32). Such would be the organization of work on the land in the society of the future. Weitling went into similar detail in describing other aspects of its life. I see no point in quoting them here.

*** *Ibid.*, p. 30.

**** See his chief work *Garantien der Harmonie und Freiheit*,

that any replacement of the old by the new is revolution. Therefore communists cannot but be revolutionaries. Revolutions however will not always be sanguinary.* To communists a peaceable revolution is preferable to a sanguinary one, but the course of such changes does not depend on them but on the behaviour of the upper classes and of governments. "In times of peace we shall teach, and in times of storm we shall act," Weitling wrote.** He qualified this formula in such a way, however, that one can see that he did not have quite clear an idea of the character of proletarian *action*, or of what it was that the workers should be "taught." As he put it, mankind was mature enough to understand what was required to help it dash aside the dagger pointed at its throat. He condemned Marx's opinion that in her historical advance towards communism Germany could not avoid the intermediate phase of the bourgeoisie's domination. He wanted Germany to skip over that phase, just as later our Narodniks wanted Russia to do so. In 1848 he did not want to agree that the proletariat should support the bourgeoisie in the latter's struggle against feudal survivals and the absolute monarchy. Convinced that any man should have the sense to wish for the dagger pointed at his throat to be removed, Weitling held a theory that is usually summed up as follows: "The worse, the better." He thought the worse the condition of the toiling masses, the sooner they would be inclined to protest against the existing order of things. The subsequent development of the European proletariat was to show that this was not the case. Nevertheless, this theory was to reappear in full in the arguments of M. A. Bakunin.³⁹ Among the methods which, in Weitling's opinion, might prove necessary under certain

published at the close of 1842. It was republished in Berlin in 1908 on the occasion of the centenary of Weitling's birth, and contained a biographical introduction and notes by Mehring. The remarks on Fourier's plan of distribution are on pages 224 and 225 of the latter edition.

* *Ibid.*, pp. 226, 227.

** *Ibid.*, p. 235.

circumstances in the struggle for the refashioning of society, there was one which seems quite strange today. He found it possible to recommend—true only conditionally and under certain circumstances—that communists should appeal to declassé elements in the cities and apply the “new tactics” in accordance with the low moral standards of those elements. This idea was merely hinted at in his principal work, but in a fairly transparent way.* Later he expressed the idea more outspokenly when he brought forward the theory of the “thieving proletariat” (des “stehlenden Proletariats”), which was rejected by those who shared his political views.** However, Bakunin later created his cognate theory of the “robber” as the backbone of the revolutionary movement. I would remind those whom such theories will shock of the place given in Romanticist literature to the great-hearted and bold robber type.*** And not only in Romanticist literature: Schiller’s Karl Moor was also a robber. In general, Utopian socialism paid quite a good deal of tribute to the fantasy.

III

In Weitling’s principal work, which won warm praise from Feuerbach and Marx,⁴⁰ there are scattered quite a number of remarks that show that he had a clearer understanding of the objective logic in the relations between the classes in capitalist society than many French Utopian socialists had. A number of interesting observations are to be met in the chapters of his *Garantien*—the first chap-

* See *Garantien der Harmonie und Freiheit*, SS. 235-236.

** Regarding this and also the attitude of other communists see G. Adler, *Die Geschichte der ersten sozialpolitischen Arbeiterbewegung in Deutschland mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die einwirkenden Theorien*. Breslau, 1885, SS. 43, 44. I would like to add that Weitling soon rejected his “new tactics.”

*** See the interesting remarks on this question made in Ivanov’s introduction to the Russian translation of Byron’s *Corsair* (The *Complete Works* of Byron, Vol. I, published by Efron-Brockhaus in St. Petersburg, 1904, pp. 274-276).

ters—in which he deals with the *rise* of classes and class rule. Here Weitling is beyond doubt an idealist in his attitude towards the motive forces of social development, but it can be sensed that he is no longer satisfied with historical idealism and that he dwells with satisfaction on the surmises which come into his mind and hint at the possibility of a deeper explanation of at least certain aspects of social life. I am sure that it is this feature of Weitling's chief work that evoked Marx's approval. However, his *Garantien* does not reveal any interest on the part of the author in economic theory proper; he was a son of his time, and at that time German socialists did not go in for economics. To quote Engels's reminiscences of the German *Bund der Kommunisten* of the pre-Marxist period: "I do not believe there was a single man in the whole League at that time who had ever read a book on political economy. But that mattered little; for the time being "Equality," "Fraternity" and "Justice" helped them to surmount every theoretical obstacle."⁴¹ It will be seen that in this respect the German communists were quite unlike the socialists of England. However, it should not be forgotten that as far back as the thirties of the last century there was a socialist in Germany who took a profound interest in economic problems and had an excellent knowledge of the literature on political economy. It is true that he stood quite apart from the others. This was Karl Rodbertus⁴²-Jagetzow.*

Speaking of himself, Rodbertus-Jagetzow said that his theory was "merely a logical conclusion drawn from the thesis brought into science by Smith and substantiated by the school of Ricardo. This stated that *from the economic point of view all articles of consumption should be considered as products of labour, which cost nothing but labour.*"** He expressed the view that labour is the sole source of the value of articles of consumption in his first

* Born 1805; died 1875.

** Italics by Rodbertus.

book, which was published in 1842 under the title of "*Zur Erkenntnis unserer staatswirtschaftlichen Zustände.*" Translated literally this means *On a Knowledge of Our State-Economic Condition.* In actual fact Rodbertus did not deal with the state economy in the real sense of the term: he made a study of the worker's conditions in capitalist society and attempted to suggest measures that would help improve those conditions. "The chief aim of my studies," he wrote, "will be to increase the share of the working class in the national product, an increase that will not be affected by market fluctuations and will be built on a firm foundation. I want to enable that class to derive benefit from the increase in the productivity of labour. I want the removal of the sway of a law that may otherwise prove ruinous to our social relations, a law according to which the very conditions of the market lead to wages being reduced to the level of the workers' barest needs, no matter how labour productivity may rise. This level of pay prevents the workers from getting a proper education and stands in howling contradiction to their present legal status and their formal equality with all the other classes of society, which has been enunciated by our most important institutions."*

Since under present conditions wages are always reduced to the level of the workers' barest needs, while labour productivity is constantly mounting, the working class gets an ever smaller share of the product their labour creates. "I am convinced," said Rodbertus, "that the payment for labour, considered as part of the product, decreases at least in the same proportion, if not greater, as the productivity of labour increases."** If one can prove the constant fall in the workers' pay (as a share of the

* *Op. cit.*, pp. 28-29. Footnote.

** *Zur Beleuchtung der sozialen Frage*, Berlin, 1875, S. 25. This book is a reprint of *Social Letters to von Kirchmann* which were published in 1850-51. It includes letters No. 2 and No. 3. Three letters were published originally; the fourth was published after Rodbertus's death, under the title of *Das Kapital* (Berlin, 1884).

national product created by their labour), one can readily understand such ominous economic phenomena as *industrial crises*. In consequence of the relative fall in wages, the purchasing power of the working class no longer corresponds to the development of society's productive forces. It does not increase or even declines, while production rises and markets are overflowing with commodities. Hence there arise difficulties in finding markets, a slump in business, and finally industrial crises. Rodbertus is not embarrassed by the objection that purchasing power remains in the hands of the upper classes and continues to exert an influence on markets. "Products lose all value where there is no need for them," he said. "A product which might have value for the workers proves quite superfluous to other classes and finds no sale. A temporary halt has to take place in national production till the masses of commodities that have accumulated on the market are gradually sold, and the direction of productive activity has adapted itself to the requirements of those who have gained possession of the purchasing power taken away from the workers."*

The decrease in the working class's share of the national product means its *impoverishment*. Rodbertus does not agree with Adam Smith, who asserted that a man is rich or poor in the degree in which he is able to satisfy his requirements. If that were true, it would mean that the well-to-do German of our time is richer than the kings of antiquity. "By wealth (whether of an individual or a class) one should understand the *relative share* (of that individual or class) in the total mass of products that exists at a certain stage of a people's cultural development."**

The growth in society's wealth is thus accompanied by the relative impoverishment of the class whose labour creates that wealth. Five-sixths of the nation are not only

* *Zeitschrift für die gesammte Staatswissenschaft* 1878, erstes u. zweites Heft, S. 345. It contains a reprint of Rodbertus's brochure *Der normale Arbeitstag* (*The Normal Working-day*).

** *Zur Erkenntnis*, SS. 38-39.

deprived of all the blessings of culture, but suffer the most terrible distress from the poverty that is always at their door. Let us assume that in previous historical periods the calamities that befell the toiling masses were necessary for the advance of civilization. Things are different today, when the growth of the productive forces makes the elimination of such calamities quite possible. That is why, in his first letter to Kirchmann, Rodbertus asks: "Could anything be fairer than the demand that the creators of the old wealth and the new should derive at least some benefit from its increase; that their income should increase; their working hours be reduced, or, finally, that an ever greater number of them should join the ranks of the fortunate people who reap the fruit of their labour?" Convinced that no demand could be fairer, Rodbertus for his part proposed a number of measures to improve the workers' lot.

All of these boil down to wages being regulated by law. The state should determine their level in each industry and then adjust them according to the growth in the productivity of national labour. This determination of wage levels would logically bring about the establishment of a new "scale of value."

Since from the viewpoint of political economy all articles of consumption should be considered only as products of labour, with no other value than that of labour, then it is *only labour* that can serve as a genuine "scale of value." As a result of fluctuations in market prices, products are not always exchanged in present-day society according to the amount of labour expended on their production. This evil should be removed by state intervention. The state should put "labour money" in circulation, i.e., certificates to show how much labour has gone into the production of a given article. In short, Rodbertus arrived herein at the same idea of the organization of exchange⁴³ that first arose in England in the twenties and from there migrated to France (Proudhon). There is no need to dwell on it.

It should however be added that for Rodbertus measures such as these had only a temporary significance. He said that the time would come—in about 500 years or so—that a communist system would be established, and the exploitation of man by man would cease.

In presenting his solution of the “social problem,” Rodbertus kept on repeating that such a solution should be *absolutely peaceable*. He had no faith not only in “barricades” or “kerosene,” but in the proletariat’s capacity for independent political action. He expected all changes to come from above, from the royal power, which, as he thought, should and would become “*social*” (“*soziales Königthum*”).

In setting forth Rodbertus’s views, I have made use of various works he wrote, beginning with his book *Zur Erkenntnis*, which was published in 1842, etc. It would be worth while noting that all his views were summarized in an article he submitted towards the end of the thirties to the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung*, which rejected the manuscript. This article was reprinted in *Briefe und sozialpolitische Aufsätze* von Dr. Rodbertus-Jagetzow, published by Rudolf Meyer in Berlin in 1882. (See Vol. II, pp. 575-586: “Fragments aus einem alten Manuskript.”) This presents interest in every respect, but particularly, in the first place, in its regarding the working class as barbarians (“*Barbaren an Geist und Sitte*”—barbarians in spirit and ways*), and secondly in the apprehension voiced that the barbarians now living within civilized society may become its masters, just as the ancient barbarians became masters of Rome. Things went well as long as the state made use of the barbarians of today in its struggle against the bourgeoisie. But the question is: whom will it lean on in the struggle against these barbarians? Will the latter struggle for long against themselves? For its self-preservation society will have to carry out social reform.**

* Compare with *Enfantin’s* view quoted earlier.

** See p. 579 in volume II of the Meyer publication just quoted.

Rodbertus was afraid of the working class. If he were less afraid of it, he would have been less inclined to his principal Utopia—the “social” monarchy and cognate secondary Utopias such as “labour money.”

Bourgeois economists now reiterate readily that Marx borrowed his economic theory from the English socialists. Some twenty or twenty-five years ago, when they were hardly conversant with English socialist literature, they made the “discovery” that as an economist Marx owed everything to Rodbertus. These assertions are groundless in equal measure. Besides, most of Rodbertus’s publications appeared at a time when the main features of Marx’s economic views had already taken definite shape. Nevertheless, Rodbertus holds a place of honour among German economists,* upon whom, incidentally, he looked with the greatest scorn.

Translated from the text of *Selected Philosophical Works*, five-volume edition,
Vol. III, 1957, pp. 567-613.

* Regarding Rodbertus see Engels’s preface to the German translation of Marx’s *Misère de la philosophie*, which originally appeared in French (there is a Russian translation by V. I. Zasluch, with my editing), *Theorien über den Mehrwert* by Marx, Bd. II, part I, section 2 (Die Grundrente).⁴⁴ In Russian Rodbertus’s views were elucidated at the early eighties by the late N. I. Ziber (in *Yuridichesky Vestnik*) and by the author of this book (in *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*). My articles on Rodbertus were collected and reprinted in *For Twenty Years* (under the penname *Beltov*) pp. 503-647.⁴⁵ Besides, see T. Kozzakov’s *Rodbertus sozialökonomische Ansichten*, Jena 1882; Georg Adler, *Rodbertus, der Begründer des wissenschaftlichen Sozialismus*, Leipzig 1883; Dietzel, *Karl Rodbertus, Darstellung seines Lebens und seiner Lehre*, Jena, 1886-1887, 2 Teile; Jentsch, *Rodbertus*, Stuttgart, 1899; Gonner, *Social Philosophy of Rodbertus*, London, 1899.

NOTES

- ¹ The Narodniks were adherents of a petty-bourgeois trend that arose in the Russian revolutionary movement in the sixties and the seventies of the 19th century. The Narodniks wanted to abolish the autocracy and hand over the landlords' estates to the peasants. They denied that capitalist relations and the proletariat were bound to appear in Russia, and, because of this stand, they held that the peasants formed the principal revolutionary force in the country, with the village community as the embryo of socialism. That was the reason why the Narodniks centred their activities on the countryside ("went among the people") in an attempt to raise the people against the autocracy. They proceeded from an erroneous view of the role of the class struggle in historical development, and thought that history is made by heroes who are passively followed by the people. The Narodniks used the tactic of individual terrorism in the struggle against tsarism.

In the eighties and the nineties the Narodniks became reconciled to tsarism, came to express the interests of the rich peasants ("kulaks"), and waged a furious struggle against Marxism. p. 7.

- ² Plekhanov wrote his *Utopian Socialism of the Nineteenth Century* during August and September, 1913.

Plekhanov's initial intention was to give a detailed account of the development of Utopian socialism in France, Germany and England in separate articles, each dealing with a particular country. However, the *Mir* Publishing House, which had ordered the work, demanded that he should deal with the subject in a single article, which Plekhanov did, producing the present work.

Utopian Socialism of the Nineteenth Century was first published in Volume II of *A History of Western Literature of the Nineteenth Century* in the section entitled *The Epoch of Romanticism* (Moscow, 1913).

The present translation has been made from the text of *Select-ed Philosophical Works* by G. V. Plekhanov, Vol. III. p. 16.

- ³ See *F. Engels, Anti-Dühring*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1957, p. 16. p. 16.
- ⁴ *Natural law*: a term used in bourgeois political science to denote a concept of law supposedly inherent in man's nature and reason. The state and law are regarded by adherents of this concept as the outcome of certain immutable qualities in man, irrespective of class and the degree of development of the society he lives in.

In the 18th century Rousseau, Helvétius and Holbach were among those who believed in natural law, and made use of it in the struggle against feudalism, which they declared opposed to the "natural" order of things and incompatible with the requirements of man's nature and reason. Despite the limitations and metaphysical character of their views of natural law, the conclusions drawn by the French philosophers of the Enlightenment from its principles were critical and revolutionary. p. 16.

- 5 Formed in 1792, the *London Corresponding Society* was the first labour political organization in English history. Similar bodies arose in Sheffield, Coventry, Leeds, Nottingham and Edinburgh. Members engaged in correspondence with one another, which gave the society its name. Its official programme called for universal suffrage and annual Parliamentary elections, but in actual fact most members held republican views and were adherents of Thomas Paine, the revolutionary democrat and educator. p. 19.
- 6 In 1794 the British Government suspended the Habeas Corpus Act and hastily passed a number of laws banning public meetings. The Corresponding Society was outlawed, and in 1798 several Sedition Acts were passed, which provided for severe penalties for any oral or printed attack on the Government. The Combination Acts of 1799 and 1800 outlawed all working-class organizations and strike action. p. 19.
- 7 The reference is to Malthus's *Essay on the Principle of Population*, which was published in 1798. Marx called this book "a pamphlet against the French Revolution and modern ideas of social reform in England..." and also as "an apology for the poverty of the working classes" (K. Marx, *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, 1923, Berlin, Bd. III, S. 61). He criticized it scathingly in Vol. I of *Capital*. p. 19.
- 8 Charles Hall's work is entitled *The Effects of Civilization on the People in European States*. p. 20.
- 9 Inaccuracy. Robert Owen made the following note to the 1817 edition of this book: "The First Essay was written in 1812, and published early in 1813. The Second Essay was written and published at the end of 1813. The Third and the Fourth Essays were written and published at about that very time." (Robert Owen, *The Formation of Character, A New View of Society*.) p. 25.
- 10 Robert Owen, *Observations on the Effects of the Manufacturing System*. p. 27.
- 11 By Act of Parliament in 1819 the employment of children under 9 at cotton mills was prohibited; for children between 9 and 16 a working day of 13½ hours was established. p. 27.
- 12 The reference is made to the 1833 factory law which was introduced in the course of several years beginning with March 1, 1834. The law affected only textile mills and limited the working day for the adults to 15 hours, for the children at the age of nine to thirteen to 9 hours and the youth from 14 to 18 to 12 hours. Compulsory breaks for meals were introduced with an aggregate

- duration of no less than an hour and a half a day. The law also reaffirmed the prohibition of the night work for all workers under the age of 18. p. 27.
- 13 See Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1956, p. 279. p. 27.
- 14 In 1816 a meeting of political and public figures led to the formation of a Committee charged with finding means to combat want. Owen, who was a member of the Committee, addressed one of its sessions and then, on the basis of what he had said, drew up a report, which he sent to the Parliamentary Committee on Poor-laws. This was "A Report Presented to the Committee of the Association for the Relief of Industrial and Agricultural Labourers." Plekhanov gives an account of this report here. p. 27.
- 15 According to the poor law of 1834 persons accused of begging and vagrancy were sent to so-called "work-houses," which were actually barracks or prisons for the poor. Hard work, poor food, humiliation and a system of punishment were features of such "Bastilles for the poor." Life at such institutions was depicted by Charles Dickens (*Oliver Twist* and elsewhere). p. 28.
- 16 The inaugural meeting of the Association for Relief of the Poor took place at the London City Tavern and it was there, on August 21, 1817, that Owen gave the address quoted by Plekhanov. (See Robert Owen, *Address Made at the London City Tavern.*) p. 29
- 17 The "revolutionary" syndicalists formed a petty-bourgeois, semi-anarchistic trend that appeared in the working-class movement in a number of West-European countries towards the close of the 19th century. The syndicalists denied the necessity of the working class's political struggle, the party's guiding role, and the dictatorship of the proletariat. They held that, through a general strike the trade unions (syndicates) could overthrow capitalism and assume control of production without recourse to revolution. p. 34.
- 18 In this connection the biography of Henry Hetherington presents special interest. A compositor by trade and a Chartist leader, he became publisher of a newspaper called *The Poor Man's Guardian*, in which he waged an open political struggle against the Government. He refused to pay the fourpenny government tax on each newspaper, and sold the *Guardian* for 1d. per paper, placing the following text under its title: "Published despite the law, so as to test the power of right against the power of might." p. 35.
- 19 In his *Will* Hetherington wrote: "I have lived, and am dying, a resolute foe of injustice and a plundering economic system. . . Whilst the land, machinery and other tools and auxiliary means of production are in the hands of idlers, whilst labour is the only lot of the creators of wealth and is merely an article of trade, which can be bought and ruled by the rich and drones—till that time poverty will be the lot of the majority of people." p. 35.
- 20 K. Marx, *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, Band III, Berlin, 1923, S. 61. p. 39.

- 21 *Chernyshevsky, Nikolai Gavrilovich* (1828-1889), the great Russian revolutionary democrat, materialist philosopher, critic and Utopian socialist. A generation of Russian revolutionaries were brought up on his writings, which, as Lenin said, breathed the spirit of the class struggle. Chernyshevsky was "the only really great Russian writer who, from the 'fifties until 1888, was able to keep on the level of an integral philosophical materialism. . . . But Chernyshevsky did not succeed in rising, or, rather, owing to the backwardness of Russian life, was unable to rise to the level of the dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels." (V. I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1952, p. 377.)

See N. G. Chernyshevsky, *Selected Philosophical Essays*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1953. p. 39.

- 22 The *physiocrats* were a group of French bourgeois economists of the second half of the 18th century (Quesnay, Turgot and others), who considered agricultural labour the only productive form of labour and advocated the development of industrial agriculture.

p. 40.

- 23 The Babeuvists, or adherents of Babeuf, represented a "leveling" trend in Utopian communism. In 1796 they formed a strictly conspiratorial organization of "the Equals," with agents amongst the workers and soldiers. The aim of this organization was a revolutionary uprising of the poor to take place under the guidance of a secret revolutionary committee. The moving spirit of this conspiracy was Emile François Babeuf, who in 1793 took the name of Camille and in 1794 the name of Gracchus, in honour of the Roman tribune.

p. 41.

- 24 K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955, p. 61.

p. 42.

- 25 *Trudoviks* (from the Russian *trud*—labour.—*Tr.*). The so-called "Trudovik group" of petty-bourgeois democrats was formed in April, 1906, by peasant deputies to the 1st State Duma. This parliamentary group existed in all four Dumas.

The Trudoviks demanded the abolition of all class and national restrictions, a democratic form of rural and municipal self-government, and universal suffrage in Duma elections. Their agrarian programme was based on Narodnik principles of equality in landownership. All government, tsar-owned and monasterial lands, as well as privately owned lands exceeding a set limit were to form a People's Land Fund. Compensation for confiscated privately owned land was envisaged, and land reform was to be carried out by local peasant committees.

During the World Imperialist War of 1914-18 the Trudoviks took a chauvinistic stand; following the bourgeois-democratic revolution of February 1917, they expressed the interests of the kulaks and went over to the camp of counter-revolution, together with the People's Socialists.

p. 45.

- 26 *Alexander Ivanovich Herzen* (1812-1870), the prominent Russian revolutionary democrat, materialist philosopher, publicist and writer. Herzen was among the revolutionaries from among the

- nobility who arose in the first half of the 19th century Lenin called Herzen an outstanding thinker who reached the borders of dialectical materialism but failed to achieve historical materialism. Since he failed to understand the bourgeois democratic nature of the 1848 movement (Herzen was then living in France), he was unable to understand the bourgeois character of the Russian revolution, and wavered between democratism and liberalism. In the sixties he abandoned liberalism and "turned his eyes . . . towards the *International*, to that International that was guided by Marx" (V. I. Lenin, *In Memory of Herzen*). See Herzen A. I. *Selected Philosophical Works*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1956. p. 48.
- 27 See K. Marx and F. Engels, *The Holy Family or Critique of Critical Critique*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1956, pp. 176, 177. p. 52.
- 28 Saltykov, Mikhail Efgrafovich (penname: Saltykov-Shchedrin) (1826-1889), the well-known Russian satirist and revolutionary democrat. His numerous writings exposed the tsarist bureaucracy, the serf-owning system in the country and the reactionary essence of Russian and international liberalism and opportunism. See his *The Golovlyovs, Tales*, etc. p. 53.
- 29 "The Golden Age, which blind tradition has placed in the past, is in the future"—this was one of the fundamental theses of Saint-Simon's philosophical and historical system, and was the epigraph in his *Discourses Literary, Philosophical and Industrial* (1825), as well as to the Saint-Simonist journal *Le Producteur*.
In a series of essays entitled *Abroad* M. E. Saltykov-Shchedrin wrote: ". . . from there (from the France of Saint-Simon, Cabet and Fourier. . .) there came a stream of faith in mankind, a confidence that the 'Golden Age' is not behind us but before us. . . In short, everything that was good, desired and overflowing with love—all this came from there." p. 53.
- 30 Plekhanov has quoted the famous lines from Heinrich Heine's *Germany (A Winter Tale)*.
*Ein neues Lied, ein besseres Lied,
O Freunde, will ich euch dichten:
Wir wollen hier auf Erden schon
Das Himmelreich errichten.* p. 54.
- 31 Tolstoy, Lev Nikolayevich (1828-1910), the great Russian writer, "a masterly artist who produced not only superb depictions of Russian life, but first-class works of world literature." (Lenin, *Lev Tolstoy as a Mirror of the Russian Revolution*.) Such of his novels as *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina* and *Resurrection* hold a prominent place in world letters. p. 58.
- 32 Belinsky, Vissarion Grigoryevich (1811-1848), a prominent representative of Russian materialistic philosophy, great revolutionary democrat, and literary critic of genius, who laid the foundations of revolutionary-democratic aesthetics. He waged a ceaseless struggle for the recognition of the lofty social role of art and branded

a contemplative attitude in art towards the realities of life. Belinsky considered only that art genuine which is moved by a profound ideology, gives people true guidance, and fights against social oppression. See: V. G. Belinsky, *Selected Philosophical Works*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1956. p. 59.

- 33 *True or philosophical socialism*—a reactionary trend that appeared and spread in Germany during the forties of the 19th century, principally among the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia. Representatives of this "true" socialism, such as K. Grün, M. Hess, G. Kriege, substituted for the ideas of socialism the sentimental preaching of brotherhood and love, and denied the need for the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Germany. This trend was criticized by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in *German Ideology*, *Circular Letter Against Kriege*, and *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. p. 60.
- 34 Weitling's sectarian Utopian communism, which, to quote Engels, played a positive part "as the first independent theoretical stirring of the German proletariat" (K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1955, p. 340), began to hamper the development of the proletariat's class consciousness after the advent of scientific communism. The reason was that it advocated a grossly "levelling" communism in a mystically religious form. Weitling denied the importance of the proletariat's revolutionary theory and its mass movement; he preached anarchism. His views were severely criticized by Marx and Engels at a session of the Brussels Communist Correspondents' Committee held on March 30, 1846. p. 61.
- 35 The expression "Peace for the cottages! War on the palaces!" first appeared during the French bourgeois revolution of the 18th century. Pierre Joseph Cambon, member of the Convent and a Montagnard, used this slogan in his address to the Convent when substantiating the necessity of the decree of December 15, 1792, on the abolition of feudal laws. The same slogan was inscribed in the minutes of a Convent session held on January 21, 1793. It was used as an epigraph to Georg Büchner's proclamation. p. 62.
- 36 See F. Lassalle, *Über Verfassungswesen*. p. 63.
- 37 Georg Büchner, *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe*, Leipzig, 1922, Inselverlag, S. 530. p. 63.
- 38 Herzen A. I., *Selected Philosophical Works*. Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1956, pp. 336-459. p. 64.
- 39 *Bakunin, Mikhail Alexandrovich* (1814-1876), the ideologist of anarchism and enemy of Marxism and scientific socialism. To the working class's political struggle for the establishment of its dictatorship he counterposed the "social struggle" which he regarded as the immediate "destruction of the state" and as an "elemental outburst" carried out by *declassé* elements and the peasantry. His tactics of conspiracy, immediate uprisings and terrorism were adventurist and hostile to Marxism.

Regarding Bakunin see the following works of Marx and Engels: *The International Working Men's Association*, *The Bakuninists at Work*, *Emigré Literature*, etc. p. 66.

- 40 According to Engels, "Feuerbach said that no other book had given him so much delight as the first part of Weitling's *Garantien*. He said that he had never dedicated any of his books to anybody, but felt a great desire to dedicate his next work to Weitling" (MEGA, Bd. IV, Abt. I, S. 344). The young Marx called Weitling's works "masterly," and the *Garantien* "an unprecedented and brilliant literary debut of the German workers." (See K. Marx, "Kritische Randglossen zu dem Artikel 'Der König von Preussen und die Sozialreform.' Von einem Preussen.") p. 67.
- 41 See K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, p. 343. p. 68.
- 42 In calling Rodbertus a socialist, Plekhanov exaggerated the significance of his works and paid insufficient attention to the reactionary aspects in his views. Rodbertus was in favour of Prussian "state socialism." While noting individual contradictions inherent in the capitalist mode of production he thought it possible to remove them within the framework of the capitalist system, by reforms that would preserve the bourgeoisie for at least another 500 years. Rodbertus's conservative and reactionary leanings were expressed in *Social Letters to von Kirchmann*, referred to by Plekhanov, as well as in his *Zur Erkenntnis unserer staatswirtschaftlichen Zustände*. p. 68.
- 43 In this connection Engels wrote: "This is indeed music of the future played on a child's trumpet. . . . In so far, therefore, as there is anything novel in the labour money exchange utopia of Rodbertus, this novelty is simply childish and far below the achievements of his numerous comrades both before and after him." (See F. Engels, *Preface to the first German edition of "The Poverty of Philosophy"*. Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1958, p. 25. p. 71.
- 44 K. Marx, *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, Bd. II, part 1, section 2. p. 73.
- 45 See G. V. Plekhanov, *The Economic Theory of Karl Rodbertus-Jaetzow*. p. 73.

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БИБЛИОТЕЧКА ПО НАУЧНОМУ СОЦИАЛИЗМУ

Г. В. ПЛЕХАНОВ

УТОПИЧЕСКИЙ СОЦИАЛИЗМ XIX ВЕКА